

Eternity Daily Bible Study - No. 307
Series: St. John's Passion - Gospel of John chapters 12-21
Today's verses: John 17:9-12
Today's Topic: Praying For The Saints
Date: 27th July 2004
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[Editor's Note: After 4 challenging months travelling on missionary work in Asia I am now back in Los Angeles and will attempt to revive Eternity Daily Bible Study on a regular basis - and continue where we left off in the series on John's gospel.]

John 17:9-12 MKJV I pray for them. I do not pray for the world, but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. (10) And all Mine are Yours, and Yours *are* Mine; and I am glorified in them. (11) And now I am in the world no longer, but these are in the world, and I come to You, Holy Father. Keep them in Your name, those whom You have given Me, so that *they* may be one as *We are*. (12) While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those that You have given Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

Jesus shows His intense desire for us and for our spiritual preservation in these few verses. Jesus prays for those whom the Father has given to Him. These are His to keep and protect and He does so except for the "doomed one", the Son of Perdition, Judas Iscariot who was so close to glory, yet so clearly of the Evil One - seduced by mere Mammon from the very Presence of Christ!

These verses astonish me with Jesus' seeming utter disregard for "the world" and all who belong there! "I pray for them, I do not pray for the world." Indeed most of the prayers in the New Testament are "for the saints". This prayer, Paul's pastoral prayers, the great intercessions in Revelation, they are all for the church! There are no prayers for the Roman economy or for the conduct of wars. Indeed we are to pray for governments – but only so the Church can live in peace and godliness (1 Timothy 2:1-4). The world can have its parades - the real business of eternity is happening in the midst of the people of God! Indeed it is the prayers I pray for the progress of God's Kingdom that are most quickly answered.

V10. "And all Mine are Yours, and Yours *are* Mine; and I am glorified in them." Christ is not glorified in "the world" but He is glorified in His saints! And so if we are praying for the glory of Jesus we will be praying for His glory to be manifested in the lives of His people.

"All Mine are Yours, and Yours *are* Mine" All who belong to the Son – also belong to the Father, and all who belong to the Father belong to the Son. Thus if you are to belong to the Father, you must first of all belong to Christ – there is just no getting around it – you must be first a Christian before you can be a son of God the Father!

"(11) And now I am in the world no longer, but these are in the world, and I come to You, Holy Father. Keep them in Your name," Jesus was moving out of the "danger zone" of the world, the place run by the Devil and his evil principalities and powers and which is hostile towards God and towards the people of God. (1 John 5:18,19, Ephesians 2:1-3, Colossians 1:21) but the saints were to remain there as agents of transformation, as gospel witnesses in a dark world and a "perverse and evil generation" (Acts 2:40). So Jesus prays for them, a seeming simple

prayer – “keep them in Your name”. Keep them in the Father, in Yahweh, in the place of grace and power that the world so often tempts us away from.

What does it mean to be kept “In Your name”? It is much more than having a Christian bumper sticker on your car or going to a church service, the place of grace is a place of faith, and a place where God owns you and you consent to His ordering your days according to His will.

Unity flows automatically when the saints are living “in Your name” – “so that they may be one as We are”. First – dwelling in the Name, then intimacy with God and with each other! Obedience precedes unity! We can never be one with spiritual rebels! I cannot work with liberal theologians, though they are often intelligent, gracious and lovely people. There is a basic difference in the way we view obedience to God and the authority of the Scriptures, they dwell in the name of Human Reason not in the name of Faith and of God! First we must dwell in the Name, under the power and authority of God Almighty. Then we will find unity with those who also fear God and worship Christ from every tribe and people and tongue.

“While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name.” One of the jobs of every pastor is to keep his flock “in the Name”, to keep them in the place of grace so that “none are lost” and this takes great diligence and care. The modern CEO model of pastoring tends to undermine the role of true discipling and pastoral care. Nothing can replace knowing the true spiritual state of one’s flock by visiting them in their homes, praying with them, counselling some, exhorting others and admonishing them to true faith in Christ and holy living.

Do our church programs act to keep them in God’s Name? Or do they just exhaust the saints? Some churches have a big “back door” – people leave in droves, hurt, disillusioned and burned out. That is not the Jesus style of pastoring! Every single saint should be precious to the pastor and elders. Above all we should pray for people by name – that they will walk with Christ and abide in Him continually.

The apostles such as Paul prayed fervently, deeply and personally – by name, for hundreds of believers, and he knew where they were in Christ and their “goings on” from one end of the Roman Empire to the other! The apostles took Jesus’ example of being passionately prayerful for the people of God and prayed for the quality of their spiritual lives above all else. In the NT there is one passing reference to a prayer for prosperity (in 3 John) and dozens if not hundreds of references to prayers for the spiritual lives of Christians – that they may walk in unity, love and wisdom and grow into the full measure of God.

Why not take pen and paper and ask the Lord to give you the names of a dozen saints that you can pray for by name that they may grow in Christ and “remain in His name”. You are welcome to pray for Minda and I as part of your list!

Blessings,

John Edmiston

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