

CALLED AS THE INTERCESSOR

Bible Background – JOHN 17:14-24

Printed Text – JOHN 17:14-24

¹⁴ I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.

¹⁵ I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one.

¹⁶ They do not belong to this world any more than I do.

¹⁷ Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth.

¹⁸ Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world.

¹⁹ And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth.

²⁰ "I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message.

²¹ I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

²² "I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one.

²³ I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.

²⁴ Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began!

-----New Living Translation

Lesson Introduction

As believers, we are often asked to pray for others. As Jesus' disciples, we are called to intercessory prayer, but, how can people meaningfully respond to the urge to intercede on behalf of others? In the study of this lesson we will explore Jesus' intercessory prayer for His disciples. Throughout the lesson study, remain mindful that prayer does indeed change things. For as we articulate our love and gratefulness to our heavenly Father, He is moved to act on our behalf.

Background: The prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 is commonly called "The Lord's Prayer." However, that prayer is actually a model for the prayers of believers. The true Lord's Prayer is the prayer of John 17. This is Jesus' farewell prayer for His disciples. In the prayer of Matthew 6, Jesus explains what His disciples should desire for themselves. In the prayer of John 17, Jesus petitions God on behalf of His disciples. Jesus and His disciples had just

January 24, 2021 – Bible Study Guide 8

finished eating the Passover meal. And “Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father (from John 13:1). Jesus gave the disciples their final instructions. He told them of the coming betrayal, going to the Father to prepare a place for them, and the coming of the Holy Spirit (John 13-16). After completing His final teaching called the “Upper Room Discourse,” Jesus offered up His longest recorded prayer, called the “High Priestly Prayer.” The prayer was likely prayed in the presence of the disciples either in the Upper Room or on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane.

-----*Precepts for Living*, the UMI Annual Commentary 2020-2021, p. 248

The Believers’ Protection

John 17:14-16: This is Jesus’ final recorded prayer before His Passion. He knows that He will be leaving them soon and petitions God on behalf of His followers. First, He petitions for protection for His followers. He has shared God’s Word with them and His mission to preach the Gospel is complete. During His earthly ministry, Jesus was a witness against the evils of this world, and as a result, the world hated Him and likewise the world also hated His followers. The disciples, He declares, are no more a part of this world than He Himself.

But Jesus prayed that His followers not be taken out of this world, but that God would protect them from the persecution and evil temptations of this world. To remove the disciples would be to deprive humanity of learning to follow God. Paul faced a similar dilemma when he confessed “a desire to depart and to be with Christ: which is far better.” (Philippians 1:23), but he was needed here on earth to continue his ministry to churches.

◆*If you could only give one last prayer for your children or another group you lead, what would you pray for them?*

The Believers’ Sanctification

John 17:17-19: He also asked that the disciples be sanctified by God’s truth through the teaching of God’s word. To “sanctify” (Gk. *hagiazō*) means to set apart, to be separated from profane things for a sacred use. This echoes the previous passage, the idea of not being a part of the world. This separation from the world is through reliance on God’s truth which is His word, instead of this world’s system of things.

Just as the Father sent Him, Jesus sends his disciples into the world. Just as Jesus separated himself to do the work God commissioned Him to do, He expects His followers to do the same. Through a great deal of courage, prayer and self-sacrifice, believers must obey God’s word and abide in His truth.

◆*How have you sanctified yourself to God’s purpose? How do you manifest that promise in everyday life?*

The Believers' Unity

John 17:20-24: Up until this point, Jesus has focused on the disciples that were with Him during that time, but now, He looks to future believers and includes today's believers in His petitions. His prayer is for the universal church throughout the ages. He prays for unity in the body of Christ. This unity would show the world the truth of who He is and that He was indeed sent by the Father. As believers unite with Christ, they also unite with one another. His prayer is that this unity will demonstrate to the world that He is God's son and cause the world to believe in Him as Savior.

◆ *How has the lack of unity in the Church, the body of Christ, contributed to why the world has not been convinced of the Gospel?*

Conclusion

In response to studying this passage of scripture, let us yearn for Jesus' prayer to be answered more fully in the lives of Christians and the Church. As we pray for others, let us pray and work for unity in the body of Christ.

Sources:

Banks, M. (Ed.). (2020). Love For One Another. *Precepts for Living*, 23(Fall Quarter), 244-254. The Urban Ministries, Inc. Annual Commentary 2020-2021.
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January 24, 2021 – Bible Study Guide 8

Lesson for Next Week – January 31, 2021 – Study Guide 9

PROPHESYING DAUGHTERS

Bible Background ♦ LUKE 2:36-38; ACTS 1:12-14, 2:16-21, 21:8-9

Printed Text ♦ LUKE 2:36-38; ACTS 2:16-21, 21:8-9

Devotional Reading ♦ JOEL 2:28-32

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Jesus Supports Mary's Choice
(Luke 10:38-42)

TUESDAY

Jesus Responds to Sister's Call
(John 11:1-11)

WEDNESDAY

Jesus Raises Lazarus; Mary Believes
(John 11:38-45)

THURSDAY

Women Carry Resurrection Message to Apostles
(Luke 24:5-10)

FRIDAY

Jesus' Final Words and Ascension
(Luke 24:44-53)

SATURDAY

Simeon Sees Impact of Jesus' Ministry
(Luke 2:28-35)

SUNDAY

The Spirit Empowers Daughters to Prophecy
(Luke 2:36-38; Acts 2:16-21; 21:8-9)