

Pray Like Jesus #5 - Pray for Yourself, Christians, and Non-Christians

- Good to see you. Super excited. This is the final sermon in the "Pray Like Jesus" sermon series. You can get a free copy of the book I had the honor of writing with our oldest daughter on the way out. This sermon is the last three chapters in the book. That should indicate to you that this will be a particularly lengthy sermon. All right, we'll be in John chapter 17, an entire chapter. Again, will clue to you, this will be a very lengthy sermon. All of which I would just simply say, you're very welcome. So open your Bible to John chapter 17 and we're gonna look at Jesus' high priestly prayer. This is the longest recorded prayer that we have of Jesus Christ, where he prays for himself, for us who are Christians, and for those who are not yet but going to be Christians. And Jesus is praying this prayer with his disciples. And let me just submit this to you, the best way to get close to someone, to get to know someone, is to pray for them and pray with them. That's why Jesus, in this context of John 17, he's praying with his disciples. If you want to deepen your marriage, pray and bring God into the middle of that relationship. If you want to improve your relationship with your children, pray for them, pray with them. Bring God into the middle of that relationship, same with family and friends. And Jesus here is allowing us to eavesdrop on his prayer so that we can grow in relationship with God and him. Some will call this the high priestly prayer. In the old Testament, the high priest would go into the Holy of Holies and would pray and intercede on behalf of the people. Jesus here is operating in that function as our great high priest. And this prayer is so significant in history. Let me give you just a little bit of its impact. There was a Scottish reformer named John Knox. He's one of our favorites. We went to his house and his church and his burial place with the kids some years ago. As he was approaching death every single day, he would have John 17, the prayer of Jesus, read to him to prepare him to go see Jesus. In addition, there was an Irish preacher named Marcus Rainsford, he actually wrote a 500 page book just on this prayer. Matthew Henry, the Puritan Bible commentator called it, "The most remarkable prayer followed the most full and consoling discourse ever uttered on earth." There was a Christian Bishop named Rile. He said, "The chapter is the most remarkable in the Bible. It stands alone and there's nothing like it." And then Martin Luther, one of my favorites. He was a German Bible teacher and pastor, he says, "This is truly beyond measure a warm and hardy prayer. He opens the depths of his heart, both in reference to us and to his Father. He pours them all out. It sounds so honest, so simple. It is so deep, so rich, so wide, no one can fathom it." This prayer is only recorded here in John 17, and what we're going to do today, we're going to pray like Jesus and we're going to learn to pray like Jesus by listening to Jesus pray. And we're gonna start with Jesus praying for himself in John chapter 17, verses one through five. "When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father." The big idea for the whole series is getting to know God his Father. Prayer is how we talk to and listen to God as Father. It's not so much about focusing on prayer, but focusing on the Father. And just like kids talk to their dad, once you know that God is your Father, you're going to have conversations with him. "Father, the hour has come." He knows he's about to die on the cross for our sins. "Glorify your son, that the son may glorify you since you have given him authority," big statement here, "over all flesh," all people, "to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only

true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work you gave me to do. And now Father glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed." And so let me just set the context here for you. What Jesus is saying is, the hour has come. We tend to measure our life in terms of time and really it's more about moments and opportunities. And Jesus knows that his life has been marching toward this culmination of his crucifixion. The difference between foolishness and wisdom, is knowing when the special occasions are upon you and the sacred moments are open before you. The day that you are getting married, big day. The day that you're going to decide to start your family, big day. There are certain days that are incredibly important, major decisions need to be made. We always need to be praying, but our prayers need to deepen and strengthen in those moments where a particularly important opportunity or obstacle has presented itself. So he says here, "The hour has come." He's gonna pray the longest recorded prayer in the Bible, and the point is this, the bigger the opportunity or obstacle, the longer the prayer. The more intense the moment, the deeper the prayer. The bigger the decision, the more you need to give your burdens to God and get directives from God. And so sometimes we just need to set everything aside and say, this is a big deal, this is a strategic time and I need to get with the Father to get ready for the future. And then what Jesus does here, he prays, and in so praying because we are overhearing, he knows who he is, but he needs us to know who he is, so he tells us eight things about himself in this brief section of prayer. Number one, that he is the son of God. He calls himself, "The son." This is in direct opposition to other religions, including Islam which has as its founding tenant, that God doesn't have a son and that Jesus is not the son of God. Jesus is the son of God. And he declared himself here to be the son. And he echoes and intimates that with referring to God as Father. He is the son, God is the Father. He also number two, refers to himself as a perfect worshiper. He says, "May the son glorify you." "May the sun glorify you." Glorifying is literally reflecting, okay? So when we got up this morning, we all looked in the mirror. For some of us, it was a sad moment. For some of us, it was terrifying. For some, every day I'm like I miss my bangs. My resurrected body is going to have bangs, I can't wait to get my bangs back. My bangs have gone home to be with the Lord. And I recently told my barber, I don't have a hair growth problem, I have a hair distribution problem. I can braid my feet. Right now I have dreads on my feet. I have dreads on my feet, but I don't have bangs. And so what happens when you look... I'm just sharing 'cause we usually don't put this one on the internet so I can say what I want. So... Which I would either way. But anyways, what happens when we look in the mirror, is the mirror reflects us accurately. And the question is, well, God is invisible and immaterial, how do we see God, how do we know God? Jesus we're told in Colossians 1, he is the image of the invisible God. So Jesus comes to the earth and he mirrors or reflects or to use this theological language, he glorifies the Father. So if you look at Jesus, you say he's very loving. That's the Father's love. Well, he's very patient. That's the Father's patience. Well, he's very kind. That's the Father's kindness. He's very generous. That's the Father's generosity. And what worship is, worship is reflecting the character of the Father on the earth, that's what it is. Saying what he would say, doing what he would do, treating others as he has treated us in Christ. So Jesus says, number one, he's the son of God. Number two, that he is the perfect worshiper that he glorifies the Father. Number three, that he is sovereign. And this statement is significant, he says that he has authority overall. We tend to think of authority being

limited to spheres, right? You have national authority, local authority, whether you're a police officer or military or first responder or political leader, principal in a school, pastor and a church, wherever the case may be, there's limited jurisdiction. That being said, Jesus has authority overall. All peoples, all times, all places, he calls it all flesh. That means everyone who has ever walked on planet earth is under the ultimate authority of Jesus Christ, and all who have authority, have derivative authority from his ultimate authority. This is a massive statement for a poor guy who is in his early thirties and homeless to make. This a big statement. You have given, God the Father, has given me the son, authority over all flesh. Jesus here is declaring himself to be the highest authority in all of history and all of the cosmos. That's a massive statement. That's a massive statement. And one of the reasons that they're going to kill Jesus is because of the things that he says. They don't kill Jesus for the things that he does. He heals people, he raises dead people, he feeds hungry people. Nobody gets upset about what he does, everyone gets upset about what he says. And he says, "I am the son of God and I have all authority." Them is fighting words, unless you believe in Jesus. And you need to know this about Jesus. He is the only founder of any major world religion to declare himself to be God. He is without peer and precedent, he is in a category under himself. Jesus says that he is the son of God. Jesus says that he is the perfect worshiper. Jesus says that he is the sovereign Lord. Number four, he says that he is the savior. He says that he, "Can give eternal life." Eternal life is what happens not just when you die, eternal life begins the day you meet Jesus Christ. A lot of people are like, I can't wait to start my eternal life. I started my eternal life at age 19, okay? So I'm living my eternal life. My eternity is already sealed and set, and one day to live is Christ, to die is gain, to depart and be with the Lord is far better. So I'm just looking forward 2.0, but right now I'm living 1.0 of my eternal life. I'm not alone, I'm with Jesus and Jesus is with me and he's for me and he's taken away all of my fears of death and he has secured my eternal life and future. Through his conquering of death, I no longer have any fear of death. The whole world is freaking out like, we're gonna die! Yeah. We've known this for a while. So you need to get ready for it. And the good news is, your eternal life begins the day you meet Jesus so your last day can be the best day.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Okay? And let me say this, Jesus gives eternal life. No religion gives eternal life. No spiritual leader gives eternal life. No good work gives eternal life. No sacrament gives eternal life. No spirituality, no ideology gives eternal life. I'm telling you that no religion saves, Jesus saves. No ideology saves, Jesus saves. That Jesus alone gives eternal life. This is the, it's the Waste Management Open, so we do a little golf claps once in a while here in Scottsdale. That's good. You guys, I appreciate that, man. I love you. And also, he also tells us that he is a missionary. He says, "Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." Some years ago, I preached the whole book of John here at the Trinity Church. And if memory serves me correct, about 40 times it uses the language of sent. This is the language like, we would think of a missionary. And so Jesus is a missionary sent from heaven to earth, right? To save us. And ultimately, he's going to tell us that it's the Father who has sent me, so I'm sending you. So Jesus is sent, and then he sends us. We tend to think of a missionary as someone who has a special calling. They move to another

place to bring the good news of Jesus to very eccentric, different cultures of unusual people, okay? And that's a great thing to do, and we support that and we praise God for that. But let me say, you can do that here. Have you met any eccentric, unusual subcultures of people? Okay, if you have not, go to Tempe. And if you don't find them there, go to Jerome. And if that's not eccentric enough, take a right and go to Sedona, they're there, okay? And the big idea is this, that wherever you go, is the place that you were sent if you belong to Jesus Christ, okay? So when you go to the grocery store, when you go to work, when you go home, when you go to your kids' sports activities, you are sent there by God. Just as Jesus was sent, you are sent to represent your King. And so you're looking for opportunities to minister. How can I love, how can I serve, how can I be a good friend, what burdens can I lift, how can I have the Jesus conversation with you? And let me submit to you, that sometimes the easiest way to have the conversation about Jesus, is to begin by doing exactly what he's doing, and that's praying. Praying for opportunities that God would open them, praying for you, that God would open your eyes and praying for them that God would open their understanding. And sometimes some of you, you're a little afraid to have the conversation with people about Jesus. Sometimes the easiest way is to just ask, is there anything I could be praying for? Because I'll tell you what, as Christians, we get asked that, non-Christians, no one ever asks that. And honestly it opens the heart and it opens their life. I recently had a conversation with a local business person. I won't disclose too many details, but I just felt inclined to ask him, like, I'm preaching a series on prayer, got to co-author a book on prayer, I'll ask if I can pray. I mean, just see what happens. What the heck, you know? Make an illustration out of it. And I did. So what happened was, I asked him, I walked in, there's the business owner and I was like, Hey, is there anything I can pray for you about? They're like, "Why?" I was like, Well, I'm pastor down the street and we love people, is there anything I'd be praying for you about? They started crying. They're like, "Man, it's really hard and business right now. I'm barely making it. I'm super stressed." And I was like, Oh, okay. You're a local, small business owner. You're you're carrying the weight. They're there looking at me and said, "Can I, can I talk to you?" I was like, yeah. Well, so we go off to the side and they just told me everything. They're like, "Could you pray for that?" I said, yeah. I said, can I pray right now? They literally, here's what they said. They're like, "Can you do that?" I'm like... Yap. I got to take out of this lucky rabbit's foot, you gotta rub it, but then I can and I can. Now until then, we got rules. All right, . What I told him was abso, I said, you know what? God is over everyone and everything. He's like a father who loves his kids and when we cry out to him, he listens and responds, so I can do that right now. I prayed for them in their business and I prayed for their business. And the point is this, everywhere you go, there are people that God loves and he's sent you to bring his love to them. That's what we're looking for, is opportunity. Number six, he says that he is God. Jesus does in his prayer. He says, the only true God. Now what this indicates is that there are false gods. So Mormonism is a false God. Jehovah's Witnessism is a false God. Hinduism is a false God. Confusionism is a false God. Buddhism is a false God. Islam is a false God. You're like, but they have a God named Allah. That's the name of a demon. See, my job is to be very clear, your job is to be very offended so we're doing good. And what people tend to say is, well, no, they have their God, we have our God. They have their demon, we have the true God. And what happens in other religions, spiritualities and ideologies, they will pray to a counterfeit demonic spirit that could actually heal their body to damn their soul, could

answer their prayer to wreck their eternal life. See their religions are real and they are really powerful because behind them are real spiritual forces that are really dark amenable and demonic. That other religions... So here's the big idea, there's only one true God. There's tons of false gods,

- [Congregation] Yeah.

- Okay? There's tons of false gods. Have you ever had ID theft? Nobody's had their ID hacked as much as God. Every demon and counterfeit spiritual leader, is trying to pretend that they're God. But there's only one true God and that's what Jesus says. In addition, he says that he is heaven. He says that they would know you, God, the Father and Jesus Christ. We tend to think of heaven as a place. Heaven is a place, but what makes heaven heavenly, is not just the place, but the person who rules that place. And the point is this, heaven is knowing God, the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ and being with them. So think of it in this regard. Let me just, we'll do this, we got nothing else to do, and we've got a few hours to kill so we'll just have this conversation. Let's say that... So if you're young, I'm gonna tell you something crazy. We used to go places, it was awesome. It was awesome. We would get, we would go to other countries. I mean, you can Google it, I'm not lying. This is not fake news, we did this back in the day, okay? So right now let's say we were back in the day where we could go places and do things, you guys just named for me some of the places that you would really want to go to. Where would you want to go?

- [Woman] Romania.

- Romania. How many of you, we did this last night too. How many of you were Romanian? Okay. We have, we had a Romanian invasion at the Trinity Church. It's just, I say, Romanians are like a Groupon, you get one, you get a thousand for free. They all came together and they're all related. They're all like, they're all... They're like, these are my cousins, uncles, brothers, friends, neighbors, sisters, wife. I'm like, I don't what the org chart, but that's awesome. We have a lot of Romanians, and here's what I found out about Romanians. They hate communism but they love middle-aged men who hate communism. Okay. So welcome. This is now your safe place, I'm glad to have you, okay? So if you could go, if you could go somewhere else, where would you go?

- [Man] Holland.

- You would go to Holland?

- [Man 2] New Zealand.

- New Zealand. They shot "Lord of the Rings" there.

- [Congregation] Yeah.

- The trees talk, you gotta go there. Holland, I'm not so sure about. There's a lot of naughtiness in Holland but they do have nice flowers. Okay? So it all depends on where you go. Where else would you want to go? Where, Italy?

- [Woman 2] Costa Rica.

- Costa Rica? My daughter went to Bible college there for months, beautiful place. It's so nice and peaceful, they don't even have a military. Wouldn't that be nice? Oh, we love the military cause we need them, if we didn't need them, that would be okay. If we got rid of the tanks and traded them for hammocks, I'd be fine, right? So Costa Rica would be nice, Italy would be nice. What if you went to your favorite place, but you went there with your enemy?

- [Woman 3] I've done that.

- What was that? You've done that? I feel like we're treading into marriage territory and I don't want to go there. I just don't want to go there, it's too dangerous. It's too dangerous, okay? If you go to a place that is wonderful but you're there with a person that's awful, it feels like hell even if it's heaven. This is why some people will say, I hate Jesus, but I want to go to heaven. You're not going to like it. Because who's going to be there?

- [Congregation] Jesus.

- Jesus, and everybody that loves Jesus. I hate it here. Well, yeah. 'Cause, this is Jesus and all the people who love Jesus. He says, "Eternal life is knowing me and knowing the Father." In this way, it's similar... I'll let you guys in a little secret, I really love my wife Grace. I adore my girl. I adore my girl, okay? I adore my girl. Every day I wake up, I'm glad. I'm glad I get to do life with grace. She's my favorite person, she's the most incredible person I've ever met. I adore my girl. So my kids, as they're launching, they're going to college, getting married, starting their life, I keep telling them, I love you, I love being your dad. I've enjoyed every season, I'm so proud of you, I'm so excited, and when you go, don't worry about me. I'm good 'cause I got your mom. And I've been waiting decades to get her full-time again. So I want to go back to where we started when we were dating. Now we got more money, we're going to go on better dates. I got plans. And what I've learned with this, it doesn't matter where I am, it matters more who I'm with.

- [Congregation] Yeah.

- Well, I can be anywhere with Grace. I can go to Detroit with grace and possibly enjoy it, okay? That's the worst I can think of right now. I don't, you know, it's just terrible. So in that, when we moved some years ago, 'cause we used to live up in the People's Republic of Seattle, we moved down here to America a couple of years ago. And if you're from California, welcome, don't vote. Nonetheless... When we, when we, were full and I got to thin it out and so this will do it, like before. Next week y'all, I parked right in the front, it was incredible. So, we moved here

some years ago and we were processing with the five kids. They're all like, I miss home. And I kept telling them, home is wherever the family is. 'Cause if you go there and we're not there, it's not home. Home is wherever the family is, I want you to think in those terms. Home is wherever the family is. But, Jesus is your big brother, God is your father, we are the family and wherever the family is together, it is ultimately home. And then he says, in addition, that he is the eternal creator. He says, "Before the world existed." So this is the time before time, this is the uncaused cause. That everyone in everything proceeds from God the creator and his created. Everyone and everything therefore is dependent, he alone is independent. These are big statements that Jesus is saying. But he's revealing to us who he is because in that moment, when you look at a humble, marginalized, homeless, poor, virgin Galilean peasant, you would not assume that this is his resume, but it is. But this is him in humility. He wasn't glory, he came down in humility to be with us, to be like us, to die for us, to rise for us, to save us. This is his love for us. A couple of lessons from Jesus' example of prayer. When you have obstacles in front of you that could cause you some grave concern, the counselors will tell you that you basically have three options, fight, flight or fright, okay? How many of you, when you see something on the horizon that is concerning, you're the fight people, you're going to run at it and punch it in mouth, how many of you that's you? Okay. Okay. That's me, right? That's me. How many of you are the flight people? You're like, I'm out, I'm running. I'm out, I'm out, I'm gone. They won't even raise their hand. They're like, that could be perceived as a hostile act. I'm not raising my hand. I'm not doing that, okay? And you're out, you just disappear. How many of you are fright? You don't know what to do, so you just kind of get frozen and stuck. I don't know what to do, so I just freeze. For the Christian and the Christian alone, there's a fourth option. It's not fight, go forward. It's not flight, go backward. It's not frozen, stay put, it's Father, go up. Jesus knows that he's about to atone for the sin of the world, by dying on the cross in our place for our sins. And what he does is he goes up, Father. And he's inviting the Father's love and his wisdom, his guidance, his provision, his protection, to direct his steps. When you're in the most difficult, darkest, concerning moments of life, you need to go up and you need to get with the Father who can direct your steps through the future that lies before you. Number two, there's a little statement here that I really appreciate. And it says that Jesus lifted his eyes up to heaven. It's fine to pray with your eyes closed. Sometimes it's good just to pray up, right? Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. That my problems are down here but my hope is up there, my help is up there, my healing is up there. And let me say this, we spend a lot of time in our world looking down on others, okay? Judging, especially those of you that have a religious disposition, you like to look down on others and judge them, okay? The key to preventing looking down on others, is looking up to him. If you're looking up to him, you really can't be looking down on them. If you're looking down on them, you're saying, I'm here to judge and I see some problems. You look up, you're like, he's there to judge, I see some problems. When you look up, you're far more aware of your shortcomings and your need for God and his grace. When you look down on others, you see their shortcomings and their need for God's grace but you're conveniently unaware of your own need for God's grace. And Jesus looks up and he encourages us to look up, and prayer is how we look up. And then number three, if Jesus needed to pray, who needs to pray? Everybody needs to pray. Jesus isn't praying because he sinful, he's sinless and perfect. He's praying because he's human. This is Jesus

Christ, the son of God, though fully God in full humanity. Let me say this, you need to pray not because there's something wrong with you, but because you're a created dependent being and you're human. And human beings need to pray, that's what we need. Your body needs air, your soul needs prayer. That's just the way it works. And then lastly, Jesus wants you to know the will of God and walk in the will of God. He says one of the most incredible statements. He says, "I have accomplished the work that you have given me to do." How many of you at the end of your life, couldn't say that? Oh God, I knew exactly what to do, and that's all I did, you're welcome. How many of us, we don't even know what we're supposed to be doing. So what we exchange is fruitfulness for busyness. And some of you are tired, you're exhausted, but you're like, God, I can't do it anymore. I can't sleep, I'm so stressed, I'm so freaked out. And God's like, I didn't tell you to do any of that. But God I'm doing it all for you. He like, Ah, no. I didn't tell you. In fact, seven of those things I told Sally to do and you ruined it for her. So actually you're not helping. Sally is supposed to be doing it. She keeps sleeping in 'cause you're doing all the work. What happens is that sometimes we get caught in the trap of chasing our potential and not his calling. There's a big difference between your potential and his calling. I don't want you to be all you can be, I want you to be who he calls you to be, okay? Think of it this way. For the first 30 years of his life, what did Jesus do? What did he do as a little boy? His chores. You know, here's eight year old Jesus, his mother Mary, Hey, do the dishes. This is the good works that you prepared in advance for me to do, Ephesians 2:10. Father, I'm doing what you're telling me to do, the dishes. How many moms say, that's really good advice right there, Pastor Mark? Yeah. Tell my kid that doing the dishes is the will of God. 'Cause somebody has got to do the dishes.

- [Woman 4] Amen.

- Okay? And when you do the dishes to the glory of God, you're doing so in the will of God. So then Jesus went to work with his dad. What was his job?

- [Man 3] A carpenter.

- Carpenter. Here he is, he just told us who he is. The son of God, worshiper, sovereign savior, missionary, the only true God, heaven on earth and the eternal creator. What's he doing today? Making a table. The question is, well, doesn't he have more important things to do? I don't know, but that's what he's supposed to do. See Jesus was content building tables out of wood. Jesus was content dying for our sin on wood. He was content in the will of God, whether that was driving nails into wood or having nails driven through his hands and feet in the wood. The point is this. As long as God calls you to do it, do what God calls you to do and be content in that. I failed at this, I'm aggressive, right? So for me I like to chase needs and opportunities. I ran hard 18 years of ministry as a senior pastor, my family and I took a break, resigned, met with a Christian counselor and I'd get up every morning, Lord, what do you want me to do? He'd be like, be a good son, love Grace, love the kids. That was it. Next day, all right, Lord, What do you want me to do? He's like, be a good son, love Grace, love the kids. 18 months, that's all I heard. Like, what do you want me to do? He's like, that. I was like, yeah, I do need to be a good son and the truth is, Grace is my first responsibility. And these kids are our first responsibility and

there's a lot of things that I can do but nobody else can be her husband or their father. So that has to be first priority. And I met with a Christian counselor, he's a pastor that we know and love. And he said, what do you think God has next for you? I was like, I don't know, he hasn't told me. Just told me to be a good son, love Grace, love kids, so I'm waiting. And he said, don't do anything out of need or opportunity but only that which is the will of God. It just like the Holy Spirit highlighted that phrase. And I thought, how many things in my life have I done because there was a need? I'll do it. I'll do it, I'll do it, I'll do it, and you get overextended, over committed, overburdened. And there was a need, but God wasn't calling you to meet the need. Some of you love to serve. Some of you need to serve others by not serving and allowing them to learn to serve, okay? How many of you are like me? I chased opportunity. I like opportunity. My favorite three things are results, results, results. Those are my favorite three things. So if there's an opportunity, I'm in. But is that the opportunity that God has called me to because sometimes Satan will provide an opportunity to get us off of the things that God actually wants us to be doing. And what Jesus says is this, two extraordinary truths are contained here and number one, I know what I'm supposed to be doing. You know what that means, he prayed about it all the time. He's like, okay Father, what do you want me to do? And what do you want me to not do? Because we look and we said, he healed people. There's people, he didn't heal. Look at the people he ministered to and met with. There's people that didn't minister to and didn't meet with. Well, look at the miracles that he did. Look at the miracles he didn't do. He didn't do everything, he did the things that he was called to do. It means, number one, he knew what to do and number two, that's what he did. And let me just say this, sometimes you need to say no, so you can say yes. If you say yes to everything, you're gonna say no to what God is asking. If you say no to some things, then you can say yes to what God has asked, okay? Sometimes people come up, can you do this? I can, but I won't. 'Cause God didn't ask me to do that. And I'm saying, no, to you so I can say yes to him. I'm saying no to this, so I could say yes to that. I want to pray and only walk in the will of God. You got to pray for yourself. Jesus prayed for himself and then Jesus proceeds to pray for Christians, both those who were present in that day, those who have proceeded billions of us in church history sense, all the way up to the present. This is the longest section of Jesus' prayer because we are a mess and we need a lot of prayer, okay? Okay? Here he goes. I'll read it to you. John 17:6-19, "I've manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world." He's going to talk a lot about the world, we'll unpack that. "Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word." Christians are people who belong to Jesus and believe the word of God. "Now they know that everything you have given me is from you. For I've given them the words that you gave me." He's gonna talk a lot about the scriptures and his, and the words, and the word of God. "And they have received them." A Christian is one who receives the word of God. "And have come to know in truth that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me, I'm praying for them." Jesus prayed for us. "I'm not praying for the world," we'll talk about that, "but for those of you have given me, for they are yours. All mine is yours and all yours are mine, and I am glorified in them, I am no longer in the world," he's going back into heaven, the unseen realm, "but they are in the world and I'm coming to you. Holy Father," personal and respectful. This is the key to referencing God as Holy, very respectful, Father, very personal. "Keep them in your name, which you have given me that they may be one," he's talking here a lot about unity, "even as we are one." There's the

Father, son, and spirit, are one God in three persons. It's why we're called the Trinity church and what saying is, there are three persons who are unified as one, so God's people though many, need to strive toward unity. "While I was with them, I kept them in your name which you have given me. I have guarded them and not one of them has been lost." And who comes to mind? Judas. "except the son of destruction that scriptures might be fulfilled." Zachariah in the old Testament, prophesied that he would, Judas would betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. That was fulfilled in Judas's betrayal. And the Psalms, it says that one who was a friend of Jesus would raise their heel up and oppose him, and that was fulfilled in the betrayal of Judas Iscariot. "But now I'm coming to you and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves." Let me just pause there, and then we'll hit the last portion of the section of Jesus' prayer. Jesus is praying that we would be joyful. Let me say this, cheerless Christianity is not biblical Christianity. A joyless Christianity is not a faithful Christianity. Heaven is a joyful place. Nobody right now that's there is bummed and wishing they could come back to be with us. Like there's nobody that died yesterday is like, I miss masks and elections. They're not saying that, okay? They're doing good. They're having a good day. In addition, the message of Jesus is called good what? News. Well, good news should be communicated in a spirit of joy. So what Jesus is saying here, he's going to say elsewhere that in the world we have trouble, but in him we have joy. That we have a peace that surpasses understanding, the joy of the Lord is our strength, the fruit of the spirit is joy. And joy is not denying reality, but accepting that God is the greater reality beyond the reality. And that he does a work in me and he's got an eternity for me that makes everything around me perceive differently. And here's what I am telling you, that we are now in this wonderful opportunity, we're in a cheerless joyless world, amen? And we just are, right? And if we, as the people of God have a supernatural joyfulness about us, it is compelling. How many of you even coming to church, this is the most joyful place you come every week, Amen? Yeah? And this summer, everything hit and I'm like, we're doing water slides. You know why? Because we believe in Jesus and joy. And I want kids to know that God is a loving, faithful Father, he's a generous Father and guess what, man? The joy is a gift that the Father gives to his family. And so I'm asking you guys, we're gonna be hitting you up for money. So this is, this is the, this is where I prophesy your generosity, so thank you in advance. What I see in the backyard is an improvement to kids' ministry, a dry well, a water slide park and a full splash pad for kids, so that all summer they can come and have fun for free. That's what I see. And here's what I want you to know, that we want this to be a place of Jesus centered joy. My goal is Bible teaching in a joyful, fun environment, okay? Yeah, joyful, fun environment, okay? So I had somebody recently come an their like, "How much do we spend on bouncy houses and water slides?" They were new. I said, "Not enough." You know why? We need bigger bouncy houses and water slides. Paul talks about the third heaven, we're trying to figure out where that is. We want to get up there. And so, let me say, if you come on campus and you're cheerless, you need to go get in the bouncy house and be filled with the spirit. And usually up around the seventh jump that's when he shows up, so you just give it some time, brother, okay? And part of it is this, we have good news, and right now the world has nothing but bad news. We have hope and the world has nothing but hopelessness. And the world right now is not doing so well, but those who are in Christ, we know that to live is Christ to die is gain, so worst case scenario is best case scenario for us, okay? Then he goes on, let me give you the

end of his prayer. "I've have given them your word." He keeps talking about the Bible, so I'm going to talk about that. I'm pretty fired up about the word of God. And the world is what? Hated them. Have you seen this? "Because they are not of this world." Anybody feel like this world isn't working?

- [Congregation] Yeah.

- Yeah, you know why? It's not working. Yeah. It's broken, it's flawed. "Just as I am not of the world, I do not ask that you to take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one." That's Satan. Behind the world there's demonic, unseen, spiritual forces. Behind the world we see, is a world we don't see, and it infects and affects the world we do see. "They are not of the world, just as I am not in the world. Sanctify them," set them apart, "in the truth." Your word is truth, I love that. "As you sent me into the world, so I've sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself that they may be sanctified in truth." Okay. What he's doing here, he's juxtaposing two things. And the first thing that Jesus says is, I pray for some things, I don't pray for other things. I pray for some things, I pray against other things. You need to know that to be for Jesus is to be against some other things. You need to know that. You're like, I'm for everything. Then you're here to, congratulations, you started a cult. You can't be for Jesus and everything else. And so what Jesus is saying is, I'm not praying for the world. Now, the original Greek word there is cosmos, it has seven senses. I'm not going to get into all the details. If you sign up for daily devotions@realfaith.com, so I've got the church and then the ministry, I'll send five days a week, daily devotions to your inbox for free and it includes explanation of all of this, gets into more of the fine print. But that word for world or cosmos it different senses. Sometimes it means people, groups, or nations, or languages, or cultures, or everybody on planet earth. In this sense, it means sinful people working with Satan. That's what it means. Sinful people working with the evil one. That's what he calls the world. Let me tell you this. In 26 verses here, Jesus refers to the world 18 times, if my memory is correct. And the world runs the media. The world runs the universities. The world runs the social media platforms, okay? I mean, I can go from 3 million to 1 million a month on Facebook by just saying something I wasn't supposed to say, but God said it, so I'm just echoing it. I expect to get banned, I expect to get throttled. I'm shocked, I'm not kicked off of YouTube. If I'm still on at the end of the day, add it to the list of Jesus' miracles, 'cause I'll tell you what I think. And what they'll talk about is, well, you violated our community standards. I've seen your community, you don't have any standards. So at the end of the day, if you're going to be for the word, you're going to be in conflict with the world. That's what Jesus is saying. And you need to just accept and acknowledge and be aware of this. 'Cause if you have to be liked, you're not going to be a good Christian. If you need to be needed, you can't be a good Christian. If you avoid conflict, you can't be a good Christian. If you want everyone to speak well of you, Jesus says, "Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you."

- [Man 4] Amen.

- Okay? And so what he's talking about here is, the kingdom versus the world. And let me tell

you a few things about the world. Number one, the world is not normal. When God got done with creation, everything was good and very good. As we look at the world, it's very different, everything is bad and very bad. So for us, we're born into the world and this is all we know. We call it "culture," right? God calls it world. Every culture has elements and aspect of the world. Human sinfulness working with divine demonic empowerment. It's not normal. This is not how the world was when God was done. Number two, this world is not home. That's why some of you were restless and frustrated. We feel like we were made for a better place in a different place, and the truth is we were, and we've made a mess of the place that God has given us. It's not home. If you're a non-Christian, you need to know that this is as close to heaven as you will ever be. And that hell awaits you, this is why you need Jesus, my friend. If you're a Christian, you need to know that this world is as close to hell as you will ever be, and that heaven awaits you. It's not our home. It doesn't feel like home. It doesn't work like home. In addition, it's not normal, it's not home and it's not forever. One day, the Lord Jesus Christ is going to return and everything that is demonic, sinful and of the world, will be utterly and ultimately eternally destroyed and eviscerated. You're not going to have porno in heaven. You're not going to have adultery in heaven. You're not going to have dudes sleeping with their girlfriends in heaven. You're not going to have corrupt politicians in heaven. You're not going to have drug cartels in heaven. You're not going to have sex trafficking in heaven. You're not going to have a drugs and alcohol addiction in heaven. You're not going to have lying and conflict in heaven. That ultimately it's all going to come to an end. So what you and I need to think of, in terms of investing our life, energy and money is, are we investing in the kingdom of God or the world? And the reason that so many of us invest in the world is, that it's very profitable. You can make more money if you join the world. But Jesus says, what does it profit you to gain the whole world and lose your soul? Because that's the price of the world. The price of the world is to lie to you that you can have heaven now, and the truth is, it's not heaven now, and it's not heaven then. He's talking here about the juxtaposition in the conflict between the kingdom of the world. And what he says is, you'll be loved by God but you'll be hated by the world. He says, "The world has hated them." Now, what I find really curious is that, this is altogether true. And what I'm telling you is, not only as the stock market going up and the price of housing going up, so is the spiritual market of being a faithful follower of Jesus Christ, okay? It's just going up. It's going up. I come from the future, I tell you guys where all of this goes. And the good news is this, two things happen when the world hates you. Number one, the fake Christians no longer pretend to be on team Jesus, okay? 'Cause there's no benefit. They're like, I'm just here for the potluck. We can't even have potlucks anymore. I mean, the CDC forbids them, so if you're over the potlucks, I'm sorry, we're done. The other thing that happens is, everybody tries everything and it doesn't work, so the only option left is to try Jesus Christ as Lord, God, savior, King and Christ. That's why you see massive evangelism. But how many of you, you know if you talk about Jesus on social media, you're going to get pushback. You tell your family, you've met Jesus, you're going to get blow back. I'm not saying that we should be offensive, but I'm saying that the message is in and of itself offensive. That's why the world hates us. Because ultimately, this is still an offensive message. People are like, I'm hurting, I'm sick, I'm poor, everything's wrong, I'm so messed, things have happened to me. What's the problem? You are.

- [Congregation] Amen. Oh, my gosh. You're so privileged and judgmental. And accurate. Because the Bible says, that you are your biggest problem, and that you are not your solution. That ultimately Jesus is your solution, that you are your problem. That's still offensive, true? It's still very offensive. I've never seen anybody run for office and say, I figured it out. You guys are all messed up and need to change. Never seen anybody run on that platform. You're good, they're bad. Your victims, their fault. Vote for me, and I'll make them create heaven for you. It's all counterfeit. Everything that God creates Satan counterfeits. And the high value in the world is tolerance. The high value in the kingdom is repentance. Jesus says they are not of the world, and what he's saying is this, in the world, the answer is tolerance, in the kingdom of God, the answer is repentance. Repentance is this, I'm wrong and I need to change. Tolerance is, I'm not wrong and nothing needs to change. And what happens in our culture, it's like, well, whatever you want to do, whatever you want to say, whatever you want to think, whatever you want to believe, however you want to behave, you do you. It's like, it has nothing to do with God. It's actually godless. There's no, it's not, what does God say, it's what do I say. And the result is, you can't be a Christian, unless you preach and practice repentance. Repentance is, I'm wrong, I need to change. I'm the problem, Jesus is the solution. And some people will say, that's just not loving, sure it is. There's nothing more loving than for people to meet Jesus because God is love. They don't even have love until they meet Jesus. What are we talking about? Love is not just a concept or a feeling, it's a person who died and rose, and pours his love into our hearts through the spirit whom he's given us. And here's the big idea with tolerance. People are like, I just accept you as you are. That's not loving. See, God loves us so much that he takes us as we are, but God loves us so much, he does not allow us to remain as we are. What love does is, it seeks the best of the beloved. I want the best for my wife, I want the best for my kids because I love them. And the best for you and I is to become like Jesus Christ. Therefore God takes us as we are, and he makes us like his son. And so repentance is far more loving than tolerance, because tolerance has no hope for you to be better and love of God through repentance of sin, makes you like Jesus, the beloved. See, this whole world is just absolutely broken and screwed up and flawed and self-righteous and very judgmental and intolerant. And it's because again, the world's system runs politics. The world system runs social media platforms. The world system runs education. The world system, it sets up laws and it raises up leaders, and it gives cultural messaging. And the world is a powerful force like gravity that exists whether you realize it or not, and it affects every moment of every day. And Jesus here is praying that our eyes would be open. 18 times in 26 verses, he says, don't overlook the world. So we can't just say, well, that's the way that we do it. And what Jesus is saying, he's saying, I don't pray for the world. So let me say this friends, there are things that we cannot pray for, okay? Somebody comes to me, says, "Pastor Mark, we're trying to raise money for the planned parenthood abortion clinic. Can you pray that we meet our fundraising goal?" Answer, no. No. See somebody immediately be like, "But that's very offensive." Let me say this, if the world hates me and I love him, the question is not, will I offend? The question is, who will I offend? Am I gonna offend you or him? The question is not, will someone be offended? The question is, will it be him or will it be you? If somebody comes to me, says, "Pastor Mark, I'm sleeping with my girlfriend, pray she doesn't get pregnant." Answer.

- [Congregation] No.

- No. I'm gonna pray you get struck by lightning. That's what I'm gonna pray. And your nether regions, I want it to strike specifically. Okay? We'll edit that out. What if somebody comes to me and says, "Pastor Mark, I'm cheating on my wife. Pray she doesn't find out." No, I'm going to call her and make sure your prayer is not answered. Okay? We can't pray for Satan. And some of you you're like, I don't know why God doesn't answer my prayer. Are you praying against as will? God doesn't bless your will, God bless it is his word. If you will submit to his word, he says, "Sanctify them by the truth, your word is truth." He said, "I've given them your word, they have received your word." If you are under the word, you can pray according to the word of God which is the will of God. But if you're not praying according to the word of God, you're not praying according to the will of God, why would God bless something that he's already told you that he is against?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Okay? And it's weird in our day, there are even people who would claim to be spiritual leaders and the things that they're praying for are godless and demonic. They're asking God to do things that are anti-God. And that's what the world does. It wants to counterfeit, it wants to deceive, it wants the false gods to supplant the real one true God. Now hearing all of this, how many of you just want to leave this planet? Are you ready to go? How many of you you're like, all right. I agree with all of this and Jesus is going to take me to heaven, now's a good time, Jesus. We're ready, Biden won, I'm in line for a vaccine, you can't miss me, I'm wearing a mask. I'm, I'm, let's go. Amen?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Any of you feeling that, right? Is it just me? If Jesus came back right now, would you be like, Oh no. Just hang out on a cloud for a while, we're having so much fun. We're not quite ready. We want to do another election. We really love the election thing. How many of you want to go right now, right? Right now. Amen? So this is what happens. Once you know how great Jesus is, and how great his plan for you is, you're like, all right, that's it. I'm out. And this is where Christians start reading rapture books, this is exactly what happens. They're like, all right, when do we go? When do we go, when do we go, when do we go? It's true, right? I mean, I'll tell you what's gonna happen right now. Rapture books are gonna start selling. And there so many guys right now, they're like, do you have a chart? I love those charts, Mark. Show me the chart and just give me a chart. I don't care if it's on the back of an ammo box with a crane, I just want to see the chart. When do we go? Wrapper. So what happens is, we ask ourselves, okay, Jesus, if you love me, and if you got an awesome thing for me, why am I here? You're not here because he doesn't love you, but because he also loves them. You're here, not because God wants to harm you, but God wants to have you help to heal them, okay? God not only reached you, he wants to reach through you to reach somebody else, okay? So Christians, let me say this. We're not going to get off track and all kinds of culture and politics and nonsense and shenanigans and

isms. We're going to stay really focused on Jesus and people meeting Jesus, that's what we're gonna do, okay? 'Cause everybody else can talk about all the other stuff, nobody's talking about him. You know what? I'd rather just talk about him, because at the end of the day, the only hope, help and healing that we have for planet earth, is not in who we vote for, not in what we commit ourselves to, it's whether or not Jesus Christ fixes the mess we've all made. That's really the only hope that we have. And so what Jesus is saying is, I'm not... He said, "I'm not praying that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one and that you sanctify them by the truth." You're like, how am I going to make it through this messed up world? Sanctify them, by the truth, your word is truth. You know what that means, as the world gets darker, God's people got to go deeper. The more you're in the world, the more you need to be in the word.

- [Man 5] Amen.

- That's the truth. How many of you feeling that in in your own soul lately? You like, I used to kind of be a greeting card Christian, one verse, click my heels and go to work. Now I'm like, that's not working. So what we're going to do, next week I'm going to have Valentine sermon, so, you know, it'll be fun. And then I need you to give, 'cause in nine months we're gonna need more kid space. And then we're going to jump into the book of Romans again. We did first half of Romans last year, we're going to start at Romans 8, and we're gonna roll through it through the end of the year. And we're going to go deep into God's word, and I want you to learn to love and enjoy God's word. And so ultimately, he talks as well about the truth of the word versus the lies of the world. He said, "I have given them your word, your word is truth." I've done this for many years, but they're really only are, friends, two perspectives to God's word. One is, I'm under the authority of God's word. If I disagree, I'm wrong. I need to change. I don't criticize the word, I let the word criticize me, okay? The other is literally this, and this is what a lot of people do. Like, you know what? It's, I have some disagreements, I have some problems, you know? There's some things in there that are primitive, they're cultural. I see sexism, I see racism, I see classism, you know, I just, I don't feel it really represents a good lifestyle. It seems very narrow, seems sort of binary, a bit judgy, very traditional, patriarchal. There's guys in there, some of them lead. Yeah, there's a lot of problems in there. The good news is, we're highly evolved and we went to community college and, I took a class where I got to criticize God and find his errors so thankfully, I'm here to fix his mistakes, okay? And let me tell you that as the world gets more intense, there are people that are going to be very compromised on the word of God. There are people that are going to be joining parades for things that they should be having funerals for, okay? Let me tell you this, cultures come and go, isms come and go. Parades movements, hashtags and shenanigans, come and go, but the word of God endures forever.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Okay? So let's just make our eternal investment and be patient to see the return on investment. And Jesus says, "We're going to need more of the word to endure this world." So then he gets to real faith versus fake faith. And what he says is, I didn't lose anybody except for

that one guy. Who's that one guy? Judas. All right Judas. Okay. So the question is, okay, I love Jesus, Jesus loves me, I'm going to be okay. But what happened to Judas? He wasn't okay. Does that mean maybe I'm not okay? And Christians then asked this question, can a Christian lose their salvation? Wrong question. The question is, can God lose a Christian? It's not like I earned my salvation, so I can honor my salvation. God saved me, I didn't save myself. If I didn't save myself, I can't unsave myself. The question is, will God fail a Christian? Will God lose a Christian? Answer, no. But then look at Judas. Like, what happened to that guy? Well, it says here that he was the one who is the son of destruction. Earlier, in John 6, verse 70, Jesus had the disciples together and he made this statement. "One of you is a devil." Had to be a weird moment, like... A weird moment, right? Jesus told them, he knew one of them was a devil. John 12:6, says, "He was a thief." He was a thief. He ran the money for Jesus and he was stealing the whole time. I'm sure he was just a socialist who thought he was reallocating wealth. Jesus, I'm not stealing. I just, I took some of yours and I gave some to me and I gave some to them, it's reallocation. See, what Satan does is, he's good at marketing and renaming, so that vices sounded like virtues. Judas was reallocating money that was not his, it's called stealing. If you're under 25, write that down. And John 13:27 says, that Satan entered him. Now he couldn't have had the Holy Spirit because the Bible says greater is he who is in the believer than he who is in the world. So the Holy Spirit is stronger than Satan. That means if the Holy Spirit is in you, Satan can't come and defeat the Holy Spirit and remove him and replace the Holy Spirit with the demonic spirit. Okay? So since Satan was in Judas Iscariot, it means that Judas was never a believer. So the question is, not did he lose his salvation, but the question is, did he fake his faith? So you can't lose your salvation, but you can fake it. Religious people do this all the time. They're like, well, they were part of the church. But were they part of Christ? But they heard the message. Did they believe the message? But they were in our group. Were they in his group? Right? My question to you is, do you have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, okay? Do you know Jesus? Do you love Jesus? Do you follow Jesus? Have you received Jesus? Have you trusted Jesus? Because you can be this close to Jesus and have no love for Jesus. You could be this close to Jesus, and have no relationship with Jesus. That's Judas Iscariot. And Judas has no one to blame but himself. And some of you, I can just see it in your face, you've got people you love and you're like, Oh my gosh, are they a Judas? Well, the difference between Judas and the prodigal son is not that they left, but whether or not they returned. The story of the prodigal son is like Judas, they both walked away, but the prodigal son came back and Judas never did. In 1 John, he says they went out from among us, but they weren't part of us because they never returned to us. As long as they're alive pursue and pray, that they would return. And if so, they're a prodigal and not a Judas. I feel inclined to say this to you, some of you are struggling because you've got church hurt or a religious leader has said or done something that has hurt you or wounded you. And let me say this, as a pastor, we do, we fail, I work for Jesus, I'm not Jesus. And am sorry, I'm gonna mistakes. Somebody would be like, Pastor Mark you've made a lot in the last hour. Good. Just illustrating my point. So, but what we learned from the ministry of Jesus is sometimes Satan puts people on stuff. Judas was filled with Satan and on Jesus stuff. Sometimes Satan hurts you through people who work for him but pretend to be on team Jesus, okay? Not everybody who is in ministry is in Christ. Not everybody who's with Jesus is for Jesus. Wouldn't make sense for the deceiver to deceive you by sending

someone who said that they were serving Jesus but was really serving Satan? You need to be discerning. Oh, the good news here, 'cause it got a little dark. Here, Jesus is praying for you and me and us, and he still is to this very moment. Jesus not only prayed for us in history, Jesus prays for us every moment of eternity. Hebrews 7:25, "He always lives to make intercession for them." And Romans 8:34, "Christ Jesus is the one who died, more than that, he was raised, he was at the right hand of God and he is interceding for us." Grace and I love our kids with our whole heart we talk about each of the kids every day and what they need. God the Father and God the Son love you as a child of God and every day they're talking about you and what you need. Jesus prays for himself, he prays for us and he prays for non-Christians 'cause the goal is, not that you would love Jesus, that we would love Jesus, but people who don't know Jesus will come to know the love of Jesus. So he closes with this, "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word." So God is gonna work through you to bring people to him. If you don't understand this, come back, we're going to be in predestination in Romans 9, very shortly, it's gonna be fun. "That they all may be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you." Talking about unity. "That they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I've given to them, that they may be one even as we are one." He's talking about unity. "I in them you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love," it's all about the love friend. "The love, with which you have loved me may be in them," God loves you, like he loves Jesus, "and I in them." What he's saying is this. He's saying that unity is precious and it is the vehicle for mission. United unbelievers are more powerful than divided believers. In Genesis, there is this occasion in Genesis 11, where God looks down and these unbelievers are lined together and they're building the Tower of Babel. They're literally trying to create heaven on earth and their own heavenly home. And God looks down and sees they are fully unified, therefore nothing will be impossible for them. Let me tell you that Satan's team tends to be more unified than Jesus' team. Let me tell you that I very rarely see a Muslim attack a Muslim, but I often see a Christian attack a Christian. That there are certain even sexual orientations that they defend one another in a way that God's people quickly turn on one another. That ultimately, you and I need to preserve what is called a unity of the spirit, the bond of peace. And so let me just make this very, very clear. This unity is so that we would have a loving, unified, joyful family so that others would want to join it. How many of you, if somebody like, my family hates each other, we talk trash about each other, we got discernment ministries to criticize one another, we post on social media about one another and we yell at one another, would you like to join? Like, I'm good. Why would you join a dysfunctional family? And why would you invite people to come visit your dysfunctional family? How many of you grew up in that family? You're like, Oh, dysfunctional family, I know what that is for sure. You wouldn't bring your friends over to the house 'cause your family was nuts. But if your family was loving and healthy, you'd bring your friends over. Church families is just like your family, We need to be healthy, loving, unified, so that we can invite other

people to join the family. And we don't feel weird inviting them to come meet the family and ultimately getting to know the Father. And so this is within our church, we need to be unified. Let me say this. We're growing very fast, many of you are new. Average churches, 36%, last weekend, we're 217%. I can't, we're trying to keep up. I'm working on Pray for a Miracle real estate deal, I'm trying to get more classroom space. We've already filled up the six o'clock service, it's only a few months old. You guys are making babies so fast, I can't knock out walls quick enough. Like, Oh my gosh. I mean, we're just trying to keep up. Wednesday night, we've got people driving off the property 'cause there's nowhere for them to park. We're only four years old. And so yeah, praise God, I'm glad. Though when you have this many new people, It's like, Hey guys, we got to work together here 'cause this could just turn into another riot and our nation's had plenty of those. Okay? So it needs to be unity within the church. And let me say this, I've been doing this 25 years as senior pastor. Sometimes the most divisive people think they're the most loving. I'm not being divisive, I just see some problems and I talked to some other people and we agree, and we love you so much that we've decided to declare war to fix it. That's factious behavior. I'm not being divisive. Are you being factious? Anytime it's like, we have a problem with them, those are factions, that's factious behavior, okay? We don't do factions, right? We do family. We do family. No, I'm just saying in doing this 'cause I really do love. Well, you may be deceived. You may be deceived. We need unity within our family. Praise God, we do have unity, and I'm very happy to preach this during a season of unity so we can maintain it, rather than a season of division where I'm rebuking it. And then unity between the churches. This is critical for this season of Christianity in the Western world. There is so much pressure from the outside to cave on issues of marriage, gender, sexuality, family, spirituality. That you know what, Satan has already decided that he's got plenty of minions to shoot God's people, so we do not need to add to their fire. And the, and what Jesus is doing here is praying for unity. What that means is, maybe if we have a problem with people, we should pray for them rather than post about them. Maybe we should go to the one who can help, rather than those who will only harm. But let me say this. Many of you are new. I love every pastor in church that loves Jesus. I am for every pastor in church that is for Jesus. Our differences are not our divisions. That the family of God is God's family, not my family. That Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. I am not the vine, I'm just one of the branches. We are just some of the branches. And let me tell you how beautiful it is, the way that we have been treated. Before my family and I moved to the Valley, we flew down and I met with some of the godfathers in the Valley, the spiritual leaders. They're not really godfathers, not like, "ice 'em," they're not like that. But they're the guys who make the decisions, they're the spiritual leaders. And I wanted to honor them. They've served faithfully for decades in this Valley, and they've served and loved well. They've done an incredible job. And I met with them closed door for hours, I answered any question. I said, my family is considering a move to Arizona, but I'm not going to come without your blessing because I believe in spiritual authority, and I believe honoring those that have been honorable. And answered, they asked the questions, I answered them. They prayed over me and they said, we welcome you and your family to the Valley. We were welcomed here. And we were given this building on the recommendation of another church in the neighborhood. It wasn't even on the market. And the realtor said, "Well, aren't they going to be competition?" He said, "No, they love Jesus, we work together." We got this building because another pastor

made it available for us. Once we declared that we were going to start this church, over 40 churches around the Valley, the country and the world, unsolicited, I never asked anybody for anything, they all sent money to pay for this. As you walk around campus, play toys, chairs, furnishings, items, there's things all over the place that were given by other churches in the Valley. This last week, some of the largest churches in the Valley, their pastors called. They said, we're here Trinity is exploding, we're so excited, how can we help, what do you need? They love you. And you know what, we love them. And you know what, they're for us. And you know what, we're for them. I got a call from the largest church in the Valley that baptized more people than anyone in the history of the Southwest. One of the senior leaders called this week, Mark, we're so excited. It's going so great. How can we help? What do you need? Can we train your staff? Can we come look at your site? Does our realtor need to help find property? How do we help you succeed? That's Christ Church of the Valley. That's the largest church in the Southwest, one of the largest in America. So you know what? We've been so well loved, we need to be loving. We've not been criticized so we should not be criticizing. We've been blessed, so we should be a blessing. And we want every church that belongs to Jesus to be open, to be strong, to be healthy, to be growing. And we want to pray for their success, and we want to celebrate and cheer their forward progress. We're in the largest, fifth largest city, the fastest growing city and county in America. We don't have enough churches for all the people that are moving here. And the churches that are here, we want them doing good, and we want more churches planted, amen?

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Father God, thanks for an opportunity to plant the Trinity Church here in Scottsdale, Arizona. God as the band comes up and we worship, it's our way of praying, corporately. God, we pray against the spirit of division and for a spirit of unity within our church, within the churches and between the churches. And Father, I just want to publicly pause and then, in your presence with these dear people, to just honor the Godly pastors and churches in the Valley that have loved our church, loved our family, so, well. God, there is a supernatural unity here that I have not seen, and there has been an incredible outpouring of grace from your people upon our church. And God, can we just pay it forward. Can we love, can we bless, can we serve, can we help, because in the end, even the church will be no more, but the kingdom of God will be forever more. And so we ask for the grace to continue to run the race until we see Jesus' face, amen.

Q&A: What is the correlation between prayer and forgiveness

- Why do you think it is, why do you think Jesus in the whole prayer, he really ends with forgiveness and he emphasizes, he says it twice and he devotes the majority of the prayer time to forgiveness?

- I think you're talking about how we have to relate to God as father but also to relate to people around us, to be in community. And it's pretty much impossible to have a good relationship with

anyone if you're not a forgiving person. If you hold grudges, if you bring all of your past pain and issues, if you've been through a lot that can be hard but if you're not able to accept Jesus forgiveness and extend that to others it makes it really, really hard to live a fruitful life the way that God intended it. If you're just holding onto that and you're putting yourself in that position of God judging other people, making them feel like they have to repay you, feeling like, you know, you have a grudge all the time and you're just angry. But if you can understand that God is Father and that he's forgiven you and the depth of what that means that you are a sinner and that's scary but he's forgiven that. And there's power in the Holy Spirit to conquer that and then to share that with others and live that out, that's the only way to really live the Christian life.

- But what about the person who says, "I know that God forgives me and I received that and I love God but I just can't forgive this person, what they did was so bad, I can't let it go, I can't just let them get away with it, I can't release it but, you know, that's okay because that doesn't affect my relationship with God."

- Yeah, that's not true. It doesn't work like that. I mean if Jesus died for all sin, for my sin, for your sin, for everybody else's sin whether it's been done to you or it's something that you've done to someone else who are we to hold that from them to withhold that forgiveness from them. And essentially you talk about bitterness and how sometimes we pour a cup of poison and we try to give it to someone else to drink it but we ended up drinking it ourselves because we're just holding on so much that we're poisoning our own souls by not giving that gift that God intends for all of us to have.

- What about the versus that says if I forgive them, they're gonna get away with it.

- Yeah, I mean, God has vengeance. "Vengeance is mine," says the Lord. There's lots of Psalms that are very comforting to me. Sometimes that I read about the wicked, not getting away with evil. And sometimes it looks like they do, but in the end like you said, death is the thing that determines what works for us or what works for God. The way that we live our life can be good or bad or you know, subjective or whatever. And we can argue about that all day, but ultimately we're gonna die and God's gonna decide what happens. And he knows and he sees and he understands what we've been through and he knows all the sins that happen. So he's gonna deal with it. He has justice for that.

- So just because you forgive somebody doesn't mean that God has forgiven them.

- Yeah.

- Would you say then you're releasing them to God. You're saying, "I'm not gonna try the case or punish you. I'm gonna hand that to God and I'm gonna let him decide what to do."

- Yeah, you talked about that last week. Like handing it to a higher court, just saying, "This is not my place to judge. This is not my thing to make that person change. I'm praying for them,

praying that the Holy spirit would come in and change their heart and change their mind if they're not able to apologize or there's not reconciliation there." But yeah, it's just not our place. It doesn't help us to try to become God for them.

- So in high school, I was thinking about it. You were an all state's sprinter, you were fast. And I loved watching you run.

- I ran with my glasses on.

- You ran with your glasses on, it was adorable.

- Nobody thought I would win anything, it was great.

- Yeah, she was the fast librarian. It was awesome. It was really cute. And I love being at the finish line and just cheering for you. So what about those people who would say, "Okay, I believe in forgiveness, but it's at the finish line, it's not at the starting line of the relationship."

- Yeah, like it has to be earned, yeah.

- You gotta earn it, you gotta work for it. If you say, you're sorry, if you don't do it anymore, if you prove over time.

- Yeah, no, I don't think that works. I mean, I can imagine like going into marriage or going into a relationship and having someone have to prove that over time, they're not Jesus, they're not gonna be perfect. They are gonna make mistakes and you have to go into it knowing that and being able to forgive and being able to work through that and not expecting them to be perfect 'cause I'm not perfect, I know I'm not perfect. But if you start with forgiveness, if you start with, yes, I know you're gonna fail. I know that I'm gonna need to forgive you. I know that Jesus forgives you and forgives me and he's gonna work on our relationship together. Then you're able to run the race and not have all of this debris in the runway. You talk about like an airplane going off the runway with debris in the way, you don't have all this baggage that's in the way of having that relationship. But you're able to just let it go and there's gonna be obstacles but you deal with it and you don't expect there's just, yeah, there's no issues all the time.

- Yeah, how great is it that Jesus puts forgiveness at the starting line of our relationship with him not the finish line.

- Yeah, absolutely, we can never earn-

- If he was like, "Okay, if you live a good life, you do everything I say, if you suffer enough, then at the end, I'll take you."

- Yeah, that's religion. I mean, you just, you know, offended everyone and said that that doesn't

work, so.

- It doesn't.

- I agree.

- So how does Satan and the demonic realm use unforgiveness, bitterness a hurt that's unhealed?

- Yeah, we were talking about this in Hebrews 12:5. I think you can explain it.

- Is it 12:15?

- 12:15, yeah, yeah. What does it say there dad? We were talking about this earlier today.

- So see to it that no one misses out on the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up and defiles many, that bitterness has roots just like weeds do. And you can chop the weeds but if you don't pull the roots, eventually they're only gonna come back bigger and stronger. This is where you feel like I dealt with it. Like, unless you pulled the root and forgiveness is the shovel that really digs up the root of bitterness. It says, and see to it that no one becomes immoral, sexually immoral or unholy. There's people who get bitter. They get opened up to all kinds of demonic sin, all kinds of unholy behavior and all kinds of sexual temptation. How does Satan work through bitterness, unforgiveness, unhealed hurt?

- Yeah, it starts with your individual choices, but then, I mean, you talk about the father when you talk about generational curses it can just kinda get into a family where it just gets further and further from God and throughout the course of your life when you are living in that, and you're not living in forgiveness, you're living in bitterness. You can't get closer to God. There is a division there. There is a separation there. And you just kinda start to drift in ways that maybe don't even make sense or become demonic because you're giving yourself up to that because we know that Satan never forgives anybody and he's not forgiving. He's completely rebellious and not okay with God. There's no like reconciliation of a relationship there. And so if you're living in that in what Satan's experiencing essentially you can't be close to God, it's impossible.

- So the culture of how is where, it's a culture of unforgiveness.

- Yeah.

- And the culture of heaven is a culture of forgiveness.

- Yeah.

- That everybody in heaven got there 'cause they were forgiven and everybody in hell is there

because they're unforgiven.

- Yeah.

- And so if you wanna pray, thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, may be the shortest way to experience that is to forgive.

- Yeah.

- 'cause when you forgive you're inviting the culture of heaven into your marriage, your life, your relationship, your family.

- Yeah, that's only through God that that can happen. We don't have that power on our own. Yeah, that's true.

- So we may edit this out so you can be totally honest. Oftentimes pastors kids are the most bitter.

- Yeah.

- They see things said and done. They sometimes know the truth which is sometimes different than the narrative. And a lot of pastors kids they're bitter against God, the church or their parents. You've been through a lot.

- Yeah.

- Why are you not bitter? And how is forgiveness changed the course of your whole life?

- Yeah, I think it's a matter of forgiveness and it's a matter of repentance where you and mom helped me separate the fact that there's sinners in the church. It's, that's how it is. Everybody sins, everybody does things that are wrong and the church is never gonna be perfect. Jesus is perfect, we're all trying to make it towards that.

- Dad is never gonna be perfect.

- Nope, that's true. And, but the important thing is that you and mom recognized that there were things in your parenting that weren't perfect and we weren't perfect kids. And you were able to tell us like that was wrong. I'm sorry I did that. I'm sorry I parented you in that way. I'm sorry that I said that to you. And I was able to not just look at you on stage and think, oh, he's saying all these things but then have a totally different dad at home. You guys were consistent. And that was really, really important for me to see. I knew a lot of pastors kids that they felt like their parents weren't living out the gospel.

- So that would be more of the hypocrite.

- Super hypocritical. And that's really hard to reconcile when you think that something is right but you're seeing something totally different. And how do you even figure out how to live a Christian life if your parents and your spiritual mentors aren't even doing that? And it's not to say that they have to be perfect and they can't be. But if they're able to recognize that Jesus will forgive them, they're allowed to fail as parents, that they're allowed to fail and all the areas of their life. And they're able to give that to God and surrender that and be humble. It teaches the kids the same thing that they're allowed to do that, that God loves them no matter what and wants them, him to, them to walk with him. But he doesn't have these expectations that are just crazy and, you know, unnecessary and unrealistic for them.

- If you wouldn't have practiced forgiveness we've been through a lot. You've been through a lot, for women your age you've been through a lot. If you didn't practice forgiveness, who or what do you think you would be today?

- Oh boy. I don't think my husband would be very happy with me. I don't think we'd be married. No, I tend to just get really like religious and judgmental. Like you talk about the religious people. And that's always when I feel convicted like the rebellion thing, not so much for me but just the religious of like judging everyone. But it's super condemning at the same time, because once you are judging everyone else, but you're realizing that you're not matching up to that standard either, it's kind of like, what are you supposed to do? You just feel wretched and terrible all the time. And so I think I'd be pretty self-deprecating and pretty just hard on myself and for no reason. I mean, God wouldn't put that on me, but it'd be really hard to have joy and peace and hope and all those things, I think I'd just be pretty depressed. I don't know.

- I sure love you.

- I love you too.

- Thank you for the honor of being your dad.

- Thanks for being my dad.

- I love being your dad, it's been a great joy.

- Thank you.

- Yeah.

- I'm gonna cry so you could pray then we'll sing, so, you know.

- Dear Lord, I thank you that we don't have to be religious and we don't have to be rebellious,

Lord. That you love us no matter what but we are supposed to take you seriously. And sometimes ourselves not so seriously, Lord. I thank you that, that you've given us just the ability to pray to you. Lord as father. And I pray that if anything has been opened up today people listening to this sermon, Lord of just ways that they can grow in their prayer life that they would walk that out this week, Lord that they would grow in their relation to you and in community with those around them. I thank you for this church and for your word and thank you that the word can get preached every single Sunday and people are growing and learning and loving you together, amen.

- Amen, love you.