

# John 17:9

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[ 0 : 00 ]     There is a danger in these days that people will so far separate God the Father from God the Son that they will begin to choose between them. There are those who choose God the Father and they say in self-righteousness, I will take my chance with God, I've lived a good life, I've attended a church, I've learned my catechism, I know my doctrine.

Friends, remember, living doctrine is the presence of Christ in your heart. It's not propositions on a page, it's the presence of Christ in your life as your Saviour.

This is what you need. Not the words on the page, but the word in your heart. And Christ says himself that you cannot go to the Father and avoid Jesus Christ.

He says, the Father himself judgeth no man but has delivered all judgment over to the Son. You can only go to the Father through the Son. Jesus says, no man cometh unto the Father but by me.

You must come to God in the way that he has given through peace for your sin, through the blood of the cross of our Saviour Jesus Christ. You cannot choose the Father and go around Jesus.

[ 1 : 18 ]     Jesus stands firmly in the way and says, I and the Father are one. Come to me, O ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Come to Christ. But neither can you come to Christ separated from the Father and say, Jesus won't let me be lost, even though I have not made peace with him in his church.

Even though I have never made my public profession of faith, Jesus won't let me be lost. Friends, Christ died for your sins, according to the scripture, because your sins were heinous in God's sight, and because your life separated from the church was a public statement of unbelief, and a friendship with the world that is at war with God.

Will you not rather make peace with your God, through Jesus Christ, by showing publicly that you belong to that one hope, that your eyes are no longer down in this world, that you're living for the next world, your eyes are fixed on Jesus, you hunger for the reality beyond this world?

[ 2 : 46 ]     How will anyone know unless you take your stand with the people of God, not just in the words, but in the word himself?

Finally, the third thing we learn is that he is the sovereign God. Church of God. And here I'm addressing the church. Fear to despise the sovereignty of Christ your Lord.

You represent him in this world as true. You proclaim the gospel, his shepherds call. You teach true doctrine from the confession and the catechism, the Savior God.

But ten men are not seeking every Christian in this church tonight. And we have to ask why. Could it be that we also have in a measure failed to fear before our God as our sovereign?

We have many denominations in Scotland. That confuses people. It dissipates the authority of Christ Kirk when his people are not united.

[ 3 : 55 ] And Christ said quite clearly what the key was to impressing the world that his sovereignty over us is real. He said it in that very same book, the Gospel of John.

He said this, Sanctify them by the truth. Your word is truth. Well, we all agree with that. But then he went on to say this, My prayer is not for them alone.

I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message that all of them may be one Father. Just as you are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

I have given them the glory that you gave me. That they may be one as we are one. I in them. And you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

At the end of the day, there is no excuse for being disunited. Whichever way we look at it, it is the result of sin. At the end of the day, we have to offer to God the judge and the presence of God the reasons for the differences between our order of living and worship and his.

[ 5 : 16 ] Our very reason for existing as an organization has to be tested at the bar of heaven with the only valid testimony being that of God's word. That is our responsibility as the church of God.

Now, others who call themselves the church do not feel this responsibility. There are those who reject such clear responsibility but produce legends and lies along with the truth and mix them in, secure in their own authority which is man-made tradition.

And then there is the liberal church. It rejects such clear responsibility and is engaged on a ceaseless search after new ideas and newer convolutions of the truth which are not the truth but mere lies and self-deceptions.

But the Kirk of God in Scotland that John Knox knew born in revival has no such means of escape from God's judgment.

It seeks the presence of God and his judgment through his word which John called the mouth of God at all times. That's the meaning of the Reformation. The true Christian who preaches Christ as shepherd and Christ as Savior crucified and risen can neither justify his actions by tradition nor by lies of men's choosing.

[ 6 : 35 ] He does not have the freedom of the flesh to disobey God and when judgment comes it begins he knows at the house of God according to the unchanging word of God.

The true Kirk must justify or condemn its practice its principles and indeed its courts and organization by a faithful adhering to the spirit and the word of God.

Its leaders have no place to hide from the truth nor excuse to shed the blood of their brothers. The true Kirk of God must seek its place on this earth as given by its God its sovereign God and no other.

It receives its foundation from above its destination comes from above its justification comes from above or not as the case may be. Friends what says the word of God to the divisions in the Evangelical Church of Scotland the fragmentary Kirk of God that was born in revival in the Reformation.

What says our king to his armies? Do we believe in and so do we practice without fear or favor in this world the presence of God not only as shepherd and as savior but as sovereign?

[ 7 : 56 ] And do we fear God enough earnestly to seek speedy unity in Christ's cause? When in the fear of God we drop all pretense and unite publicly as the reconstituted Kirk of God the call of the shepherd the sacrifice of the savior and most of all the awesome sovereignty in the courts of his church of Christ the sovereign judge of men will be powerful in our day and generation.

The seeking hearts that presently wander through the alternatives of this world will turn to the authoritative presence of Christ in his pre-constituted church.

They will seek the blessing of God in his true Kirk which rises above all such unbiblical notions as self-seeking and division and the lies and traditions of men.

And in that day when the reality of our unity is declared before the world and before the principalities and powers Scotland will be convulsed by a new revival of faith because the presence of God will be known amongst his people and confidence in the living word of God will replace the present vacillation and uncertainty.

Scotland will believe in a sovereign God when it sees that we do. in that day the ten will seek the one because the presence of God is unmistakable and when he's in his church people come and people want to be there because they're drawn in their hearts by his real presence.

[ 9 : 50 ] They'll come out of a dying and an unviable society. We can see that. How do societies fall into pieces? They'll come when they see the reality of Christ among us and they'll say let us go with you for we have heard that God is with you.

But if we will not unite the Kirk of God we give the future to Rome or to Islam in this nation that was once called the people of the book and the blame for that will not lie with Rome nor with Islam nor with the society nor with the Lord but with the Kirk that was disobedient and preferred the spirit of the age of individualism and of man each man doing what was right in his own eyes to the call of God the shepherd God the savior and God the sovereign without our obedience there will be no public awareness in Scotland that there is a Kirk of God and the presence of God within we'll turn to the chapter that we read in the gospel according to John chapter 17 and we'll read it verse 9

John 17 and verse 9 I pray for them I'm going to read also two verses from the passage we read together in Exodus that's Exodus 28 and it's talking about how the names of the children of Israel were attached to the garments of the high priest and in verse 12 it says Aaron is to bear the names on his shoulders as a memorial before the Lord and Exodus 28 and 29 says when Aaron enters the holy place he will bear the names of the sons of Israel over his heart on the breastpiece of decision as a continuing memorial before the

Lord so here in John 17 verse 9 Jesus says I pray for them he was carrying them on his heart he was carrying them on his shoulders they were in a place that was warm with his love and they were in a place that was secure with his strength I want to ask you at the beginning of this new year if that's the place that you are in and I want to ask you if that's the place that you want to be in as time passes as our lives go by we form different priorities we form different aims and ambitions in our hearts perhaps we want to have a bigger house a better car a better job is this the supreme ambition is this the supreme aim is this the highest priority in your heart and life that you would be in that place to be near to the heart of Jesus

Christ and in that place carried by the power of Jesus Christ kept by the power of God through faith to salvation ready to be revealed in the last time we think about the passage of time we think about how we need a secure place and that's the place that I'm pointing you to this morning on the first day of 1995 to be near the heart of Jesus to be carried on his shoulders to be in this place I pray for them so that's one thing that I want to say this morning that we want to be in that place in that secret place of the most high under the shadow of the almighty the other thing I want to say this morning is that as Jesus says here

[ 14 : 31 ] I pray for them and as Jesus set the example in his own life of prayer that he was praying when he came out of Jordan so that the heavens were open and the presence of God was felt and seen by the banks of Jordan as Jesus prayed for the night before he chose his twelve disciples as Jesus prayed after he had fed the five thousand and sent away his disciples and they had a stormy passage to the other side of the sea of Galilee as Jesus prayed there as Jesus prayed when he was on the mountain which became the mount of transfiguration in answer to his prayers and he had the company of Moses and Elijah who understood about the necessity for his impending death Jesus got that in answer to prayer as Jesus then sets as an example here when he says I pray for them so

I want us to take on board this the need for us to reassess the priority that prayer should have in our lives hallesby says in his classic book on prayer it is therefore necessary for the spirit of god to burn into our hearts this mystery that the most important work we have to do is that which must be done on our knees alone with god away from the bustle of the world and the plaudits of men Jesus says I pray for them see the air is darkening around Jerusalem with plots for the destruction of the church but Jesus doesn't set in motion some physical plan for the protection of his disciples he says

I pray for them and we ought to learn again in 1995 how absolutely central how absolutely essential for the life and prosperity of the church prayer is well why does Jesus pray for his disciples at this time why does he particularly say I pray for them at this time well one thing was that Satan wanted to destroy these disciples for whom Jesus was praying and Luke says in chapter 22 that Jesus told Peter Satan has desired to have you that he may sift you his feet something that's tossed up in the wind some light insubstantial thing blown away by a breeze Satan has desired to toss you up like some insubstantial thing

Simon that you would be blown away and that may be true of you also as an individual I know that Satan cannot tell the future but he can have a more precise premonition or perception of how things are going perhaps than you have in some areas he may have a sense a feeling in his bones a creepy feeling up his skin that God is going to do something in your heart this year that God is going to make use of you in some solid and substantial way in 1995 you may not know it but he may have a creepy bad feeling about it that makes him sick and he may desire to toss you up like Simon he may desire that you would be exposed to some contrary wind to blow you away from a place where you could have served

God for the coming of his kingdom in the world and these people for whom Jesus is praying here Satan also wanted to destroy them as a body not just as individuals but as a group and therefore he goes on in this prayer to pray for the unity of this group of disciples that they may be one he has a burden on his heart he feels it on his heart this issue of the unity of his church and again we do not know but Satan may wish to divide us from one another Satan may have his own ideas and his own plans as to how he is going to achieve that we may not know but he may be hatching these plans and we may need in a special way the intercessory prayer of Jesus Christ over us

[ 20 : 00 ] I pray for them because Satan may have a desire to destroy us as individuals or to destroy us as a group of believers now the other reason why Jesus especially prays for them is this that the very ones whom Satan wanted to destroy as individuals and as a group were the very ones whom Jesus purposed to have positions of responsibility in the church after Jesus was gone after his tremendous tornado swept through Jerusalem wrecking things after that in the calm after the storm in the work of creating a new thing in the earth Jesus wanted these very ones to be active and to be accepting responsibility whose destruction

Satan longs for and it may be that there are people in the church whom Satan particularly wants to destroy and these are the very ones whom God has a purpose to use when you think after the storm and the din of this hurricane that swept through Jerusalem when you think of Peter standing up on the day of Pentecost and in the power of God's spirit preaching and he has the taste of God's mercy on his own tongue from his own restoration from forgiveness received in his own soul and from this personal fresh appreciation of the glories of God's grace he preaches the gospel to the people in Jerusalem what a wonderful thing that you see on the day of Pentecost the fulfillment of these four words I pray for them behind the figure of

Peter standing up on the day of Pentecost and preaching with power the gospel of Jesus Christ I see these words behind him I pray for them and specifically Peter I have prayed for you so let's think now what does Jesus pray for then why does he pray for them he prays for them because Satan wants to destroy them individually and as a group and because the very ones whom Satan wants to destroy are the very ones whom God has a purpose to use for the coming of his kingdom in the world so what does Jesus pray for for them he says I pray for them he's carrying them in his heart he's carrying them on his shoulder I pray for them what does he pray for for them when he prays that they'll be protected it says that in verse 11 holy father protect them by the power of your name and you may feel the power of evil roaring in your heart and you may see the power of evil roaring even in the church and yet what a wonderful thing that Jesus has committed the protection of his church into the hands of a higher power

Jesus has done it Jesus has gone before all the hassles which upset us and he has beforehand committed us into the safekeeping of his father he prays for protection he's prayed for your protection Jesus also prays for progress because if somebody is going to be used for the coming of God's kingdom in the world it's not enough that he is simply preserved from being destroyed it's not enough that he is simply protected from being swept away or blown away he has to make progress in godly things and Jesus prays specifically for progress he prays for progress in love that's verse 26 the last verse of this john 17 he's prayed for them and he says i have made you known to them and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that i myself may be in them this is part of Jesus burden that if Simon Peter has been excited by the love of God that he may be more filled yet with the love of God and this is Jesus prayer then for you but if in 1994 you had an exciting new personal view of the love of God towards you that in 1995 you would make progress in that that you wouldn't be looking back and saying June 4 July 26 August 19 marvelous a wee touch of heaven and earth but that you'd be looking forward to 1995 and that you'd be making progress in this and that the Holy Spirit would shed abroad the love of God in your heart in an even deeper way do you know what can best keep you from sin the love of God in your heart do you know what can best keep you from being seduced by Satan the love of God in your heart do you know what can best keep you from trading in a substitute for the joys of the gospel the love of God in your heart Jesus also prays that they would make progress in joy in verse 13 he speaks about this i'm coming to you now but i say these things and while i'm still in the world so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them again the same thing maybe you had a happy time at moments in 1994 and you're tending to look back and thinking as you look forward it'll not be as nice as that it'll not be as joyful it'll not be as happy as that but Jesus is specifically praying for you in this area that 1995 would have more of the joy of God's salvation than 1994 had Jesus prays for you that you would make progress in the joy of the gospel poor old David taken up with the joy of sin the substitute for the joy of the gospel and yet the prayers so to speak although Jesus hasn't yet come into the world Jesus are around David until he comes to this point of repentance and he says restore to me the joy

of your salvation he's making progress after slipping back he's now making progress and praying for progress himself in the joy of the gospel and for that Jesus prays for you third thing that Jesus prays for although it's not in this chapter that I'm working from is peace it's the last verse of the previous chapter he says I have told you these things that in me you may have peace in the world you will have trouble but take heart I have overcome the world Jesus says also in 14 verse 27 peace I leave with you my peace I give to you I do not give as the world gives do not let your hearts be troubled do not be afraid so this is in the thoughts of Jesus at this time when he prays for his people this is another area where he wants them to make progress that they would make progress in gospel peace is this something that you pray about is this something that you long for is this something that you put yourself in the way of in your lifestyle in the time that you give to God in the time that you give to personal prayer in the time that you give to reading his word in the place that you give to his rule for your life are you putting yourself in the way of more peace

[ 29 : 08 ] Jesus is praying that his church would make progress in love and in joy and in peace third thing that Jesus is praying about here is that his church would experience his presence that's in this world verse 21 may they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me he's praying that his disciples whatever the storm will blow away that the disciples will be conscious that the storm did not blow their savior away but that God in the midst of them doth dwell nothing shall them remove the Lord to them a helper will in that right early prove Jesus prays for that I don't know what changes you've passed through

I don't know what traumas you've experienced I don't know what traumas you may be frightened of that lie around the corner just down the road from you from where you are right now but Jesus has gone before these things praying that whatever experiences you have or whatever changes you experience whatever traumas you pass through in God's providence that you will not lose a sense of God's presence with you in the midst of these trying things he's also praying that they will experience his presence all the way to heaven see if you're praying for God's presence in this world and if this becomes the controlling thing the absolute priority that it did for Moses if your presence doesn't go with us don't carry us up if you long for the presence of God if you thirst after the presence of God because in the presence of God you make progress in love and joy and in peace if you long for the presence of God at the bottom of that longing is a longing for heaven did you ever think of that you're praying yourself out of this world did you know that because the time will come when God will say well cannot give him the answer to that prayer as I would like and I'll have to take him up here to heaven and kit him out and fit him out to a greater capacity to experience my presence in answer to his prayer so he says in verse 24

Father I will or I want those you have given me to be with me where I am and to see my glory that they would experience his presence in this immediate face to face way in this immediate direct way standing in his presence the presence of Christ filling heaven supposing 1995 had death for us may we get grace to see it in this positive way that it's death in answer to the prayers of Jesus Christ I pray for them I pray that they may experience my presence in Dr. Kidd's book sorry the book about Dr. Kidd by James Starr there's a reference to another minister in Aberdeen who was minister of a church in Belmont Street his name was James Templeton and he says that believers are reluctant sometimes to look in this positive way in death and he says it's like myself he said when I had to leave the old house and

I wasn't on for leaving it and the furniture was out but I was pacing up and down in the room for example where my children were born in the room where I was praying preparing for preaching on Sunday I couldn't tear myself away and then Betty the maid came in and she said come a war sir come a war the time's up and the other house is a far better in so he was able to tear himself away and may we get grace to view death in this positive light we wouldn't be looking back to corners of this world where we experience the presence of God but we'll be able to look forward to heaven where we will experience the presence of God in an incomparably fuller way the time's up and the other house is a far better aim this is the house that the father is building so to speak five miles up the valley this is not a toy house this here is the toy house but heaven is the real house that's the house filled with the presence of God is that the house to which you're headed so he's praying that they'll be protected he's praying that they'll make progress in love and peace and joy and he's praying that they'll experience his presence

I want just to come on to some points by way of application of this as we begin this this new year and you think of these simple words here from Jesus intercessory prayer I pray for them as you think of these this cloud if you like using old testament symbolism this cloud that moves along the road ahead of you as you set out on 1995 I pray for them I want to ask you first of all are you in Christ are you in that safe place Paul says in 2nd 20 12 I knew a man in Christ are you a man in Christ are you a woman in Christ are you a boy in Christ are you a girl in Christ are you on his heart are you carried on his shoulder well is there this longing in your heart and is there this leaning in your heart of total dependence on Jesus

[ 36 : 26 ] Christ his person his work you see you start this new year you begin to think oh I must put things together better in my religious life I must tidy up things I must improve things but that shouldn't really be the first thought the first thought should be this not who you are nor what you do but who Jesus is and what he does and are you launching out at the beginning of this year leaning upon who Jesus is and leaning on what he has done leaning completely on the grace of God that's revealed to you through Jesus Christ this one who says I pray for them have you given up all your concerns not only yourself but your concerns into the hands of Jesus

Christ at the dawn of this new year losers said I've often tried to keep things in my own hands and I lost them all but I never lost anything that I committed into the hands of Jesus Christ so I'm asking you again then at the beginning of this year have you yielded up all your concerns all your cares into the hands of Jesus Christ you know you can't attend to them yourself anyway you know that you know that Jesus can't attend to them you know that have you yielded up all your cares then at the beginning of this year into the hands of the only one who can't care for them you know when you do that the peace of God a door will open in heaven the peace of God will flow out to where you are peace of God fill your heart through

Jesus Christ another thing as we apply this we should be more concerned that God will be glorified by whatever happens in this new year than we should be taken up with the details of what will happen either this or that isn't it wonderful that Jesus is facing the darkness of death that Jesus is facing the cross but he's more concerned with the glory of God than with his own comfort heart that's what's the thread that's running through it he doesn't use the words here he used them earlier in chapter 12 but father glorify thy name that's what's through this and as we begin this new year is this our supreme desire father glorify your name another thing another thing we'll be more likely to be a means of glorifying

God if we enjoy him we'll be more likely to be a channel through which the purposes of God are fulfilled in the world if we enjoy God and Jesus is praying for that here the fruit of the spirit to be in the hearts and in the lives of the disciples the love the joy the peace and Paul writes afterwards in Galatians 5 the fruit of the spirit is love joy peace and who are the people who are likely to be the means of glorifying God in the world in 1995 the people who are most enjoying God see Jesus prays that in verse 1 father the time has come glorify your son that your son may glorify you he's asking that he'll be honored by heaven being strengthened and having the comforting sense of

God's abiding presence so that he will dedicate himself through his death to the further glorifying of God's name in the world and we ought to pray lord help me to make progress in the fruit of the spirit this year the love the joy the peace so that I'll be more disposed to be a means through which your glory will be seen in this needy world one one last thing Jesus has said to us at the beginning of this new year I pray for them I was thinking this well I was reading just this past week about Hudson Taylor's conversion which I'm sure you may be familiar with that he was just killing time a Saturday afternoon and he picked up a tract and he came across this phrase the finished work of Christ and he thought why does he express it in these terms and so the thought came of Jesus words on the cross that is finished and it penetrated his soul that the work of

[ 42 : 17 ] Jesus on the cross was finished and all that he was called to do was to believe in Jesus and to receive this finished salvation that's one thing what I want you to think about is his mother was praying for hours that very Saturday afternoon for him I want you to think about this also his sister was praying a month before she entered it in her diary she would pray every day until her brother Hudson was converted the reality of prayer and I want you to take this away from our service this morning when we meet one another supposing we never met one another until a year from now I hope we do but I mean suppose we never did until a year just now would we greet one another then and would we be able to say about one another as Jesus was able to say to Simon

I have prayed for you let's pray oh Lord we give thanks for your word we give thanks for the ministry of your holy spirit we are so unworthy of your word we are so unworthy of your spirit we give thanks Lord that everything in the standing and in the destiny of your church depends not on who we are nor what we do but on who Jesus is and what he has gloriously done Lord we pray for your presence now as we go from the service we pray for your presence this evening as your gospel is preached again we pray for Bruce we pray for your presence with him and your heavenly anointing on him and for your blessing on us at the beginning of this year as we launch out on the ocean of your grace my grace is sufficient for you my strength is made perfect in weakness

Lord take care of us Lord protect us Lord grant that we make progress in grace in this coming year for Jesus sake Amen