

Order of Worship for March 3rd, Communion, title, “The Lord’s Prayer: Kept,” text, John 17:11-19

Opening Song
Welcome:

Invocation: Lamentations 3:21-33

Message Theme: We are kept for God by His grace

Worship Theme: Thanksgiving for God’s protection and provision and renewing grace

Sunday Evening in the Word
Tonight we begin a study of 1 and 2 Peter with 1 Peter 1:1-12
All are encouraged to come.
5:30 pm to 7:00 pm in the Church Library

Opening Song:

“10,000 Reasons”

Overhead

Welcome

Invocation:

Lamentations 3:21-33

Special Music: “I Lift My Hands” by Tara Wixom

Preparing the Heart in Song:

“Everlasting God”

Overhead

“All Creatures of Our God and King” Song # 63

Offering and Offertory

Message:

“The Lord’s Prayer: Kept”
John 17:11-19 Pastor John Bronson

The Lord’s Supper:

Coming to the Table

“The Lord’s Prayer” Song # 631

Invitation to the Supper and Prayers of
Confession and Consecration

Distribution of the Elements

Closing Song:

“Let the Peace of Christ Rule in Your Heart”

Song # 231

Parting Word of Grace and Invitation to Prayer

Sunday Evening in the Word:

5:30-7 pm in the Church Library, 1 Peter 1:1-12”

“The Prayer Closet”

March 3, 2012

“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.”
(Colossians 4:2a)

This week let us be united in praying that:

Joel and Virginia Cook, AWANA Missionaries for Northern California and Northern Nevada: the Lord will protect Joel over the many miles he drives; the Spirit will give him wisdom for counsel and encouragement for club commanders; the Lord will ensure the spiritual and financial support they need

President Obama: the Spirit will guide him into the truth and convict him regarding error; the Lord will open his heart to love the nation he serves and to place a premium on the spiritual and moral health of his family

The Congregation and the Elders: the Spirit will lead both to a common understanding of the Lord’s direction for the growth of the church as a community of faith serving the community

College Student / Young Adults: Seth Duenas (son of Rudy and Tracie): that the Holy Spirit lead him in his decision making

Military or Public Service Personnel: Tim Hammonds, Air Force (son of Tom and Cindy): currently deployed to United Arab Emirates for the next 4 months to work on drone airplanes, wife is home in college. Please pray for safety and for the Lord to make Himself evident in their lives.

Please pray for our homebound family members: Hilda Chapman , Carol Koehler, Gary & Ruth Lentz, Fred & Jean Pauly

(please call the office to request updates to this list)

I.

Please open your scriptures. I am going to be preaching through the next section of John 17, the prayer that Jesus lifted up to His Father on the night of His betrayal. Here is the passage; turn to John 17:6-19. Join with me in reading the Word. Again, this is [a] prayer and so we should be mindful of that. Jesus is addressing His Father regarding His disciples. They are very much the focus at this point.

“I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they maybe one, even as we are one. 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 except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.”

We are going to be taking communion, participating in the Lord’s Supper today. The degree to which the words which we have just heard actually pertain to us is a reflection of the degree to which we have come into the same place as Jesus’ men that night. In other words it has to do with how much we have become disciples, how much we have accepted from God through His Son Jesus all that He intends would be for His people. So as we listen to this we should be asking ourselves, “Oh [Lord], have I desired, to be Your disciple?” Please notice that is not the same things as saying “I desire to be saved.” [Or] “I desire to escape the consequences of my misbehavior.” Sure! Jesus is addressing those whom He has called out and He has said, “I am giving to you what the Father gave to me so that you can go into the world as I was sent by the Father into the world in order that you will now represent the Father.

When people come to faith in Christ, often and indeed virtually always they are relatively broken. They recognize themselves as those standing in need of grace. As we come into a more broad and detailed contact with the Word of God, or with other Christians – oftentimes people who have lived longer in the faith than we have – sometimes it is very hard for us to imagine that we could be counted amongst the company of those who were in the Upper Room. In other words, can it possibly be the case that ordinary people like us can be expected by God to act like those disciples [in the Upper Room]. The answer is, “Yes”. [As] the adult is potential in the child, in exactly the same way as the adult is potential in the child, so also the mature witness and fully equipped spiritual man is potential in every newly born believer. There is no such thing as first, second and third class believers. All there are are people who are more or less mature on the journey. So the issue that needs to settle in on us as we contemplate the word of God and as we contemplate the purposes of God is simply this: I have said it before, “Do I want to grow up? Do I want to be a fully mature Christian? Do I want to be one who effectively lives the life I have been called to live?” That is the question that really needs to set on us as we take up and listen to these words that Jesus directs to His disciples, those who have made that decision.

Jesus does not merely say that He has given the disciples from the Father. He says that, but that is not all. This is what He says, “I have manifested the Father’s name to you.” To manifest is to show by way of demonstration. Jesus is saying this: I have lived the character of God before you. I have lived in front of you the way God the Father would live if He could be a man. That was [a major part of God’s] intent in the incarnation.

Jesus has said this is His desire: “I am modeling for you [men] what it is you should be, how you should be in the world. The intention is that we would manifest the name of Jesus to the people whom the Father will give to us out of the world. We are in exactly a parallel situation to that of Jesus. That is what He keeps telling them.

It is important for us to recognize that we do not represent Jesus to others in the same way that Jesus represents the Father to us. There is a distinction. The reason for this is immediately clear if we remember who we are relative to Jesus and in contrast to Jesus relative to the Father. Jesus relative to the Father is the exact representation or imprint of His nature. Jesus is the radiance of the glory of God. I don’t think anybody in this room is going to stand up and say, “I think I am the radiance of the glory of Jesus!” I just don’t think anybody is going to do that! However, while that is true, it is also true that the qualities of Jesus Christ are to come through us, that though we do not in and of ourselves embody the whole of who Christ is, though Jesus embodied the whole of who God the Father is, nevertheless the presence of Christ in us, the presence of the Spirit in us, shines through us according to the various gifts and qualities that He has given us to exercise as we continue to be His faithful ones on the face of the earth. We are members of His body. Paul emphasized that the members of the body have different functions. We are not the radiance of the glory of Jesus. But by means of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the steady renewing of our minds with God’s truth, and the reformation of our character in the process of sanctification, we have the fragrance of Christ in the world and fulfill the will and purpose of God. Nini and I are privileged to have a friend of ours with us today. Some of you have met Linda Clyde before. During the welcoming time she turned to me and said, “There is such a . . .” I interrupted her, saying, “there is so much talk!” She was much more complimentary, “No, no,” she said, “there is such a sense of community here.” And that is true. There is a sense of community here because we are those who stand together in Christ, who know the reality of His forgiving love, and who desire to represent Him and to live a life that is pleasing in His sight. That draws us together. That is exactly what Jesus is talking about in His prayer. There is a common bond of faith that draws us together. We are a highly diverse group of people. Sometimes Nini and I talk about this. Did you ever do this? “I can’t believe that person is saved! Why would God save those people?” [Laughter!] But honestly, think about the people in this room. How many of them would you have come to know on your own and in your fleshly character to love and cherish as good friends? But here we are! We should say to ourselves, “That is remarkable!”

The common bond of faith is what Jesus refers or points to in chapter 17:6. I encourage you to look there: “*They have kept Your word.*” It is important to understand that when He says they have kept Your word, to keep is to remember and do. It is to believe and obey. That is what the word “keeping” means. So He says, “They have kept Your word” They are men who have sought to be obedient to what [God has] told them to do. It is faith in those words that binds us together. It is our trust, the common bond is our trust in the words which have communicated God’s truth to us, specifically the truth about how the world is, the way humanity is, salvation and all those things. The word written is, of course, the Bible. The word living is Jesus as the logos. The word written and inspired and written on our hearts and minds is the action of the Holy Spirit writing the truth of God in us. Here are some cross references and I recommend that you write these down and look them up at a later time. Hebrews 8:8-11 just talks about the work of the Holy Spirit in us. I John 2:26-27, [and then] I am going to read 2 Peter 1:3-4. “*His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. . .*” How many things do we need that we don’t already have? Listen to it again: “*His divine power has granted-past tense-all things that pertain to life and godliness. . .*”-How many things do we need? They are all there! That is essential for us to remember. They are there. They have been given. They are present. They are resident within you. They are resident through the Holy Spirit in your life. [Peter continues}, “. . .so that you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

We recognize, therefore, that Jesus does three things for us: First, Jesus manifests or gives an open demonstration of the character of God. He models godliness in front of us. We know this. Secondly, Jesus gives us instruction,

revealed truth which is for the transforming or the renewing of our minds. Thirdly, Jesus dies on the cross to satisfy the justice of God relative to our guilt and offense before Him. Those are three things that Jesus does for all of those who place their faith in Him. This opens our lives up to the active presence of the Holy Spirit because sin has now been removed as an offense against a Holy God. The Spirit, who is the Spirit of Jesus just as He is the Spirit of God, thereafter ensures that all that Jesus has revealed will be remembered.

Jesus specifies that He has manifested the Father’s name to a specific group, to those whom the Father has given Him. This has been given to some, notice, and not to all. This is in line with what Jesus has already said in 17:2. It has sometimes been said that the death of Jesus was sufficient for all, but efficient only for some, that the death of Jesus, its quality, its capacity to pay for the sins of humanity would pay for every sin by every living creature ever through all time. But it is applied to only some. In this way God remains sovereign in the salvation of souls. In the beginning of [John’s] Gospel the author wrote this in 3:17-21:

“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been carried out in God.”

What results, the consequence of this is the recognition that apart from the convicting work of the Spirit through the revealed word of God no one comes to faith in Christ. That is the judgment of the Word.

To that convicting work Jesus refers in John 17:7, a part of the prayer. Jesus says, *“Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you.”* Our tendency, I believe, is to think of conviction in negative terms: conviction for sin. But conviction, like confession – which we also tend to think of in negative terms as confession of sin – both conviction and confession in fact are profoundly positive. We confess our faith in Christ, don’t we? Furthermore, surely we have unshakeable convictions regarding what is true and good and right and just. What Jesus is saying is that it is the Spirit who brings these confessions and convictions to life in our hearts, and that He does this through the Word of God. How does He do that? Paul says in Romans 10:17, *“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”* Paul’s words reflect Jesus’ statement in John 17:6-8, *“They have kept your word and now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.”* This kind of belief is essential; it is what the Reformers called in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, “saving faith.” It is exemplified in the statement Paul wrote to the Thessalonians in chapter two verse thirteen of the first chapter: *“We also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as what it really is, the Word of God.”* I always love it when I make some statement that riles somebody, and then they come and they look at me and they get upset with me and they wonder why I said that. And I say, “I didn’t; God did. Take your argument to God, do not argue with me. I don’t like it any more than you do.”

You sense a shift at verse 9. Jesus is praying, He says, for His men. In a way that surely troubles us He says, “I do not pray for the world.” Jesus died for the world: that is what the scriptures say. Jesus died so that whoever believes in Him would not perish. Let me ask you a question. Answer me: if somebody believes in Jesus as Lord and Savior and the sacrifice for their sins will they be saved? Yes! So if somebody comes to you and they say, “I don’t thing I am amongst the chosen!” you should say, “Well, do you believe in Jesus?” [And then they say], “I want to!” [then you should say], “Stop worrying about it. Whoever believes will be saved!” Don’t ever take that away from anyone. Jesus died for the world so that whoever believes in Him will not perish.

But at this point Jesus says, I am not praying for the world. I am not interceding, He says, for the whole world as I do for My disciples. He prays for those whom the Father has given Him. He prays for those from the Father in a way that is distinct from all the rest. This is the single most crucial distinction there is for anyone. The present ministry of Jesus Christ is one of intercession. We are told in Hebrews 7:25 and 9:24 that Jesus ever lives to make intercession. Then there is a tag: “for the saints”. Did I add that tag? I did not add that tag. That is added on by the Holy Spirit. Are you a saint? He is praying for you. Are not a saint? You had better change your status as fast as you can.

Jesus stands in the heavenly temple in the presence of the heavenly Father and there He speaks on our behalf. What Jesus says here in this chapter is that the prayer ministry is selective. It is not for all people indiscriminately. We know that God is universally kind. In Acts 14:16 we read, *“In past generations God allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.”* Whom has God not blessed? There is nobody whom God has not blessed. We know that God is longsuffering in His tenderhearted mercies and compassion. But God is not indiscriminate in His grace.

I spoke not too long ago with a person who was in the hospital, very ill. As we spoke the person said to me, “I think probably this is God trying to get my attention.” The person had been living a worldly life in open rebellion against God. I said, “Yeah, you’re right this is probably God trying to get your attention. And the harder the heart, the more vigorous the hit in order that the heart would be penetrated.” So the person was weeping tears. I know this person. Tears do not save us. Tears do not wash away our sins. The blood of Jesus washes away our sins. Those tears had been shed before and I had seen them. That person has walked in and out of the light of God’s presence again and again. Do I know where they are today? No. Are they saved? That is up to God. What is my response? Turn to the Word and pray for them. Ask God for mercy. Remind them of the way of grace. Do it again, do it again, and do it again. As far as we are concerned the blood of Christ is only applied by the Spirit when we submit by faith to the truth of God’s word and turn from our wicked ways. It does no good to separate that package, breaking it into pieces. “Can I confess Jesus as my Lord and Savior and can I clean up my act later on? After all, I am not saved by works, I am saved by faith.” If you think you can stand in the presence of a holy God Who sacrificed His Son on the cross and say, “I’d like to make a few fine distinctions in the process. I want to reserve the right to fool around for a little longer, but I want to be saved right now.” Well, all I can say is, have fun talking to God, for God is no fool. He looks directly upon the heart. He knows whether or not you are responding to the drawing power of the Holy Spirit leading you away from sin and to godliness. If you think you can have faith in God and have no desire for godliness, you do not read the Bible that I read. If there is no repentance, if there is no change of life, there was no faith, and grace has not come to rest in that darkened soul.

Jesus says that He is glorified in His disciples. Just as Jesus glorifies the Father by manifesting or making known, giving a demonstration of the Father’s nature or character, His name, so the ones for whom Jesus is praying are those who make Jesus’ character or name known. It is important that they do not simply give out information. To glorify the Father Jesus had to be as the Father is. Otherwise you could not possibly see or sense the presence of God the Father. To glorify Jesus the disciples had to be as Jesus was, they had to live the character of Christ in the world.

The tenth verse speaks of Jesus’ view or understanding of who His disciples are as His witnesses. Already they have in essential ways been incorporated, He says, into the divine Trinity. Notice what He says, *“All mine are yours, Father, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.”* Already, if you ponder those words, his disciples stand in relationship to Jesus as Jesus stood to the Father. That is precisely what He is saying. The need for this will come clear in the fourteenth verse. Jesus says, “I have given them your word and the world thinks they’re best!” Oh wait, I made a mistake! I must have skipped a verse. [This is what He actually says,] *“I have given them your word, and the*

world has hated them. . .” Don’t we sometimes think to ourselves, “Oh, if I could really be Christ-like and full of kindness and goodness and [be] compassionate and merciful, then everybody would love me! I would be so kind and good and gentle, I would be a great person.” What Jesus says is that the more you are like Jesus the more they will hate you.

That poses a very significant question to us, because all of us know people who do not know God but who do know us. [According to what Jesus has said, that means they must hate us.] Now the question is, what does it mean to hate? [Speaker quietly turned his back on the congregation.] That’s all. To ignore, turn away, silence, prefer other things; whenever you start to talk about Christ change the subject. Invite you to things that have nothing to do with God. Ah!

As Jesus returns to the Father in the heavenlies His disciples remain in the world. Satan is a defeated enemy, but he still exercises frightening power and we are vulnerable to that power. There is great significance to Jesus’ petition in verse 15. Notice it. *“I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.”* Beloved, we are no match for Satan. Our defense against Satan is to concentrate on the truth, not to confront the enemy of our souls. Even without Satan’s active hostility the world is alienated from, suspicious of and hostile to those who draw their truth and inner strength from a different source of strength and authority than that on which the world relies. What does Satan try to do to us in the meantime? Satan seeks to make us cling to small comforts, and to be amused with the fleeting distractions of the world. Satan knows that we are weak and we are inconsistent in our grasp of spiritual truths and are vulnerable to the world’s voices that speak to our desires. Here is the question: what is the application?

There are a couple of things I want to set in front of you: I am responsible for these. I want you to think about this. How many of us have been drawn away, turned away from God this past week? Not that we did deliberately evil things, but we” hated” Him. What does it mean to hate? It is to ignore. We just ignored Him. I want us to ponder that. I have asked the elders of this church. Something troubles me. This church is an outstanding body of people. I am not making a boast, it is a simple fact. The giftedness of this congregation is remarkable. And the depth of dedication of many people in this congregation is outstanding. Why [then] do we not grow? There is one answer that could be true, and that is that we have not been faithful and consistent in dealing with sin in our own lives. As we prepare to come to the Table I want you to remember something. God’s mercies are new every single morning. If you’re walking around under a burden of guilt, if you are avoiding God because you feel like you are not worthy to be in His presence, there are two things you need to know: you are not worthy to be in His presence, but his blood through Jesus Christ, His mercy through the cross: they are there for you and for me to take them up and say, “O, Father, set me free, make me new, I would be whole, and Yours!”

Let’s pray about it: gracious Father as we call upon You from our hearts, knowing the greatness of Your salvation and confessing our personal reluctance in many cases to make that great salvation our own, we know our Father that in this town around us there are hundreds and thousands of people who are lost, who know nothing of Your grace and truth, they are in deep trouble. By Your grace we have received the only answer to their sorrow and difficulty. Grant, our Father, a refreshing and renewing of our minds as Your servants. For we desire to be pleasing in Your sight, and we desire to be filled with Your Holy Spirit, and we desire that the light of Your truth would penetrate to every darkened corner of our community and save the souls of the lost. We pray it, our Father, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Questions for Understanding and Application:

1. Do you assume you will (can or should) become a spiritually mature believer and effective witness for Christ? If not, why not? What seems to keep you from becoming so?
2. Have you known some people who seem especially to have the fragrance of Christ about them? What to you is the dominant element in that “fragrance”?
3. What is the difference between saying our common bond is faith in Jesus and saying it is our trust in the words which have communicated God’s truth to us? How does this relate to I John 2:26-27 or Hebrews 8:8-11 or 2 Peter 1:3-4 or Ephesians 4:17?
4. Are you more inclined to see conviction and confession as positive or negative? What are your positive convictions and confessions?
5. Does it shock or trouble you that Jesus does not pray for the world? How aware or conscious are you of Jesus’ present ministry of prayer? (Hebrews 7:25 and 9:24)
6. Why is personal sincerity not an adequate measure of spiritual reality?
7. Jesus said that He is glorified in His disciples. How do you see your life glorifying Jesus?
8. Have you experienced hatred from the world as a result of your faith in Jesus? How has that hatred been expressed
9. Are there “small comforts” and “fleeting distractions” that interfere with your spiritual focus, growth, and service for others?
10. Have you found prayer and faith to be effective shields against the dangers and deceptions of the world?