

John 17:11b-19

“I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name--the name you gave me--so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Dear members of God's family.

Back in 1940 a radio show debuted on NBC radio that quickly became a favorite. It was called, “Truth or Consequences.” It later became the first game show to air on TV in as it made its debut in 1950. The premise to the show was very simple. The contestants were asked a question, which usually was sort of off the wall and the contestants had to answer it correctly. The problem was that the correct answer was almost impossible and most often got it wrong. If you answered it incorrectly you didn't tell the truth and you had to face the consequences which usually consisted of some crazy stunt that put the contestants in a funny predicament. If you told the truth you would be spared the embarrassment of whatever the consequence was.

While this show made the consequences for not telling the truth into a show and made many people laugh, we are going to take a deeper look into that word truth and see that following the truth and speaking the truth can bring many consequences that are not funny at all. This morning we are going to spend some time reminding ourselves what the truth is and where we find the truth. How are we going to do that? We are going to see from Jesus' High Priestly that Jesus tells us we are going to face consequences as Christians even when we tell the truth which seems quite odd according to the world's standards. Our theme for today brings this out:

Theme: The Truth Brings Consequences

- 1. It separates us from the world.**
- 2. It sends us to the world.**

1. It separates us from the world.

How many of you know what Jesus High Priestly prayer is? My guess is that most of us are not too familiar with this prayer from Jesus. The words that we just read as our text from John 17 are a part of Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. In these words that Jesus prayed with his disciples in the upper room on Maundy Thursday, Jesus is praying for himself, for the disciples that he would leave behind, and for his disciples who were yet to come. Jesus knew that he would be leaving this world soon and he was praying to his Heavenly Father concerning those who are still living on this earth. The word that keeps coming up in this middle section of the prayer is the word “protect.” Jesus is praying for the protection of his disciples.

His prayer begins, **“Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name--the name you gave**

me--so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. "I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world." (John 17:11-14)

Jesus' prayer for protection implies a danger in which his believers live their lives. Disciples of Jesus then and now live experiencing the world's hatred in regard to how we live. Our world is perfectly comfortable believing that there are no absolutes. As long as everyone can set their own standards, everything is fine. But start to say, "This is what the Lord says," and the trouble begins. Start saying what God says – things like petty theft is a sin, abortion is a sin, sex outside marriage is a sin, or slander is a sin, and the world's hatred begins.

The world also begins to hate us when we presume to tell them about death. "If you lived a good life, you're OK," some will say. Or others prefer to think, "When you're dead, you're dead." But let us say, "The soul without Jesus is going to hell," or "The one who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life," – things that God clearly says in His Word, and the world's hatred begins.

Or what do you think will happen if we share what God says about being saved? The world says, "If you try your best, God will accept you." They say, "A God of love could never condemn anyone to hell." So when we say what God says, things like **"whoever does not believe stands condemned already,"** or **"there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved,"** and the world begins to hate us.

And why should we expect anything different. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians, **"The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned".** (1 Corinthians 2:14) The world hates believers because they do not understand the things that God has revealed and, in fact cannot understand them. They don't and they can't understand God's truth. Or as Jack Nickolson put it in *"A Few Good Men,"* "You can't handle the truth."

The Truth Brings Consequences, but the same Word that brings hatred from the world offers us protection. God's Law protects us by warning us of the danger by showing us both God's hatred of sin and our need for a Savior. That same Law keeps sin in our world from violent outbreaks that can harm God's people. Finally, that law of God serves as a guideline of God's will and a handbook for the Christian life. But God's Gospel, found in that same Word, offers protection as it presents to us the Word made Flesh, our Savior Jesus. The Gospel offers the pardon and peace of forgiveness of sins as well as motivation to live a life that is pleasing to our God.

Yes, the Truth Brings Consequences. It brings both the hatred of the world and the protection of Law and Gospel. It separates us from the world and, ironically, the same truth sends us into the world.

2. It sends us to the World.

Jesus prayed, **"My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified."** (John 17:15-19) At the same time he prays for the safety of His disciples, he prays that the Heavenly Father would use them as He sends the Gospel into the world. Jesus' disciples for 20 centuries have recognized that sometimes Jesus sends us to do His work in circumstances of danger. He wouldn't have to do that. As soon as we are baptized or as soon as we come to faith, he could simply zap us out of this world to his side in heaven. But he has chosen to leave us in this

world and to do battle on his behalf against the forces of the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh. Jesus' prayer keeps reminding us that God will also be with his Believers as they do that work. And so it is with great confidence that we can go forward at his commission to **“make disciples of all nations.”**

In the history of the church there are many who tried to achieve the ultimate in spiritual safety through a process called monasticism – by becoming a monk or a nun. People would move into places where they were completely cut off from the rest of the world. They would work hard and subject themselves to practices that would put down the sinful flesh and encourage Christian growth. This “holy huddle” brought limited success to some people as they avoided sin and dedicated their lives to God. But in the meantime, what happened to **“making disciples”** or **“going into all the world and preaching the Good News to every creature?”**

Jesus said, **“My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.”** (John 17:15-18) Why should we fear when Jesus promises to protect us? Why should we hesitate when he says that he's sending us out with powerful tools? Remember that St. Paul described the Gospel as **“the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.”** And don't forget that wonderful promise that God gave us through the prophet Isaiah, **“As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”** (Isaiah 55:10-11) God is promising us that the inevitable consequence of the spreading of the truth is the Salvation of souls.

The Truth Brings Consequences. Thank God for His protection as he separates us from consequences and dangers. But also thank God for opportunities to serve as he sends us into the world. Finally, thank him for his sanctifying Truth, His Holy Word. May our prayer continue to be Jesus' prayer, **“Lord, sanctify them by the truth; your Word is Truth.”** Amen.