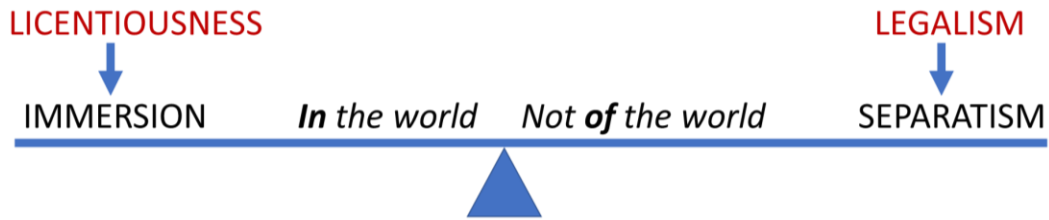


John 17:6-19

He may not be your cup of tea, but there's a song by Christian hip-hop artist, Andy Mineo called Wild Things. Listen to this verse.

If you catch me in a bar where the wild things are
With my pastor and an entourage who loves God
Please don't think that it's odd, we kick it 'round broken hearts
Fishing for men, surrounded by sin but ain't taking part
I talk about Jesus, all the Christians love me
I walk like Jesus now they wanna judge me, ain't it funny?
I'm duckin' stones thrown from the Pharisees
Gospel of peace up on my feet like a pair of cleats
Walkin' with the Paraclete, that's Greek for the Spirit
They say the wild things'll eat you up
Who shall I fear when God is walking with me

Again, this may not be your cup of tea, but he is asking the question—and perhaps pushing the boundaries—of what it means to be in the world but not of the world. In this case, he defends going into bars to share the gospel with those who are desperately lost. Whether or not you like this song or would defend witnessing in a bar is beside the point. There are Christians who completely withdraw from the world and there are those who seem indistinguishable from the world. Recycling is a good thing, right, so I am recycling last week's diagram because I thought it would be helpful with this topic as well.



Jesus said that his disciples were in the world but were not of the world. That is the delicate balance to which we have all been called. If you go too far to the right, you can quickly get imbalanced into separatism. Separatists tend to condemn things in the world that even the Bible does not call sin, which is legalism. But at the other extreme are those who are so immersed in the world that they no longer have anything distinctively Christian about them. They have fallen into licentiousness, which is a license to do whatever they want to do. Both extremes are unbiblical, but a genuine balance is not easy. The world is a big, bad place and it's easy to run from it or immerse yourself in it. Jesus was about to leave the disciples with whom he had taught and cared for, for the past three years. But when we dig into his prayer, we see that he left us with all we needed.

⁶ "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. ⁷ Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. ⁸ 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. ⁹ I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹ 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 may be one, even as we are one. ¹² 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. ¹³ But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

Jesus gave us eight benefits to help us to live in the world but not be of the world.

Inspired Words

Jesus said to his Father, *For I have given them the words that you gave me.* Jesus preached and healed and taught his disciples and repeated that over and over again. We learn from his example and we are transformed by his sacrifice, but he also used words to convey his truth. "I have given them the words that you gave me."

This is one piece of what is called the verbal plenary inspiration of Scripture. This simply means that all of the words of Scripture are inspired. This is a vital truth to understand because if the

words themselves are not inspired how can any of it be inspired? Some people say that the Bible contains inspiration but don't go so far as to say that every word is inspired. Let's say I gave you a large bag of gold coins except only one out of ten of them contained any actual gold, the other nine were just lookalikes. Could you say that I gave you a bag of gold? No, but you could say that I gave you a bag that contained gold. This is how some treat the Bible. They say it contains the word of God. Some of it inspired, but which parts and who gets to decide?

The Bible itself testifies to its own inspiration.

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Passages like this are the basis of our Statement of Faith. Last week we read statement #1 together. Let's read this one together.

2. The Bible

We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

The inspiration of Scripture will keep you from both extremes. If you obey its commands, it will keep you from worldliness and if you don't make it say more than it was intended to say, it will keep you from legalism.

Belief in Christ

The words that Jesus gave bore much fruit. *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.*

Last week we saw the wonderful intersection between God granting eternal life and the necessity of our belief in Christ. Both are equally true. But in a practical sense, the Bible most certainly emphasizes active belief. When the Philippian jailer came crying to Paul and Silas in the middle of the night asking, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul did not ask him, "Well, first you have to answer this question. "Did God grant you eternal life?" No, they didn't do that. Instead, they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved..." (Acts 16:30-31).

But there are times when the Scriptures explain belief like this. "And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48). Nevertheless, in the practical sense, the Bible never asks someone if they were granted eternal life. They ask if they believe in Christ. Do you believe? I am not asking, "Did you believe?" as in, did you ever believe in Jesus, but do you believe now? Are you actively believing in Jesus?¹

I am convinced that our major roadblock as believers is a lack of belief. That almost sounds like an oxymoron, doesn't it? Believers who don't believe. But we do tend to live as practical

atheists. Our belief is more past tense than it is present tense. Don't believe me? Let me ask you this. You believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died on the cross, rose from the dead, ascended to heaven and is coming back again. You believe all of that, but what difference does that belief make in the way you treat your spouse? What difference does it make when you face pressure at work or children who give you fits? Does your belief have any impact on your daily life? If not, your belief is mostly in the past and you are living like a practical atheist. But it doesn't have to be that way. Let's see how the other six benefits will help us.

Saved Forever

The first week we looked at this prayer I emphasized how amazing it is that Jesus even prayed; that his dependent prayer to the Father means that we are all the more dependent in prayer. But in verse nine, Jesus said, *I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.* OK, so what? What difference does it make that Jesus is praying for us? Listen to this precious promise in Hebrews 7.

The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. Therefore **He is able also to save forever** those who draw near to God through Him, **since He always lives to make intercession for them** (Hebrews 7:24-25).

Jesus did not just pray for us on the night before his crucifixion. "He always lives to make intercession" for us. And it's this active intercession that keeps us in Christ.

Holy Father

In verse eleven, Jesus addressed his Father as "Holy Father." We know that God is holy and we know that he is our—and Jesus' father—so what is so unique about this title? It is the combination title that stands out. Holiness obviously represents his infinite perfection and sinlessness. He is set apart. He is transcendent. He is wholly other, perfect in glory and wonder. But he is also our Father with the accompanying reality that we are in a relationship with him; that he is knowable; that there is intimacy present between us; that he cares for and protects his children. In short, everything that a perfect father should be.

This is absent in every other religion. The god of Islam is holy and set apart, but he is not a personal Father. He is distant and unknowable. Actually, this would be true of almost all religions, especially since most are polytheistic. Most "gods" are impersonal and unknowable. I can't think of any that are fundamentally personal. People will tell you that their religions is a personal decision but that does not mean that their god is personal. But our holy Father is a wonderful combination of immanence and transcendence; of perfection and intimacy; of power and personhood. Jesus knew him this way and so can you and me.

Kept and Guarded

Our chief struggle as believers is to believe but I think our chief need is to belong—to have a sense of security, safety and significance. And this is exactly what we have here in Jesus' prayer. ¹² *While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction.* I'll touch on that last part in my

next point. Jesus prayer something similar in verse 15. *I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.* So we have been kept and guarded and we will be kept and guarded.

When it comes to battling the evil one, we know that we still have a responsibility to put on the full armor of God, but kept and guarded is not something we have to do. We just believe it. We trust that God is guarding our souls.

I think Charles Wesley captured this truth in his hymn, Arise My Soul, Arise.

Arise, my soul, arise! Shake off thy guilty fears;
The bleeding Sacrifice in my behalf appears.
Before the throne my Surety stands;
Before the throne my Surety stands;
My name is written on his hands.

On what basis are we kept and guarded and safe and secure? Why can we shake off our guilty fears? My surety stands before the throne because Jesus' bleeding sacrifice stands on my behalf. This is done for me and I only need to believe it. But there's even more to this old hymn.

He ever lives above, for me to intercede,
His all-redeeming love, his precious blood to plead.
His blood atoned for all our race,
His blood atoned for all our race,
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.

He ever lives above, for me to intercede. There again is the intercessory prayer of Jesus for us. There is helpful application to a balanced life. If you know that you are secure in the Lord, you won't feel a need to perform, to try to earn your place in God's kingdom, which drives much of legalism. Conversely, if you are secure in Christ, the love of worldly things will diminish. You won't want to immerse yourself in the world because Jesus is more than enough for you.

Scripture fulfilled

Here's that interesting verse again: *not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction², that the Scripture might be fulfilled.* Jesus kept his disciples and none were lost, except for Judas. And further, Jesus said that Judas' falling away was a fulfillment of Scripture. The Scriptures predicted that Judas would fall away, and as did Jesus himself.

- John 6:64—But there are some of you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”
- John 6:70-71—Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil.” He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him.

- John 13:10-11—Jesus said to him, “The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you.” For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, “Not all of you are clean.”
- John 13:18—I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, ‘He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.’ (Psalm 41:9)

Here’s the Scripture to which Jesus said would be fulfilled—Psalm 41:19. It makes sense that Judas’ betrayal was on Jesus’ mind. As soon as he finished this prayer, he walked into the garden and was betrayed by Judas. It probably happened within the hour. But even something as difficult to swallow as predicting someone’s apostasy is, Jesus emphasized that even this was fulfilled by Scripture. Such is the power of the Word of God. It cannot fail, even when it claims difficult truths.

The Joy of Jesus—*that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves*

We already have the stunning truth that we are kept by Jesus. That out to be sufficient by itself because it tells us that we will survive. We will make it to the arms of Christ. Sometimes survival or just making it is sufficient, especially when you feel like you make not survive the latest battle that is raging around you.

In the early days of Grace Church, many of us considered mere survival to be success. Statistically speaking, most church plants do not survive, so the fact that we were surviving was itself a sign of success. We didn’t make it to the cover of any fancy Christian magazines, but we were surviving. Some days surviving feels like success to you, and I can relate. But as believers, we are not given merely survival. Jesus has made provisions for our survival AND our joy—actually, His joy.

Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church, lost his son to suicide in 2013. They stopped in to see their son, but he would not answer the door. Rick and his wife Kay stood outside crying and holding one another because, based on his history of depression, they feared the worst. As they waited for the police to arrive, Kay held up her necklace to her husband that spelled the words “Choose Joy.”

Rich Maurer
October 7, 2018

TABLE TALK

1. Carefully read this passage while you picture Jesus praying this just for you.
2. List as many “benefits” of Jesus’ prayer as you can.
3. Which one or two has the most meaning to you right now? Why?

¹ And of course, we can’t merely believe in Jesus, but we have to believe what the Bible explicitly taught about Jesus. Frank Schaeffer is the son of Francis Schaeffer of L’Abri Fellowship and has, sadly, lost his

way. “to be a Christian is not to believe in Jesus in terms of who he was, whether he is the Son of God, rose from the dead or not, it is to believe in that life as an example.”

(<https://www.theamericanconservative.com/dreher/frank-schaeffer-go-to-hell-pro-lifers/>)

² Cf. 2 Thes. 2:3—*Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction.*