

The Story of Jesus

Published By Evangelist Van Billingsley

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What Do You Expect?

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me." -- John 15:18 - 21

These words are just some of the enlightening warnings and instructions Christ gave to His disciples upon preparing them for life and ministry after His departure. In the sermon for this edition we will examine the prayer of Jesus as he mentions this truth and many others about His followers He is about to leave on earth with a commission to fulfill.

Our Place In This World

by Evangelist Van Billingsley

[Our text is the prayer of Jesus recorded in John 17.]

We have four gospels which each present Christ from a different perspective. Matthew, Mark and Luke often being called the synoptic gospels, deal with mostly the same events where John differs covering other accounts. Each gospel presents Christ in the light of its theme. Matthew presenting the King covers genealogy for David's throne from Abraham and tells of the visit from the magi after Christ's birth. Mark presenting the servant begins with His work, having no need to give lineage or birth account, for a servant's pedigree is irrelevant. Luke the physician presents the Son of Man in His humanity covering the physical aspects giving the most

physical detail of his human birth and gives lineage back to the first man Adam. John presenting the Son of God in His deity, instead of a genealogy, declares that He (calling Him the Word) was in the beginning and that he was God. For His birth, he proclaims that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. It is easy to overlook the purpose and importance of the various accounts.

Besides the different events covered by John,

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Our Ministry News. . .



Greetings from the state of South Dakota, where I sit outside my bus in the city park I am living in for four days. I am behind on my reporting, so I will have to cover a lot of territory.

Our tent season got off to a great start down in my home state of Alabama. I did the tent meeting at Smith Station without my partner family due to Mrs. Redmond's illness. (Please keep her as well as Bro. Redmond and the children in your prayers. They had to leave at the beginning of our tent meeting in Conway, SC when she was hospitalized and eventually had surgery. Bro. Redmond was able to return with the children to complete that meeting then after her surgery, he and the children have been traveling without her during her recovery time which may be extended due to complications.) God blessed the meeting in Smith Station; we had seven saved, four on visitation and three in the services.

Satan has fought the work diligently this season! As I headed out for the summer, my front bus tire blew out which almost wrecked me. I praise God that the only damage was the tire and the headlamp/parklamp assembly and some fiberglass. I also thank God for my home church who provided the money for those repairs and the service call. I also am thankful to my friends in Smith Station who had already purchased two new tires which I was unable to have installed before leaving (they were in the tent trailer).

We also had a great meeting in Conway, South Carolina where we had one saved in the services. Please keep in mind that we work with church planters and generally

have small crowds, but God has blessed our services tremendously.

The battles continued as I was traveling out of the southeast. I broke down and had to be towed fifty miles from Tennessee into Kentucky. The issue was severe but external, so I was able to do the repairs on the engine while parked at a church I found through Bro. D. Easter and Good Shepherd Baptist Missions.

We had another great tent meeting in Faulkton, South Dakota with visitors every night and support from the church in Hoven, South Dakota. So far the only hardship I've faced in South Dakota has been the breakdown of my RV air conditioner. God has allowed me to repair that but dollars were spent and miles were traveled to do so, and yes, this happened just before a stretch of South Dakota's only hot days! The Lord has been good through all these works, trials and blessings; Jesus doeth all things well!

Between each of our tent revivals, I have been busy travelling from town to town preaching in different churches and meeting new pastors and ministries. My miles in South Dakota are going to be much greater than expected because I am making trips back and forth across the eastern half of the state. I do not normally plan meetings this way if I can help it, but this is to help church planters when they need help. I will be handling Sunday services for two different pastors as they take young people to Christian colleges. One, who pastors two churches is taking his sons to PCC and the other is taking a young convert to Crown College. With many other services between these, I will be using a lot of diesel fuel before heading south, but God has opened these doors and planned these circumstances, so I know He

will provide the means. It will be September before I leave South Dakota and begin working my way back toward Alabama.

God has also been providing meetings for 2015. We've scheduled three tent revivals and awaiting confirmation on two more. There are others we are talking to for additional meetings as well. I also have scheduled a missions revival for 2015 in addition to regular meetings I generally am a part of, so next year is looking to be a busy year traveling to the upper peninsala of Michigan, to the great plains and possibly to the southwest then back to the Carolinas. Well, I have a busy 2014 to

complete, so please keep me in your prayers as I endeavor to do all God places before me!

A Servant of Christ,
Evangelist Van Billingsley

Our Support Needs:

Monthly Support

Our monthly support is divided into three stages:

(Currently within the # 2 stage.)

1. Required amount to survive while doing full-time ministry and deputation.
2. Amount to begin traveling with tent ministry. (Raising funds as I go.)
3. Full support

(...continued from cover) Our Place...

we find that of twenty one chapters, John has arrived at the final week of Christ's earthly ministry by chapter eleven. The second half of his gospel deals with the days leading to the cross and a period after the Resurrection. At the point of the resurrection of Lazarus, Jesus turns His focus from the lost world to preparing His disciples for His absence. Beginning with ministering to this family while Martha served and Mary anointed His feet, His attention was upon preparing them for what was to come including His death, burial and resurrection, then life and ministry in His absence. He makes His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, then following the last supper, He uses washing their feet as an object lesson to teach daily forgiveness and forgiving each other. He comforts them with the promise of preparing a place in His Father's house for them. He promises the Holy Ghost as their comforter and warns them to expect persecution for His name's sake. After telling them of things to come, He prays the high priestly prayer of intercession recorded in chapter seventeen. This is the true Lord's prayer. The sinless Christ never prayed for forgiveness as He instructed us to pray in the model prayer, but here Jesus pours His heart out to God in His prayer, the true "Lord's Prayer."

In the close of preparing His Disciples for life and ministry on earth in His absence, He prays a short time concerning His glorification referring to the cross and the work of redemption before turning attention in the remainder of this prayer toward His disciples He is leaving behind. In verse twenty He reveals that the prayer is not just for those current believers, but all we who will believe on Him. As believers, He reached down through the centuries and prayed this prayer for us. In verse nine he made clear this prayer was not for the lost, but for those who had and would believe. Though not praying for the world but believers specifically, He used the word "world" nineteen times. This makes it clear He was praying about **our place in this world!** We will examine a few verses in which this prayer makes three things clear about our place in this world.

When Jesus said "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (v.14), He revealed that our place in this world would be a place of persecution from the world. Paul reminded the young Timothy of this fact writing, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12). We know from the phrase "I have given them thy word" as the cause

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(...continued from p.3) **Our Place...**

for this hatred, that we will be persecuted because of the reproof of the Word. They hate us for proclaiming their need for salvation based on God's Word, for revealing their sin from the Bible. Then "because they are not of the world" shows they will hate us for our resistance to the world; we are not like the world, we don't act like the world, talk like the world, enjoy the worlds entertainment or even dress like the world. In the sermon on the mount Jesus said, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake" (Matt. 5:10). Peter also wrote, "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye" (1 Peter 3:14). Though it would be true, these verses do not refer to being persecuted for winning the lost, but for righteousness sake -- for just being different from the world.

Jesus continued, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (v.15). I like to call this verse the principle of insulation rather than isolation. We are not told to colonize together to avoid coming face to face with the lost world, but to be kept from the evil! Here Jesus reveals our place in this world should be a place of protection from the world. Jesus goes on to say, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (v.16). This protection comes from our relationship with Christ for our strength comes through He who is not of the world. He then says, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (v.17). This protection further comes from His Word. Just as we protect our children from physical danger then teach them to

function around those dangers as they grow older, we must be protected and learn to discern good from evil and live holy unto our righteous Lord as we mature spiritually. I wish I had space for the illustrations I've used in the pulpit here but this generation has been taught a lie about what adulthood and maturity is with terms like adult content, mature audience and adult beverage in place of ungodly wicked things. Likewise, those in the church today have no concept of spiritual maturity.

The remaining verses tell us our place in this world is to be a place of proclaiming to the world. We see our responsibility of the great commission as Jesus says, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (v.18). When He points out, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word" (v.20), He speaks of the reproduction of God's children as we tell others of His salvation, fulfilling His desire expressed in the words, "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (v.21), and "that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (v.23). This reminds me of David's words in the valley of Elah standing before the giant, "That all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel." It is our place to do all we can to let the world know who Jesus is.

After Jesus died on the cross, rose from the grave and returned to his disciples, John records this, "Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). Echoing the words from His high priestly prayer, Jesus reminds us that this is our place in this world!

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proclaiming

The Story of Jesus

-- A Missionary to our Homeland --

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