

A Parting Prayer

John 17:9

I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.

The earthly path of our Savior is near an end and has led to this place. It is a place of parting. It is a place of last things. It is a place of prayer. His beloved disciples will not be gathered again this side of the cross. Soon the vicious and menacing crowds will come, and He will give Himself to them- separating from those whom He loves so. The howling mob will verbally and physically abuse Him. They will humiliate Him, reject Him, convict Him falsely and nail Him to a tree! He will face trial, rejection, and death. He is the Christ! He is on the threshold of sacrifice! The words that He will say and the prayer that He will utter have, therefore, enormous weight and implication.

This verse and those that follow it in this chapter mark the end of his earthly discipling ministry to these men into whom He has poured himself in love. They are a varied group but have at least these two things in common: (1.) They were lost and without hope before their encounter with Christ and (2.) They were all first owned by the Father. Note that the Father does not surrender His ownership but shares it with the Son.

The Savior would go on to ask the Father for the disciples to be kept from evil, sanctified, unified, know of the Father's love for them, be with Him at last and ultimately behold His glory. It is worth further note that Christ does not pray for their health, wealth, or safety. Tradition tells us that all of this group save John were ultimately martyred for the name of Christ and the gospel. Which of these do you suppose would today exchange a Martyr's crown for the recovery of a forfeited long, and comfortable earthly existence?

Lastly, consider that he does not pray for those who do and will reject His offer of grace and forgiveness (the world). Their names are not upon His tongue, nor their faces engraved upon His consciousness. They are lost to Him and someday also to you - and that forever!

Caution and comfort one another with these words.

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