

## Connecting Minds

"These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31)

### The Gospel of John

#### Chapter 17:17-19

**"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You have sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth."**

We are continuing to look at Jesus' prayer to His Father for His disciples and for us. He prays that He would be glorified in us (verse 10). He prays that we may have His joy in us (verse 13). He prays that we would be kept by the Father's name from the evil one (verse 15). Now we come to the next petition - "Sanctify them by Your truth..." The word "sanctify" has two meanings given in the Scriptures. First, it means to set something apart for special use and secondly, it means to be holy.

The Greek word for "sanctify" is *Hagiazo* and it would help us to see its usage in the New Testament. In Matthew 6:9 the word is translated as "hallowed" - "Hallowed by Your name..." - meaning that the name of God is set apart as holy. God's name is unlike any other name that is named. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 6:11 places sanctification is before justification, which must mean that we have been set apart for the work of justification - "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified..." In 2 Timothy 2:21 we read of being cleaned as a vessel in a household, "sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work..." We're set apart just as the fine silverware is set aside for special occasions.

This word is used three times in John 17:17-19, twice of the believer and once of Jesus Himself. We must therefore be careful about how we interpret the word because the same word is used to describe both us and our Lord.

"For their sakes I sanctify Myself..." Jesus uses the word to describe Himself in verse 19. He must be thinking of separation, of being set apart for a task because Jesus has no need to be made holy since He is sinless. It makes

sense, however, that Jesus does “sanctify” Himself in that He sets Himself apart for the special task of redemption through death. When Jesus says “Sanctify *them* by Your truth...” I believe both meanings of the word are present in this petition – both being set apart and being made holy.

Let’s look at the purpose of Jesus praying for us to be set apart for God’s service. We see something of this by looking at the two verses surrounding verse 17. In verse 16 Jesus says that we are “not of the world...” – we are set apart, we are different. Believers have been taken and set apart, out of the world, for God’s purpose. In verse 18 Jesus “I have sent them into the world...” Here is the purpose – we are set apart for this special ministry of being sent into the world with the gospel of peace.

And therefore Jesus prays for our growth in holiness, the other meaning of the word “sanctify”. In order to be effective in the ministry we must be kept from the evil one and our being worked upon for holiness is how we are to be kept from the evil one. This is how we are to glorify Christ. This is also the reason of His going to the cross - “For their sakes I sanctify Myself, *that they also* may be sanctified...”

Martyn Lloyd-Jones writes “We have been set apart for this special task of glorifying Christ, of bearing the message to an unbelieving world; and because we have been set apart for that, we must be fitted to do it... Our very task and calling demands that we must be a holy people since we cannot represent a holy God unless we ourselves are holy.”<sup>1</sup>

## TableTalk

Did you realize that Christians were not just saved to go to heaven? Paul calls us ambassadors for Christ.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21? What does it mean that Christians are chosen to be ambassadors with the ministry of reconciliation?

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<sup>1</sup>The Assurance of our Salvation, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, pg. 355