

What Jesus Says About You

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[0 : 00] Well, I'd like us just to turn together for a wee while tonight back to John 17. And we've been looking at this chapter today. Tonight I'd like to read again from verse 6, where Jesus said, 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. As we said in the morning, this is one of the most remarkable passages in the whole of the Bible.

In it, Jesus prays for us. And so it gives us an insight into the work of intercession that is continuing to this day. The risen Jesus is at the right hand of God, and he is praying for his people.

And that means that if you are a Christian or if you become one, Jesus is praying for you right now at the Father's side. But at the same time, this chapter also gives us a beautiful insight into the relationship that exists between God the Father and God the Son. Because here in this chapter, Jesus is talking to his Father, and we can listen in. And that's why this chapter takes us to, it takes us to some of the greatest heights of our theology. Tonight, I just want to look at something very simple, something very beautiful, and something really quite astonishing. In this conversation between God the Son and God the Father, Jesus keeps on speaking about the same topic again and again and again. He keeps on speaking about you. And if you look closely at the prayer, you'll see that although Jesus does make some specific requests to his Father, like we saw this morning, he prays, keep them in your name, he prays, sanctify them in your truth.

Most of the time, he's just talking about you. He's making descriptive comments about his people. And these descriptions have got a huge amount to teach us. And we're going to look at them tonight.

[2 : 15] Our title is What Jesus Says About You. Now again, this chapter is very rich. There's so much we could say. Our time is very limited. So there's a lot that we're going to have to miss out. So that means tonight you are getting the short, slimmed down, condensed version of this sermon. So because of that, we're only going to have 10 points. And each one of them looks at something that Jesus says about you. Number one, he says, yours they were. I've manifested them in your name. I've manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were. That phrase points us backwards, points us to our past, it actually points us to our origins. And actually, it's a phrase that would maybe surprise us because when we know the gospel quite well, we would expect, maybe expect Jesus to say that we weren't the Father because we are lost and without Jesus we're broken, we're alienated from God, we're rebellious, we're sinners. And of course, all of that's true. So we easily think that we weren't the Father. But although all of that negative reality of sin is true, it's not the whole truth. Because before sin ever became a reality in human experience, before our relationship with God was broken, before the power of darkness ruined everything, we were His. That's actually one of the basics of the Bible. But it's a truth that will never stop blowing our minds if we stop and think about it. Our ultimate origin, the foundational truth of our existence, the preface to all our own personal stories is that we were His.

You are God's creation, His handiwork, His idea, His delight. And that means that we owe Him everything. We owe Him absolutely everything. Every ability, every memory, every experience, every joy, every achievement, everything. That immediately gives you inherent value. It tells you that your ultimate origin is something beautiful, that you are something so precious.

But at the same time, it immediately gives us inescapable responsibility because we were made for something special. We were made to be something good. But the fact that it's aware there maybe also points us to the fact that now something is no longer what it should be.

Sins broken the relationship that we are meant to have with God. Sins distorted the purpose for which we were made. Sins ruined God as creation. And all of it is reminding us that sin is not a problem because it prevents something. Sin is a problem because it spoils something.

And it's also teaching us something so crucial about the Gospel. If we start off with the fact that we wear His, that is telling you that the Gospel, the Gospel is a return.

[5 : 42] It's a reconciliation. Coming to Jesus is a homecoming. And that's why if you fall into the arms of Jesus, whether for the first time or for the thousandth time, that's where you find the place where you really belong. He says, years they wear. But the second thing he says is that you gave them to me.

Years they wear and you gave them to me. The wear of our past is not the end of the story. In fact, it's the very thing that Jesus has come to change. And if you notice, there's a beautiful shift from years they wear in verse six to years they are in verse nine. And that's all because of what Jesus has come to do. He's come to restore the relationship between you and God. He's come to take away the alienation. He's come to heal all that's gone wrong. And that was always the Father's plan. Always the Father's desire. And that plan to save a people for himself is captured by the beautiful way that Jesus describes you. He describes you as a gift from the Father to the Son.

The people that you gave me out of the world. Years they wear, you gave them to me. And again, that's so easy to miss. It's so easy to misunderstand because so often we will think of the gospel as a gift to us. And it is, that's absolutely true. Salvation is given to us. Forgiveness is given to us. Joy, hope and peace are given to us. But again, that's only a half the story because in the gospel you are also given to Jesus. And that means that when Jesus looks at you, his first thought is not to say, I'm so glad the gospel is there. His first thought is to say, I am so glad that they are mine. You're a gift. You are a gift from God the Father to God the Son. You are a joy to God the Son. You are so precious to Jesus. And that statement does two things. It stretches our minds to the mysteries of eternity of the Father giving a people to his Son. It brings us into that depth of giving and receiving between God, Father and Son. But it doesn't just stretch us into the mysteries of eternity. It also has huge implications for the way we live our lives this week because it raises a massive question for everyone. What are you being given to?

What are you giving yourself to? And we've got to ask that question because every single one of us is giving ourselves to something. Maybe it's your career. Maybe it's your bank balance.

[8 : 56] Maybe it's the person you're in love with. Maybe it's the friends that you want to keep in with. Maybe it's the lifestyle that you cannot live without. And these things are not necessarily bad.

These things can be very, very good things. But if they become the ultimate thing, if they become the thing that we are ultimately giving ourselves to, then something's wrong. Because here we see that all of that is secondary to the relationship that matters the most.

Not the relationship with your career or your money or your family, but a relationship with God. For Christians, this is so important because it's telling us that we are gifts to God the Son.

We're alive in Him. We're living for Him. And yet it's so easy for us to live our lives. In a way that looks as though we're just giving ourselves to success at work or security in our finances or approval among our peers, it's so easy to slip in the trap of making those things the most important. And for anyone who's not yet a believer or not sure, you've got to ask who gets the gift tag of your life? If you imagine your life as a gift with a gift tag, who's that been given to?

Who gets your energy, your devotion, your effort, your pain, your secrets? And if it's not Jesus, then who is it?

[10 : 34] Jesus says, you gave them to me. Third thing he says is, now they know. That's in verse seven to eight. They know that everything you have given me is from you, but I've given them the words that you gave me. They've received them. They've come to know the truth that I came from you. They've believed that you sent me. These words are describing an intellectual shift from not knowing to knowing. And you see that in the now of verse seven.

You see that in the come to know of verse eight. And in the immediate context, it's speaking about the disciples. And if you know the story of the disciples, you know that so often that experience was one where they didn't know and they didn't understand and they would say to Jesus, what's going wrong? But now they are starting to understand. They're realizing that Jesus has come from the Father, that everything given to Jesus has been given to him by his Father in heaven. And they're realizing that Jesus's message is the Father's message. They're learning that understanding that eyes are being opened and their experience is the experience of everyone who comes to faith in Jesus. We come to know and to understand what we did not understand before. That's why we can speak of the gospel in the language of revelation. God is revealing himself to us, making himself known.

And through that, we come to discover what we did not know before. Now two very important points arise from this. First, that doesn't mean that as Christians, we know it all. And one of the worst things that we can ever do as Christians is behave as though we do know it all. We don't know it all. We don't have all the answers. But what we do know is the one thing that matters more than anything else. And I can see that in my own experience so much. When I think back to when I became a Christian, I knew next to nothing about theology. But the one thing I did know was that trusting in Jesus mattered more than anything else. But secondly, when we speak, when Jesus speaks in terms of knowing, of coming to know things, of gaining understanding, it's reminding us that when we come to faith in Jesus, everything starts to make sense. And that's such an important point for us to remember. The gospel makes sense. It makes sense of why we exist. It makes sense of morality.

It makes sense of human behavior. It makes sense of everything that you feel in your heart. And that doesn't mean that we can explain everything all at once. But it does mean that Jesus brings us to a place where our hearts are at peace, where we find answers that satisfy us.

[13:16] And that really is what Christianity offers you. And if you don't agree with that, then it's because you've not maybe looked into the claims of Jesus enough. And that's something that we'd always be happy to chat about more. Jesus speaks about us knowing what we did not know before.

The fourth thing he says is that he is glorified in you. I'm glorified in them. We could spend hours in this verse. And yet at the same time, it also leaves me a bit speechless.

Jesus says, I'm glorified in them. God the Son speaking to God the Father about how you are shared in their love and in possession and ownership all minor years, all years, and years are mine and I'm glorified in them. And that's what I want to try and think about.

Jesus is glorified in you. And again, it's so easy to miss what Jesus is saying because we could so easily think that it would say Jesus is glorified by them in the sense that we worship and honor and praise him. Yes, that's all true. But it's not what he says. He's not just glorified by us.

He's glorified in you. In other words, there's a magnification of the beauty and majesty of Jesus through what happens to you. And as you trust in Jesus, as you realize that he's the truth, as he helps you turn from darkness to light, as you follow him, as he helps you grow in faith, as he helps you overcome sin, as he lifts you when you stumble, as he comforts you when you weep, as he uses you in his service, as he pours his love into your heart, all of that makes your life a theater where Jesus's glory is seen more clearly. And that means something amazing. It means that for Jesus, being involved with you is not embarrassing. It's glorifying. That's why Hebrews 2:11 can say that Jesus is not ashamed to call you his brother or sister. Fifth thing that Jesus says about you is that you're not of the world. They are not of the world. This is all tying in with the language of sanctification that Jesus uses in this section of John 17. If you're a Christian or if you become a Christian, then you're sanctified. And sanctification is both an event and a process. It's an event in that when we come to faith in Jesus, we're set apart as saints. We have a new citizenship, a new identity, a new master. But sanctification is also a process because that new status and identity then shapes and transforms our character. And bit by bit, the Holy Spirit makes us more and more like Jesus. Bit by bit, we're restored towards being the people that God created us to be.

[16:30] And this is where we see so powerfully that bringing, coming to faith in Jesus brings us out of the world, out of the kingdom of darkness. And it's important for us to recognize that when John uses that term world, he is using it in a negative sense. Sometimes the Bible would use the word world in a positive sense, but in John's gospel, it's used negatively. So it's not the world like you would see in a holiday brochure. When you pick up a holiday brochure, you see the world in all its best light. And you see the beauty of God's creation. That's not what John's meaning.

When he uses the word world, it's the world like you would see not in a holiday brochure, but in a tabloid newspaper. A world of immorality, of brokenness, of cruelty, of injustice. When you come to faith in Jesus, you no longer belong to that world. However, Jesus then goes on to say number six, which is that he sent us into that world. And here we are confronted with one of the biggest misunderstandings of Christian living that has affected the church in Scotland and has definitely affected the church here on the island over the years. When we come to faith in Jesus, we start to see the world the way John saw it, which is to see the negatives that are in it and all the problems that sin has caused in the world around us. We see the danger and the damage and the desperation of a broken world and we immediately want to withdraw.

But the key point here is that the sanctifying transformation that the gospel brings, yes, it makes us unlike the world, but it's meant to move us towards the world.

And so often we have got that completely the wrong way around. So often we have separated ourselves from the world and yet behaved just like it. So as an example, and this is just a made up example, imagine a young Christian is 22 years old. He likes football. So he goes to the football club AGM and there he sees a meeting that does not go well. He sees people speaking aggressively. He sees people lose their temper. He sees people talk about others behind their back and it's a horrible experience. The next day he goes to a Deacons Court meeting that he'd been invited to attend and he tells them what happened at the football meeting and he's told a Christian shouldn't be at football. We're not of the world. And then the meeting begins and he sees people speak aggressively, lose their temper and talk about other people behind their back.

That's a hypothetical situation, but I think everybody here knows that it's not an impossibility at all. And it's the precise opposite of what Jesus wants us to be. We are to be different.

[19 : 38] So where the world is harsh, we are to be gentle. Where the world is selfish, we are to be generous. Where the world is merciless, we are to be gracious. And as Christians, we are to be involved in our communities so that that difference can be seen. And this is where we see that in the greatest prayer ever prayed, the high priestly prayer of John 17, Jesus mentions Monday morning. He's mentioning tomorrow morning because that's exactly what he's doing with you tomorrow. He's sending you into the world. And there you can be an amazing light and you can make an amazing difference in people's lives.

Number seven, Jesus says, for their sake, I consecrate myself. Now, I read a bit of explanation here because this is still the language of sanctification. English doesn't bring this out very well. But here in these verses, that word there sanctify, that word there consecrate, that word there sanctify, it's all the same word in Greek. It's all the language of sanctification. But it's interesting because here it's referring to us and here it's referring to Jesus. And it's the same it's the same word. But there's a sense in which the meanings or certainly the implications are the opposite. All of it's referring to being set apart. That's what the word sanctify means.

It's point to holiness being set apart. For us, we are set apart when we come to faith in Jesus. We're delivered from a world of sin. We're brought into a beautiful new realm of peace and security.

For Jesus, it's the opposite. Because in coming into this world, he is stepping away from a realm of peace and security. He's leaving the Father's side.

And he's about to be set apart for condemnation. He's going to be crushed under all the sin and evil of the power of darkness.

[21 : 58] And all of it is for your sake. All of it's deceit.

Number eight, the glory that you've given me, I have given to them. I'm running out of time and I'm also running out of words to describe what Jesus is saying here. Here he speaks of sharing his glory with us. What does he mean by that? How do we understand that? Well, one way to think of the glory that the Father has given him is to think of every way in which the Son is special to the Father. Every way in which Jesus is special to his Father.

And as we think of that, we think of how much the Father delights in his Son. How he smiles over his Son. How he values his Son, treasured his Son. To the Father, the Son is utterly unique. And Jesus as the Son of God, he enjoys a glory. He enjoys a specialness in the eyes of the Father that is beyond anything that I can describe. Just that fullness of perfection of a Father's devotion to his Son is what we see in the relationship between God, the Father and God, the Son. Everything that is special in that relationship has been spoken about here and Jesus says, I am sharing that out with my people.

And this is where we see that in the Gospel, the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit is on a mission to include you and involve you and embrace you in the life and joy and intimacy and love of the very being of God himself. We are invited to share in the eternal glory and blessedness and security of God himself so that you become as special to the Father as Jesus is.

You belong with the Father as much as he does. And we get to enjoy that forever. And then people say, I might become a Christian.

[24 : 53] And you think, I don't know what should leave us more speechless. The fact that God offers us this. The fact that some of you are saying, I don't even want that.

Number nine, he says, the glory that you've given me, I've given to them that they may be one, even as we are one, I and them, you and me, that they may become perfectly one.

All of this emphasis on giving and sharing and including is taking back to one of the most forgotten fundamentals of the Gospel, the fact that in Jesus we are one, one family, one church, one people. This is all something that we share in together. And that's a relentless emphasis on this in this prayer. If you are a Christian, if you become one, then we all share in this together. This is ours together. And there's a beautiful consequence of that that Jesus speaks about. It's so that the world may know that the Father sent him and have loved them even as you loved me. We must never stop thinking about it.

We must never stop thinking about this. And we must never stop recognizing the importance of this. If you look at John 17, the amount of times the word one appears is just again and again and again. And we live in a village where the Christian church is two.

And it shouldn't be like that. And maybe we need to recognize that this verse is telling us that that that, you know, if the positive is true, that the unity of God's people displays the love of God to the world around us, then the conversion negative is true, that division and separation obscures and even contradicts the love that is truly revealed in the gospel. We want to keep coming back and keep praying that this prayer would not just be a spiritual reality because spiritually we are one side by side. We wanted to become an actual day to day week to week reality one day as well.

[27 : 27] And then we come to verse 26 where Jesus says, I've made known to them your name and I'll continue to make it known that the love with which you have loved me may be in them and I in them.

I don't think I can add anything to that sentence. Jesus, Jesus is great mission, his great goal, his great desire is that the boundless love that he knows from the Father would be known by you as well.

And he died to make that possible. So there's our 10 points, 10 things that Jesus says about you. Yours they were, you gave them to me, now they know and glorified in them. They're not of the world, I've sent them into the world for their sake, I consecrate myself. The glory that you've given me, I've given to them that they may become perfectly one, that the love with which you've loved me may be in them.

10 points, actually it's an 11 points. Because over all of this is one amazing point, one amazing fact. The fact that Jesus is talking about you, keeps talking about you, he loves talking about you, he can't stop talking about you. Why is that?

[29 : 07] It's because he loves to talk about his bride. And I know what that feels like, because I could talk about you now all night.

I'm not going to do it because it would be embarrassing for her and utterly cringe worthy for my children. But I could do it, I love doing it. And my delight in talking about my wife is just a pure, pure reflection of how much Jesus loves to speak about his bride.

About how much Jesus loves to speak about you. But I want to close just asking the question for anybody who's not yet a believer, what is Jesus saying about you tonight? What's Jesus saying about you if you're not a believer?

What's Jesus saying? Well I can't put words into Jesus's mouth right now, all I can do is quote him. All I can do is quote him. In John 7:37 he says come.

That's what he's saying to you. In John 7:36 he says whoever comes I will never cast out. He will never cast you out. But maybe most of all he's saying the words of John 8:46.

[30 : 55] Why do you not believe me? I mean, let's pray. Lord Jesus, we thank you for these amazing words.