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Safe in the World

John 17.6-16

Series: Signs of Life

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I. Introduction

- A. A number of years ago there was a well-known pastor of a church in a large mid-western city
 - 1. Located in the downtown area of the city
 - 2. Church – flagship church for the particular expression of the evangelical world it represented
 - a. Impact was deep and lasting
 - b. Pastor’s writings were prolific and influential
 - c. Ministry extended all over the globe – missions-minded church
- B. Pastor was interviewing a promising candidate for a position of assistant pastor
 - 1. In the pastor’s office discussing the ministry
 - a. There with the candidate, candidate’s wife
 - b. Couple had several small children
 - 2. Eventually it came time for the pastor to ask the candidate and his wife if they had any questions
 - 3. Don’t remember who asked the question – candidate or his wife
 - a. “I have just one question. Is it safe here?”
 - 4. Reasonable question to ask
 - a. Young parents; small children
 - b. All parents care about the safety of their children
 - c. Reasonable to ask about the character of the community they may come to reside in
 - d. They said, “Is it safe?”
- C. It was too much for the pastor
 - 1. “Safe? NO! It’s not safe”
 - a. This is a big city
 - b. It’s got big city problems
 - c. There are drive by shootings every weekend
 - d. There are drug dealers on the street corners
 - e. This is a high crime area
 - f. You can’t leave your house unlocked
 - g. You have to be careful where you park your car – and don’t leave your stuff in your car
 - h. The schools have metal detectors
 - 2. “Safe? NO! It’s not safe”
 - a. “But we’re not calling a pastor to come to a safe place”

- b. “It’s not safe”
- D. I don’t know what the outcome of that interview was
 - 1. I think I know
 - 2. I doubt that he took the job
 - a. Or that he was even offered the job
 - 3. But the world is not safe
- E. We were reminded of that this week, weren’t we
 - 1. 21 people murdered in a school in Texas
 - a. 19 of them children
 - 2. Even that is merely a microcosm of a world that is decidedly unsafe
 - 3. Last year
 - a. Chicago – over 700 homicides
 - b. Philadelphia – over 500
 - c. Even mid-sized cities far surpassed murder rates in 2021; St. Paul, MN, Portland, OR, Tucson, AZ, Toledo, OH, Baton Rouge, LA, Austin, TX
- F. Not just the US
 - 1. Mass shootings worldwide
 - a. Deaths per million – US is 11th
 - 2. Religious and ideological deaths
 - a. More than 2,000 Nigerian Christians were murdered in 2020
 - b. More than 4,000 Christians killed by extremists worldwide in 2020
 - c. Christians are not the most persecuted religious group worldwide
 - d. Uyghurs in China – 120,000 to 1 million are detained in detention camps; forced sterilization; genocide
- G. Is it safe?
 - 1. No!
 - a. The world is not safe
 - 2. Important to have perspective
 - a. 56 million children attended school on May 24 in the US
 - b. 56 million children came home, less 19
 - 3. The point is not to instill fear
 - a. In your children, your grandchildren
 - b. Or even in yourselves
 - 4. The point is to recognize that the world is not a safe place
 - a. And has never been a safe place – ever since Cain and Abel
- H. Which makes it all the more amazing that in Jesus’ prayer in John 17
 - 1. He prays that the Father would keep us safe
 - 2. And He claims in His prayer that while He was with the disciples, He had kept them safe
 - a. 100% safe!
 - 3. And He prays to the Father with the expectation that the Father would keep, not only the 12 (minus Judas) safe
 - a. But that He would keep safe everyone who would ever come to faith in Jesus through their ministry

- b. Completely safe
- I. How can Jesus pray that way?

II. **The First Petition: Glory**

A. **John 17:1-5** (ESV) —

1. 1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, 2 since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.
2. 3 And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.
3. 4 I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.
4. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.”

B. The first petition is that Jesus asks the Father to glorify the Son, so the Son would glorify the Father

1. Glorify in what sense?
 - a. Speaks first of His crucifixion
 - b. The death of Jesus on behalf of all those who would ever believe in Him is the most compelling way for the Father to reveal Himself to humanity
 - c. To show Himself to be the gracious and compassionate God
 - d. Merciful to genuinely blameworthy sinners
 - e. Who gave His own Son to save a lost and sinful humanity
 - f. So in the death of Christ, God is glorified
2. But Jesus also asks that the Father glorify the Son in the sense that the effulgence of the light of the glory of God
 - a. That glory that the Son left behind in the incarnation
 - b. Be restored in heaven upon Jesus’ ascension
 - c. (Ascension Day was this past Thursday; today is Ascension Sunday)

C. Recall from last week that Jesus prays that God would glorify Him in the entire plan of redemption

1. We saw salvation from God’s perspective – and how it glorifies God
2. That God the Father has taken a people out of the world
3. The Father has given that people to Christ
4. The Father has given to Christ authority over all people
5. So that Christ would give eternal life to all those the Father has given to Him
6. And that eternal life was defined as knowing the Father and the Son

D. Jesus has all that in mind in His first petition that the Father glorify the Son

III. **Praying for Whom?**

- ### A. But there’s something else we need to do with this text to fully understand it

1. We need to understand for whom Jesus is praying
- B. Decidedly, Jesus is not praying for everyone in the entire world!
 1. You may have a hard time with that; you may wrestle with the implications of that
 - a. But you must hear what Jesus says as He prays
- C. **John 17:6–9** (ESV) —
 1. 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.
 2. 7 Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you.
 3. 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.
 4. 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.
- D. Jesus is not praying for the world, or everyone in the world
 1. He is praying for those disciples who have been given to Him by the Father
 - a. But that’s not all...
- E. **John 17:20** (ESV) —
 1. 20 “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word...”
- F. Jesus doesn’t pray for the world
 1. He prays for His disciples – whom the Father gave Him out of the world
 2. And not just for the disciples who are present with Jesus
 - a. The 12 (minus Judas); the 11
 3. Not just for them
 - a. But for all those who will believe in Jesus through their word
 4. For you and me!
 - a. Because we have believed in Jesus through the testimony of these apostles
- G. So Jesus is praying – not for the world
 1. But for believers
 - a. Those present with Him in the upper room
 - b. Those who will believe in Him through their testimony
 2. Believers across the ages
- H. So Jesus’ pray is not for everybody
 1. But it is for us
 - a. If we are genuine believers
- I. And one more thing
 1. These disciples really do need Jesus’ prayers!
 2. Remember – these were a rag-tag bunch of Jewish fishermen, tax collectors, and political zealots!
 - a. They struggled to understand Jesus’ teaching
 - b. They jockeyed for prominent positions among the disciples

- c. They misunderstood His plain teaching about going to the cross
- d. They imagined Jesus to be a political-military Messiah who would overthrow the Romans
- e. They would scatter when Jesus was arrested and drug off to trial
- f. They would hide in fear in the days following the crucifixion
- 3. They really did need the specific prayers of the Son of God
 - a. And so do you
 - b. And so do I
- J. Jesus goes on in this prayer to describe these people for whom He is praying
 - 1. That in spite of their frailty, their failures
 - a. They have a number of qualities and characteristics that give Jesus confidence that His prayer for them (and for us) will be answered

IV. The Disciples

A. Belong to Jesus

- 1. **John 17:6** (ESV) —
 - a. 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...”
- 2. Jesus prays for these people – because they are His people
 - a. They belong to Him
 - b. The reason they belong to Him is because the Father gave them to Jesus
 - c. They belonged to the Father – and He gave them to Jesus
 - d. So He prays for them – because they are His people
- 3. And He prays for us in this prayer
 - a. Why?
 - b. Because we also belong to Jesus
 - c. We’re His people
 - d. The Father has taken us out of the world and given us to Jesus
 - e. So He prays for us – because we belong to Him

B. Kept the Word

- 1. **John 17:6** (ESV) —
 - a. 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.”
- 2. These disciples have kept the Word of the Father
 - a. The Word the Father gave to the Son
 - b. The Word the Son preached to them
- 3. They may not have understood all of the things Jesus taught them
 - a. But whatever they did understand – they kept the Word
 - b. They believed the Word
 - c. They obeyed the Word
 - d. Not perfectly
 - e. But substantially
 - f. Enough so that Jesus could say about them, that they kept the

Word of God

4. Can the same be said for you?
 - a. Do you keep the Word?
5. Jesus prays for these people – and for us – confident that His prayers will not be in vain
 - a. But will be answered affirmatively
 - b. Because the people He's praying for have kept the Word

C. Convinced of Jesus

1. **John 17:7-8** (ESV) —
 - a. 7 “Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you.
 - b. 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.”
2. They've heard Jesus teach the Word of the Father
 - a. Taught authoritatively
 - b. They've believed the Word
 - c. They've observed the power of Jesus in His healings and miracles
3. So they are convinced that Jesus came from the Father
 - a. That the Father sent the Son
 - b. The Son of God incarnate
 - c. The Messiah
4. They're convinced on Jesus
 - a. He's the Christ, the Son of the Living God – the Messiah
5. Are you convinced of Jesus?
 - a. You don't have to understand everything about Him
 - b. But do you understand enough to know that He came from God?
 - c. That He is who He claimed to be – the incarnate Son of God?

D. Glorifying Jesus

1. **John 17:9-10** (ESV) —
 - a. 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.
 - b. 10 All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.”
2. In spite of their frailties
 - a. In spite of their weaknesses
 - b. In spite of their failures
 - c. In spite of their doubts
 - d. They glorify Christ
3. How do they glorify Christ?
 - a. They do it by testifying about Him
 - b. They do it by obeying Him
 - c. They do it by loving Him
 - d. Loving Christ is perhaps the most glorifying thing you can do for Christ

- e. In loving Christ you place your deepest and most profound affections on Jesus
- 4. That's why Jesus asked Peter in Peter's restoration – "Do you love Me?"
 - a. The most important thing Peter can do to glorify Christ is to love Him
- 5. And so with us
 - a. Do you love Jesus?
 - b. Do you obey Jesus?
 - c. Do you follow Jesus?
 - d. Do you testify about Jesus?
 - e. Do you declare what He has done for you?
- E. **In the World**
 - 1. **John 17:11** (ESV) —
 - a. 11 "And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. ..."
 - 2. Jesus is leaving the world
 - a. But they are staying
 - b. And that's why they need prayer
 - c. They are staying in the world
 - d. And the world is a nasty place
 - e. The world is not safe
 - f. And Jesus is leaving them in this treacherous, dangerous, inhospitable, antagonistic world
- F. **Not of the World**
 - 1. Remember – **John 17:6** (ESV) — 6 "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world..."
 - 2. God the Father took these people out of the world
 - a. He gave them to Jesus
 - b. And Jesus leaves them in the world
 - 3. **John 17:14** (ESV) —
 - a. 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."
 - 4. So these disciples – and we also
 - a. Are in the world
 - b. But not of the world
 - 5. That's why Jesus prays for these disciples
 - a. And for us
 - 6. We belong to Jesus
 - a. We've kept the Word
 - b. We're convinced of Jesus
 - c. We're glorifying Christ – even if in fits and starts
 - 7. But we're in the world
 - a. This broken world
 - b. This hate-filled world
 - c. This dangerous world

- d. Where we're vulnerable
- 8. And we're not of the world
 - a. And so we need prayer

V. **The Second Petition: Keep Them**

A. **John 17:11** (ESV) —

- 1. 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...”
- 2. Keep them – protect them
 - a. The world is not safe
 - b. They're vulnerable
 - c. They're in danger
 - d. Keep them – protect them
 - e. Guard them
 - f. Sustain them
 - g. Don't let them be lost

B. **In Your Name**

- 1. “Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me...”
- 2. What name has the Father given to the Son?
- 3. **Philippians 2:9–11** (ESV) —
 - a. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,
 - b. 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
 - c. 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
- 4. The name the Father has given to the Son is not Jesus
 - a. The name is Lord
 - b. “Jesus Christ is Lord”
 - c. The Sovereign One
 - d. The One who has been given all authority in heaven and on earth
- 5. Jesus is praying that these believers – and we believers – will be kept under the name of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - a. Under the authority of Jesus Christ
 - b. In the Kingdom of Jesus Christ
 - c. That we would never stray outside of His Lordship
- 6. That doesn't mean these disciples might be free from suffering
 - a. That doesn't mean that these disciples might not be persecuted
 - b. That doesn't mean that these disciples might not be murdered
 - c. Remember – not too many days from this upper room encounter, Stephen would be stoned to death
 - d. The apostle James, the brother of John, would be murdered by Herod
- 7. That doesn't mean that we might be free from suffering

- a. That we might not be persecuted
 - b. That we might not be incarcerated for our faith
 - c. That we might not be killed
8. But it does mean that whatever might befall these disciples – and us – we would never fall outside of the loving authority of the Lord Jesus Christ
- a. That whatever happens to us – we would not be lost
9. **John 17:12** (ESV) —
- a. 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.”
 - b. Jesus kept them – guarded them
 - c. Kept them in the name – in the Lord
 - d. Did it perfectly
 - e. Only Judas was lost
 - f. And He was the son of destruction – he never was found
10. Jesus says, “Father, I kept them. I’m leaving the world. They are staying in the world. They are vulnerable”
- a. “Keep them – just as I have kept them”
 - b. “Keep every one of them”
11. Are you secure? Are you safe in the world?
- a. Not that you won’t find suffering, danger, or even death
 - b. But that your faith will not fail
 - c. That you will stay under the authority of the Lord Jesus?
12. If you are safe in the world – it’s not because you are such a great Christian
- a. It’s because Jesus – the eternally begotten Son of God
 - b. God incarnate
 - c. Your Savior
 - d. The Lord who has authority over everything
 - e. Because this Jesus prayed that you would be kept
13. And what does the scripture say?
- a. “The effectual and fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much”
 - b. If the effectual and fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much, how much more does the effectual and fervent prayer avail when it comes from the eternally begotten Son of God?
 - c. You are kept – because Jesus prayed for you
- C. **That They May Be One**
1. **John 17:11** (ESV) —
- a. 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.”
2. “Keep them, Father – that they may be one”
- a. That they would be on the same page
 - b. Just as the Father and the Son are one

3. That there would be a unity among the people of God, all believers, throughout all time
 - a. That the fundamentals of the faith would be the conviction of the Church of all ages
 - b. That the God of the Bible, the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit – would be supreme in our affections
 - c. That the Word of God would be recognized for its authority and for its inerrancy
 - d. That the person of Christ as the incarnate God-man; God come in the flesh would be universally acknowledged by the Church
 - e. That the atoning work of Jesus Christ – who lived a life we could not live, died in our place taking upon Himself the just punishment for our sins – would be believed and obeyed
 - f. That we would have that unity of the faith

D. **That They May Have Joy**

1. **John 17:13** (ESV) —
 - a. 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.”
2. That the overriding disposition of the people of God would be joy
 - a. In spite of the dangerous world
 - b. In spite of the suffering that we must endure
3. But that we might have the very joy of Jesus
 - a. Who, “for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising its shame” (**Hebrews 12.2**)
 - b. “Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied” (**Isaiah 53.11**)
4. We are a people in this community who go through a great deal of loss
 - a. That’s what happens in this stage of life
 - b. And it’s hard
5. Jesus prays for you that you would be kept – in the Lord
 - a. And that you would be kept so that you might have the joy of Jesus
 - b. And that joy is not dependent on your circumstances
6. Jesus is praying for you in LHC as much as He is praying for you in this building
 - a. “That they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves”
7. Christian, don’t act like you’ve been baptized in vinegar
 - a. You’ve been cleansed by the blood of Christ
 - b. You’ve been sanctified by the Spirit of Christ
 - c. Jesus has prayed for you to be kept
 - d. You have every reason for joy

E. **From the Evil One**

1. **John 17:15** (ESV) —
 - a. 15 “I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.”
2. “Don’t take them out of the world – the world with all its dangers”

- a. "The world that is not safe"
- b. "The world is Satanic!"
- 3. "But keep them from the evil one – from Satan"
- 4. That no matter what plagues the people of God
 - a. Satan would have to keep his dirty paws off of the people who belong to Jesus
 - b. Those whom the Father has given to Jesus
 - c. To Jesus – the One to whom the Father has given all authority in heaven, on earth, and under the earth
- 5. Keep us safe in the world
 - a. Safe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ