

# Jesus Praying For Us

John 17:9-17



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**FOCAL** John 17:9-17<sup>KJV</sup> I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. (10) And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. (11) And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. (12) While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled. (13) And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. (14) 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. (15) I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. (16) They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. (17) Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

I was talking to a dear lady just the other day about the so called *avian flu*. This lady, a devout Christian, wanted to know what we were going to do to help in the coming *potential U.S. pandemic*. I told the dear lady that my plans was to keep on telling others about Jesus Christ, and that faith in His atoning Blood is the only thing that will keep a soul out of that place of eternal burning, a place Jesus referred to as "a **furnace of fire where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth**" (Matthew 13:42).

I don't want to be judgmental, but why are Christians worried about things *that are not*? I had to look up the word "pandemic" to find out what it meant. The word "pandemic" means **"an epidemic occurring over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people"**. In short, the difference between a *pandemic* and an *epidemic* is that the pandemic is supposed to wipe out whole nations. That in itself sounds frightening. *Could* the avian flu wipe out the United States? Sure it could - all things are possible. It is also *possible* that Red China - which now, according to the *Central Intelligence Agency*<sup>1</sup> has around 1,306,313,812 people - *could* decide to come in military force and overthrow the United States. According to the CIA, communist China *could* field an army of 342,956,265 if it so desired. The largest army the United States could field would be 67,742,879, if we drafted every male between the ages of 18-49 years old<sup>2</sup>. In other words, the *potential* Chinese armed forces is roughly **19 times greater** than the *potential* United States armed forces.

Why did I tell you all this? Was it just to frighten you? Absolutely not! But I do pray that you, as Christians, cease looking at the world through the *worldview of the lost*, and begin to look at all things through the *worldview of Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord*. When we look at what *might* happen or what *could* happen and begin to let our imaginations run wild, we are playing the devil's game. A recent article in *Science and Theology*

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1 according to the CIA *Factbook*, online at <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ch.html>  
2 <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/us.html>

News stated<sup>3</sup>:

**"The avian flu, which has claimed more than 80 lives worldwide, could kill 209,000 to 1.9 million Americans, the Center for Disease Control estimates. The actual numbers will depend, in part, on how well public and private sectors work together."**

The whole article talks about what *could* be. The lost, looking at these articles, focus on what *could* happen. What *has* happened, though, is that **80 people to date have died worldwide** from this thing. Hear me! 80 people! Certainly I do not want to diminish the death of even one soul, for all life is precious, but here are some *real figures* to look at. According to the **Centers for Disease Control** (these statistics are all available at <http://cdc.gov>) the following *real deaths* occur in the United States *every year*<sup>4</sup>:

**430,000 - tobacco use**

**81,000 - alcohol**

**41,000 - motor vehicles**

**30,000 - suicide**

**19,000 - homicide**

**17,000 - AIDs**

**3,400 - unknown foodborne agents**

Considering that the *avian flu* has only killed **80 people worldwide**, I think we need to stop worrying about what is not and start worrying about the reality. Jesus said:

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3 *Science and Theology News*, February 2006, page 13, by Kevin Ferguson  
4 [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/research\\_data/health\\_consequences/andths.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/research_data/health_consequences/andths.htm)

**Matthew 6:33-34<sup>HCSB</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things [food, clothing, provision of your needs] will be provided for you. (34) Therefore don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.**

God is in control of all things, even the icky things. It is a reality that people can and do die. It is also a reality that *10 out of 10 people* will die of something. This body is not meant to be forever. However, if we tell others about that wonderful salvation found only by faith in Jesus Christ then, no matter what may come, we will one day be with our Savior and Lord in Heaven.

**"Whosoever believes in Jesus will not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:15).** This promise is so precious, so important to our worldview, that Jesus repeated it twice as He spoke to another unbeliever long ago. He said in this well known text:

**John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**

What is important to the Christian worldview? Is it not to tell others about Jesus Christ, to tell them that faith in His *finished work* saves? When Jesus prayed for His Church just before going to that hill called Calvary, He

prayed:

**FOCAL** John 17:15 I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil [one].

The Church is to be *in* the world, but the world must not be *in the Church*. The prayer that Jesus prayed had both a *positive* as well as a *negative* request. The two parts of that prayer are:

negative: **I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world**

positive: **but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil [one]**

Let's focus on this prayer for a moment.

### 1. The Negative Answered: The Church MUST Be In The World

Jesus prayed:

**FOCAL** John 17:15 I pray not<sup>5</sup> that thou shouldst take them out of the world ...

The Church that Jesus died for has a mission in this world, and Jesus never prayed that we be taken out of

<sup>5</sup> Present Active Indicative of G2065, ἐρωτάω, erōtaō, er-o-tah'-o, apparently from G2046 (compare G2045); to *interrogate*; by implication to *request*: - ask, beseech, desire, intreat, pray. Compare G4441. + the negative οὐ= "I am not requesting" (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries)

this world. In ancient times there were *monasteries* where so called *monks* and *nuns* gathered to live and to worship God. The idea behind the monastery was that these people, certainly sincere in their faith, could only draw close to God while in seclusion. Some *cloisters* or sects of monks took *vows of silence*, reasoning that this would give them more time to focus on God. All this goes to prove that Christians, even sincere Christians, often misinterpret the words of Christ when we do not interpret this Holy Word *through the power of God's Holy Spirit*. Jesus literally said to the Father **"I am not requesting that you take them out from the world"**. The Church cannot afford to be *cloistered* from the world, for if it is it can *never* fulfill it's mission.

Before Jesus ascended into Heaven we see His last "first incarnation" teaching. The disciples asked Jesus:

**Acts 1:6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?**

They wanted to know if Jesus was going to **restore again the kingdom to Israel**. They wanted to know if Jesus was going to overthrow Rome, casting down the enemies of God, and set up His Millennial Kingdom, His *thousand year reign* on the earth. Jesus replied:

**Acts 1:7-8 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own**

**power. (8) But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.**

Our Lord told us to *stop worrying about times and seasons* - God controls all these things. At the proper time God the Father will tell God the Son, **"Son, go bring My Children home"**, and no force in Heaven and earth will stop Jesus. The Lord told the disciples to *stop worrying about Rome and the Millennial Kingdom*. Instead the disciples were to be focused on the reality that **they would receive power from God after God the Holy Spirit came and indwelt them**. Once they received **God's Spirit**, they were to focus on **being witnesses for Jesus in Jerusalem** [their home], **Judaea** [their friends], **in Samaria** [those who were NOT their friends but strangers], **and unto the uttermost part of the earth** [everywhere you walk, you tell them about Jesus]. This was the challenge that Jesus laid out for His Church. **John Gill**<sup>6</sup> states:

**"[Jesus] had much work for them to do, by preaching the Gospel, for the conversion of sinners and comfort of saints; and it was for His interest they should live longer; and it would make most for His glory .."**

It would have been no great feat for the Lord to draw the

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<sup>6</sup> John Gill's *Exposition of the Bible*

Church to Heaven, just as He drew the Savior to Heaven. But there is a big difference between Jesus Christ and the Church: Jesus finished His work - our work has just begun! When Jesus died on the Cross He cried out:

**John 19:30 ... It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.**

The work of Calvary is done! Jesus paid for our sins. Whoever believes on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. This is a *once and for all sanctification*, as the Scripture says:

**Hebrews 10:10 ... we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once [for all].**

His work - offering that **atonement for sin** - is finished. But our work is not finished. Jesus tells us:

**Matthew 5:14-16 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. (15) Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. (16) Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.**

We who are the Church, the *called out ones*, the *saved by faith in Jesus* are called to be the **Light of the world, the city of God**. The Church is called to be in the world, telling the world that faith in Jesus Christ alone saves. The Church is called to be in the world telling the world *through the power of God's Spirit* that Hell is sure, that death is certain, and that judgment is coming. The world **MUST** accept Christ as Savior, else those in die in their sins apart from God in Christ shall *surely* spend eternity apart from God.

**Illustrate:** Jesus Christ referred to those who believe in Him as the **light of the world**. We are not light because we are pure in ourselves. We are light because we preach Jesus Christ in the power of God! Let me illustrate. Would someone turn off the lights? Do you notice now the darkness in this place? The world is a place of darkness, just as sure as this room is dark. Jesus left the Church in the world to carry the light of the Gospel to a lost and dying world. As I light this candle you see how the darkness retreats from the light. As I light more candles, more light comes into the room.

If the only preaching of the Gospel comes during the regular meetings of the Church, then a little light goes into the world, but only a little. The Lord designed His Church to carry the light out *into the world*. We are to tell others about Jesus. Jesus said:

**John 8:12 ... I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.**

If you have the **Light of Life**, Jesus Christ in you, then **walk in Light**. Tell others what Jesus has done for you. When we tell others about Jesus Christ, and tell others that salvation is **by faith alone in Christ alone**, we glorify God the Son. Jesus said in His prayer:

**FOCAL** John 17:9-17KJV I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. (10) And **all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.**

What must the Church when it gathers be focused on? It must focus on **glorifying Jesus, and praising God for the Cross and the empty tomb!** What must the Church when it scatters, going into the world, be focused on? Each member must focus on **glorifying Jesus, and telling others about the Cross and the empty tomb!**

One of the saddest indictments that can be made against a Christian is that the unbeliever does not know you to be one. Oh my Beloved, Jesus warned us:

Mark 8:38 **Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.**

That beloved Preacher, C.H. Spurgeon said:<sup>7</sup>

**"[the Apostle Paul] could not restrain himself from preaching "Woe is unto me" he said "if I preach not the gospel, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Christ." Oh! if you could have seen Paul preach, you would not have gone away as you do from some of us, with half a conviction, that we do not mean what we say. His eyes preached a sermon without his lips, and his lips preached it, not in a cold and frigid manner, but every word fell with an overwhelming power upon the hearts of his hearers. He preached with power, because he was in downright earnest. You had a conviction, when you saw him, that he was a man who felt he had a work to do and must do it, and could not contain himself unless he did do it. He was the kind of preacher whom you would expect to see walk down the pulpit stairs straight into his coffin, and then stand before his God, ready for his last account, Where are the men like that man? I confess I cannot claim that privilege, and I seldom hear a solitary sermon which comes up to the mark in earnest, deep, passionate longing for the souls of men."**

The Church that belongs to Jesus is to remain in the world, constantly telling others to turn to Jesus. Would you reform America and see a great revival in it? Tell others about Jesus. Would you see the number of abortions decrease in America (1.29 million abortions

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<sup>7</sup> in his sermon *Gospel Missions*, APRIL 27, 1856, AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK, on behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society.

took place in 2002<sup>8</sup>)? Then tell others that salvation is by faith in Christ Jesus. Once God saves a soul, He enters that person to ever draw them to God. Once saved, the believer saved by faith becomes:

**2 Corinthians 5:17 ... a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.**

We are not only **workers for God**, but we also become the **workmanship of God**, created by God to do good works. Those who are saved by faith in Christ are God's:

**Ephesians 2:10 ... workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.**

Along with the Apostle, I am:

**Philippians 1:6 ... confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ:**

What God begins, He will finish. God decreed that David be King of Israel. Though Saul chased him and hounded him, David was still King of Israel. God decreed that Israel be freed from Egypt. Though Pharaoh stood against God, it was like a Tsunami standing against a leaf in the wind. Pharaoh had to release Israel -

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.prb.org/>

God's Will will be done! God decreed that Israel enter the Promised Land. Though the first Generation rejected, murmured, and died in the wilderness as payment for their efforts, Israel yet entered the Promised Land. Page after page in Scripture reminds us that God is Sovereign, and will do all that He pleases.

Listen Beloved, the world will hate you just as it hated Jesus. Our Lord even said as He prayed:

**FOCAL John 17:14 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.**

It is normal for the world to hate you, because you are not of this world. As we sing,

**This world is not my home,  
I'm just a passing through!**

As we pass through, we redeem the time by telling others about Jesus. We who believe

**1 Peter 3:15 ... sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and [be] ready always to [give] an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:**

As lives change we impact our world by leading others

to Jesus. As people receive Jesus Christ as Savior, the Spirit of God lives in them leading them along paths of righteousness.

Now let's look at the other half of Christ's prayer:

## 2. The Positive Answered: The Church To Be Protected From Satanic Forces

Jesus prayed:

**FOCAL** John 17:15 I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep<sup>9</sup> them from the evil [one].

Listen my Beloved: the Church *cannot* be destroyed from without, but it *can be destroyed from within*. Jesus prayed that His Church would be *guarded from the Evil One* or from Satan and his forces. This is still a very important prayer, and I beseech you to pray it even today. Jesus Christ built His Church on the *truths of the Word of God*:

**Matthew 16:18 ... upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not**

<sup>9</sup> G5083, τηρέω, tēreō, tay-reh'-o, From τηρός teros (a watch; perhaps akin to G2334); to guard (from loss or injury, properly by keeping the eye upon; and thus differing from G5442, which is properly to prevent escaping; and from G2892, which implies a fortress or full military lines of apparatus), that is, to note (a prophecy; figuratively to fulfil a command); by implication to detain (in custody; figuratively to maintain); by extension to withhold (for personal ends; figuratively to keep unmarried): - hold fast, keep (-er), (ob-, pre-, re) serve, watch., (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries)

**prevail against it.**

The **gates of hell**, that is, the powers of the Evil One cannot overcome the Church that Jesus died for. As long as the Church stands on the Word of God - not just on it's doctrine, but on *the applies truths of that Scripture* - then the Church cannot be defeated. Jesus wanted us to know that the Church is unconquerable from without. But our Lord did pray that God the Father would **guard us from the Evil One**, guard us from Satan.

If he gets a toe hold in the Church through any of its members, this cancer can grow until it consumes the whole. This is why Jesus prayed:

**FOCAL** John 17:17 ... **Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.**

The Church is established on the Truth of God's Word, not on the fabrication of man's opinion. The following quote is from the **National Center For Science Education**:

"For far too long, strident voices, in the name of Christianity, have been claiming that people must choose between religion and modern science. **More than 10,000 Christian clergy have already signed The Clergy Letter demonstrating that this is a false dichotomy. Now, on the 197th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin, many of these leaders will bring this message to their congregations through sermons and/or discussion groups. Together, participating religious leaders will be making the**

statement that religion and science are not adversaries. And, together, they will be elevating the quality of the national debate on this topic." At last count, 365 congregations in 49 states were scheduled to hold Evolution Sunday events; they are listed at the Clergy Letter Project website.

Evolution Sunday is the successor to Zimmerman's successful Clergy Letter Project, in which over 10,000 members of the Christian clergy signed a statement reading, in part, "We believe that the theory of evolution is a foundational scientific truth, one that has stood up to rigorous scrutiny and upon which much of human knowledge and achievement rests. To reject this truth or to treat it as 'one theory among others' is to deliberately embrace scientific ignorance and transmit such ignorance to our children. We believe that among God's good gifts are human minds capable of critical thought and that the failure to fully employ this gift is a rejection of the will of our Creator. ... We urge school board members to preserve the integrity of the science curriculum by affirming the teaching of the theory of evolution as a core component of human knowledge. We ask that science remain science and that religion remain religion, two very different, but complementary, forms of truth."<sup>10</sup>

By the way, this was supposed to be Evolution Sunday in churches all across America. I hope you don't mind, but I'll not be endorsing this evil teaching from the Evil One. What did Jesus pray for His Church?

**FOCAL** John 17:17 ... **Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.**

The Word of God teaches that God made all things in *six literal, 24 hour days*. Charles Darwin, following the lies of his father Satan, taught that the world was created by *accident over millions of years*. Jesus upheld the Word of God, and believed in the teachings of that Word of God. As Christians we must continue to guard against the Evil One and his forces. When the Church becomes governed by *opinion of man* and not by the *clear teachings of God's Word*, then we open the door to the Evil One.

Jesus prayed that God would protect us from the Evil One. We need to continue in that prayer. Just as God is alive and well, Satan is alive and well. We must continually guard against a *Satanic worldview* in our lives, or in the life of the Church. Remember,

**Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.**

Our enemy is Satan and Satanic thought, worldliness, the works of the flesh. Christians are called to remember that we are not called to befriend the world, but to love the world by telling it about Jesus Christ. We are to live our faith, loving our neighbor as we love our God. We are to

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.ncseweb.org>

do good, and avoid contention. We are not to approach the world like it is our mother, and allow her to lead us around by the ear like little children. God is Sovereign, in control of all things, and has invited us to tell others about Jesus. Along the Apostle I encourage you to

**Ephesians 4:1-3 ... walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, (2) With all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; (3) Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.**

Follow Jesus, follow God's Word. Ask yourselves before you do anything, would your action be worthy of Christ? Tell others to come to Jesus while there is yet time.

May God touch your hearts with this word.

