

John 17:11b-19

¹¹Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. ¹²While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. ¹³“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Introduction

With various services and products, quite often providers will offer a package deal. For example, my insurance company gives me a package deal on my cars, my home, possessions, and liability. Communication companies offer technology packages for telephone, internet, and cable TV. Often the package deals are a good deal.

God’s is. The package Christ won for us and God gives to us through faith includes forgiveness, peace, joy, strength, hope, the ability to cope, confidence, wisdom, meaning for life, eternal life and more. As we listen to Jesus, during the Last Supper, pray his High Priestly prayer for his followers, it’s clear that **God’s Blessing Package Includes Protection**. Jesus prayed, **“Holy Father, protect them.”** Jesus talks about **God’s reasons** and **God’s resources**.

God’s Reason’s for Protecting Us

In our lives we seek protection for a lot of reasons. There may be threatening people around us. We don’t want loved ones lost or hurt. We may have valuables that we don’t want people to steal. So we strive to protect ourselves, our loved ones, and our valued things. Why does Jesus pray for protection? Why does God give it?

- **#1 - Obviously one reason is love.** Jesus loves his disciples. When you love someone, you protect them. Remember 1 Corinthians 13 – **“It always protects...”** So out of love, Jesus prays for protection for his followers. Out of love God the Father protects us.

- **#2 - Another reason is God wants his disciples to be one as God the Father and God the Son (and God the Holy Spirit) are one (v. 11).** God’s desire is for his Church is that believers be united in faith. While God is pleased that many believe in the Triune God and in Jesus Christ as Savior, the fractured nature of the Church must be a disappointment to God. So Jesus prays for protection for his disciples that they and we be one.

This raises the question, “If God wants unity, why didn’t God stop the fracturing of the Christian church and hold us together in one big, unified church body – East from West, Protestant from Catholic, Protestant from Protestant, Lutheran from Lutheran? That’s like asking why God didn’t stop Judas from being tempted to betray Jesus. God foreknew Judas’s fall, but did not will it. God foreknew it and worked it into his plan of salvation. Likewise, God did not will the dividing of the Christian Church but foreknew that it would happen. Yet, God protects his elect from falling from faith. He protects us from losing his word.

Still God wants us to strive for unity. But the way to it is not through agreeing to disagree or disregarding teaching of Scripture that people don’t like to have unity. The way to unity is through faithfulness to God’s word. This means letting God’s word interpret itself. This means looking at the setting, the meaning

of words and what the rest of the Bible says about a topic. Strive to be faithful to God's word. Pray for unity in God's Church. For there to be unity in God's Church, we need God to protect us from false teaching, not letting our reason dictate principles but God's word. So Jesus prayed.

- **#3 - A third reason Jesus prayed for their protection is that Jesus wanted his followers have the full measure of his joy (v. 13).** This joy comes through the Jesus' words as he speaks to his followers of his love, his presence, his power, his payment for our sin, the pardon we enjoy through him, and the place we have in God's family forever. This joy also comes through the knowledge that God is always with us and protecting us. Doesn't knowing that God and his angels are protecting you give you joy?
- **#4 - A fourth reason for Jesus' request is the world hates the followers of Jesus (14).** This is obvious when we look at the ministry of Christ and the opposition he faced. Look at the Book of Acts and you see God's followers imprisoned, persecuted, and put to death. The world still hates the followers of Jesus today. Open Doors, a Christian missionary society, estimates that presently 1 million Christians are being persecuted for their faith. Consider how the media and entertainment world view Christianity. Why do we have Freedom from Religion organizations and atheist action groups? Consider what happens on many college campuses when Christians openly confess their faith. Have you found yourself criticized for your faith in Jesus or faithfulness to his word? We need protection because the world hates us.
- **#5 - Jesus also pointed to the presence of the "evil one" (v.15) – the devil.** As the world hates us, the devil wants us. Working in cooperation with the evil world and finding sympathy from our sinful nature, the devil seeks to lead us astray and away from Jesus and into eternal destruction. We need protection from the devil. Jesus also knew the potential his followers have to follow the evil one and pursue sin. Our sinful nature produces that potential and more than we realize we succumb to it – in self-centeredness lies, in laziness, and in lifestyles God labels sinful. We need protection from the devil.
- **#6 - Another reason Jesus prayed for protection was that Jesus sanctified himself that his followers might be sanctified (v.17, 19).** To sanctify means to cleanse and/or set apart. God the Son set himself apart to serve as the Savior of the world and took on human nature in the person of Jesus. He put himself under the Law over which he is Lord with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He did that to fulfill it in our behalf. He set himself apart as the sinless Savior who would die on the cross. As a result he has provided us with cleansing through the forgiveness of sins. We enjoy this through faith in Jesus. When the Holy Spirit brought us to faith, he set us apart to be part of God's family. Because of his big investment in us and the fact that we followers of Jesus are his family, God protects us.
- **#7 - Finally Jesus' has a mission for his disciples.** Jesus didn't set apart the twelve or the rest of us followers of Jesus so that we could twiddle our thumbs and wait for Jesus to come and get us. Jesus' plan for his apostles was that they go out into the world and preach the gospel to people. He wanted them to gather disciples baptizing and teaching. That his plan and purpose for us too. We are not here to see how much money we can make, fun we can have or fame we can acquire. He wants us to be his witnesses with our ways and our words. As this is his plan and purpose for us, he wants God to protect us in this hostile world. And God does.

God's Resources

Transition: As I visit homes, I notice different methods people use to provide security. There are the simple locks we use on doors and windows. There are alarm systems. Some places have security cameras. Some people and places have guard dogs. Other places have guards such as gated communities or people who live in palaces. They use different means or resources for protection. Jesus also prayed about resources for our protection and that of all his followers. To what did he refer?

- **A) One resource Jesus asked his Heavenly Father not to use was his power to remove Jesus' followers from this world (v.14,15).** While Jesus didn't want his disciples to be of the world or worldly, he didn't want his father to take all his followers from the world. Remember Jesus' plan and purpose. We are in

this world to witness to him. We are here to be salt that has a preserving effect on society. We are to serve as light to show the way to Jesus and reflect his love to others. While God has a set time for us in this world, Jesus doesn't want us all raptured from the world. His plan is to use us as his workers and witnesses while in this world.

- **B) One resource Jesus mentions is the power of God's name (v.11,12).** How can someone's name protect people? If you knew that something or someone belongs to the head of the Sinaloa drug cartel in Mexico, would you take that something or hurt that someone? These days if you are part of the president's family, that name carries with it protection. The same thing with those who have God's name and are called Christian, or children of God. We have God's security force in terms of a legion of angels that looks out for us. So Jesus is praying that God and his security forces look out for his disciples. They do today. As we are assured in passages like, **"The Angel of the Lord (the Lord himself) encamps around those who fear him (Ps. 34:7)."** Or **"He will command his angels to keep you in all your ways (Ps. 91:11)?"** God's blessing package includes protection.
- **C) Another source to which Jesus refers is the power of God's word (v.17).** God's word is described in various ways. It is a sharp, probing sword that reveals sin but also heals souls (Heb. 4:12). It is a fire that burns off impurity and a crushing hammer that breaks the hardness of the heart – **"Is not my word like a fire and like hammer that breaks rock into pieces (Jer.23:29)."** **"It is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes,"** Paul wrote in Romans 1:16. The word of God gives guidance - **"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path (Ps. 119:105)."** The word of God enlightens us in the darkness caused by sin - **"The precepts of the Lord are right giving joy to the heart (Ps. 19:8)."** The word of God gives us power to resist the devil – **"Be strong in the Lord and his mighty power ...Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God (Eph. 6:10ff, esp. 17)."** It keeps us apart from the unbelieving world (Jn17:17) even though physically we disciples of Jesus remain in the world – **"Sanctify them by the truth, your word is truth."**

But for God's Word to do all these things, use it, hear it, read it, think about it, pray about it. Just as an air conditioner on warm days won't keep you cool if it isn't on, God's word doesn't work if it isn't in you.

Conclusion: Package deals are often good deals. God's blessing package is. One reason - it includes protection. Amen.