

PP Alien Invasion: We Come in Peace

Part 4-John 17:15-23

4/30-5/1/2016

Illus Many years ago, Johann Lukasse of the Belgian Evangelical Mission came to the realization that evangelism in Belgium was getting nowhere. The land seemed impervious to the Gospel. Driven to John 13, he devised a plan. First he gathered a group of Christian volunteers- Belgians, Dutch, Americans-and had them rent a house and live together for seven months. Naturally, frictions developed as the believers rubbed against one another. This, in turn sent them to prayer for love and victory. Finally, they went out to witness to others and they began to see amazing fruit. Outsiders called them “the people who love each other.”

What is the ultimate goal of the church?

Surprising to some perhaps, it is not missions

It is worship...always has been and will be for all eternity

Missions will end on the Day of Judgment but worship will endure through eternity

If you and I are not enjoying Christ, growing in Him in glad exaltation and love for Him, then like the hotel girl, we have a poor and ineffective witness to the salvation of Jesus Christ

We are being challenged in this sermon series to live powerfully among the people of this world

PP *“Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles [‘Aliens and strangers’-NASB] to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.” 1 Peter 2:11-12*

Open to **John 17:15** and let’s learn how to live powerfully in a world not our home

PP 1-We are not of this world (17:15-17)

Imagine a woman who doesn’t not believe there is a God, opening a bible in her hotel room, reading of the life of Jesus Christ, when suddenly her heart responds and she sees the truth, and believes it, and cries out for salvation

Saved, her body begins to dematerialize and God beams her up to heaven for the rest of eternity

Didn’t even have to pull out a Communicator and ask Scotty to beam her up: just automatic

The reality in salvation is very different, and the prayer of Jesus shows us what it is

“I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.”
17:15

Jesus doesn’t pray for our escape, but for our protection

But as His disciples here, they *“are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.”*

We are not made for this world, we have been remade, reborn for another

This past week my mountain bike sold to someone in Michigan who saw it on Craigslist

He used PayPal, it was boxed up and sent up to Michigan and now it belongs to a new owner

Church, we have been pur-chased by God, He paid for us with the death of His Son, and He transferred us to His family, adopting us, sealing us into His Son’s name

PP So Christian, *“You are not our own, for you were bought with a price” 1 Corinthians 6:20*

PP *“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son”* Colossians 1:13

Listen to what Jesus prays next, *“Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”* 17:16-17

PP The word *‘Sanctify’* has a basic meaning of *different or separate or set apart*

PP It also means holy, clean or pure

PP We see this second nuance in 1 Corinthians 6:11, *“But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God”*

Both meanings are to be taken together and when we do, we understand Christ to be praying,

PP *“Sanctify them [purify, consecrate, separate them for Yourself, make them holy] by the Truth; Your Word is Truth.”* The Amplified Bible

PP 2-We are sent into this world (17:18-19)

“As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.” 17:18-19

Christian, how can we effectively serve a lost world if we are not willing to be sent into it? Unless our churches live in the midst of the communities of unsaved people, how can we penetrate the darkness with the worship of our exalted Savior?

Martin Luther, the reformer, said that Christianity has to be a *‘profane faith’*

The word *‘profane’* means *out of the temple*, that Christians come to church for edification, worship, fellowship, but then go back into the world to bear witness to the glory of Christ

We are to enter the world, not live a life of detachment in a Christian subculture as our Savior did, Who involved Himself into humanity, among the very ones who needed saving

He saw human sin, heard human swearing, observed blasphemy, waded into human disease, there when humans died, dwelling among human poverty and hopeless

Our mission is the same mission of Christ’s in that we are sent to announce with our whole lives—word and deed—that the Father has sent the Son and He saves lost sinners

But be careful here, Jesus was sent by the Father to serve humanity, and so are we

But He served them by giving His life as a ransom for many, unique to His sending

Christ’s mission of redemption is unrepeatable, utterly unique

We don’t give our lives as a ransom, our deaths would not save even one person

Our message is not about us, it is about Jesus Christ

PP We have been given the *“ministry of reconciliation, that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their [sins] against them, entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.”* 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

‘Sanctify them in the truth’ of 17:17 and *‘sanctified in truth’* of 17:19 means that Christ equips His people by His Word for a heart, mind and character to accomplish His purposes and sending us into the world to do them

Christians are the sent ones of God, prepared by God Who has set them apart, making them holy, making them useful, by His Word

We are set apart by God, being sent into the world being prepared by the transforming power of His Word, to speak and show the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ

The reason that we are being sent into the world is that many in the world would worship Christ
 The reason is not most chiefly to bring comfort to the suffering
 It is not to be get water to the thirsty and food to the hungry
 The reason is not chiefly to dispense God's will in issues of justice to the marginalized
 These are all the outgrowths of gospel mission, the potential fruit of gospel mission
 But the chief aim of gospel is the exaltation and worship of Jesus Christ

This is precisely why we are multi-siting instead of building a mega-campus church
 We believe that what pierces the darkness of this world will not be socially active, good works
 dominant functions of a church
 Secular organizations are socially active and can be effective on many levels in communities
 What sets the church apart is the exaltation and worship of Jesus Christ
 We are deliberately going into areas with worshipping communities lifting up our Lord and Savior
 But there is a way we must do this...and that way is unity

PP 3-We are to be unified so the world will believe in Jesus (John 17:20-21)

Christian, Jesus is praying here for you and for me... *"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word" 17:20*
 And look at what He is praying: *"that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me." 17:20-21*

He prays for us asking that we may be one...that there may be unity among believers
 That makes unity among Christians a gift of grace, one which is given to us freely by God
 Unity among the disciples of Christ enables people in the world to believe Jesus is the Son of God sent for our salvation
 This isn't a call to get rid of denominations, for denominations allow Christians to worship in ways unique from others, yet still have a common bond among Christ-centered churches
 This isn't a call for every church to organize itself the same way, looking the same way
 It's is a call to unite around God's Word, all exalting God in the person of Jesus Christ
 Jesus says in this verse, true Christian unity comes from God...it is a request to His Father for us
 Unity among a church that is grounded in Scripture, speaks to the world about the reconciling work of Christ and becomes a powerful witness to the good news

The reason Jesus prays for our unity is that the world might believe in Jesus

PP Thomas Merton explains why unity is so important: *"Divisions in the church breed atheism in the world."*

Our unity makes the gospel believable, that lost sinners would believe and worship Christ

PP 4-We are to become perfectly one so the world will know God's love (John 17:22-23)

We just saw that unity among believers is essential for the world to believe our message
 What Jesus prays next is not a repeat of that, but a different prayer, that Christian unity would
 help unbelievers know the extent of God's love

There are a couple of thoughts in this final point that boggle my mind, and perhaps yours too
 The first is this: ***"The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one
 even as we are one"***

Just as Jesus showed the world Who God is, that task is now given to the church
 Similar, though vastly more important, Denise and I proudly say that our children belong to us,
 knowing that they can bring great honor to us or take it away

The Father and Son guard their glory, investing in their treasured possession, helping us to attain
 this unity: ***"I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one"*** 17:22-23
 Recall your wedding day when you and your spouse were united as one through your vows
 There is such a seamless unity in your marriage that should you divorce, it will be a separation
 forced along jagged lines, for there is no serrated edge to neatly separate in marriage
 Yet though God joins you together, you must work hard at learning to function in unity
 I often say when I do a wedding: *Enjoy your wedding day, now go make your marriage great*
 Similarly, unity is a gift of grace, yet all believers must strive to maintain it

There is one final statement here that staggers the mind when we really think on it: ***"so that the
 world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me."***
 The power of unity is the love of God and the incredible truth of this comes clearer when we
 discover that the Greek translated ***'even as'*** means *just as, or to the same degree a*

This is a truth so wonderful it is nearly unbelievable...God loves the Christian to the same
 degree that He loves His Son
 The love I have for my own children is vastly greater than the love I have for yours and is not the
 same true for you?
 As our minds grow in our understanding of this, it fills our hearts with worship
PP ***"God's love has been poured into our hearts [overflowing] through the Holy Spirit who
 has been given to us."*** **Romans 5:5**

The love we must have to experience world attention unity, mission-saturated worship, is God's
 love that He pours into our hearts for Him and overflows for each other
 Picture your heart as a container filled and overflowing with God's love
 You bump into me-*I hear that you gossiped about me, or criticized me*-and splashing on to you is
 God's love
 I bump into you-*I say something to offend you in a sermon, or don't reach out to you in a time of
 need*-splashing on to me is God's love
 Our effectiveness in the world is directly related to how well we maintain Christian unity

Christians, God has saved us through Christ, we are reborn by His power and we are no longer of
 the world
 We are set apart and increasingly so as His Word transforms us to serve, exalt, worship Christ
 His power is helping us to be unified so the world will see and believe and know the incredibly
 extent of the love of God for us

How could we not love each other, and maintain the unity God has given to us?

Amen

Pray