

***Jesus Prepares to Leave***  
John 17:1-11  
Free Lutheran Fellowship at Willow Springs  
May 4, 2008

Our children are growing up and in a couple years will start to leave home...that includes our youth group...Travis, Amy, Katie... We worry about them:  
Have we taught them well?  
Will they stand up to temptation?  
Will they find a godly spouse?  
How do we best let them go?

I suppose that is the way Jesus felt when he prayed his "high priestly" prayer in John 17. In a few weeks he would be gone into heaven. He would send the Holy Spirit, but it would be different. The disciples were confused and concerned.

Separation is inevitable. Job loss forces us to move away from friends and family. Death forces us to leave loved ones on earth. Leaving is a part of life.

Christ's John 17 prayer gives us some helpful *Separation* principles. First of all, we must remember that we are:

**I. SAVED FOR GOD'S GLORY**

*John 17:1-5 These things Jesus spoke; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee, 2 even as Thou gavest Him authority over all mankind, that to all whom Thou hast given Him, He may give eternal life. 3 "And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. 4 "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do. 5 "And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.*

As Jesus prays he has two primary concerns.  
One, GLORIFY GOD.  
Two, COMPLETE HIS WORK.

For Jesus, that meant the cross. This is illustrated by this story someone sent me called: **Giving When it Counts...** *Many years ago, when I worked as a volunteer at a hospital, I got to know a little girl named Liz who was suffering from a rare & serious disease. Her only chance of recovery appeared to be a blood transfusion from her 5-year old brother, who had miraculously survived the same disease and had developed the antibodies needed to combat the illness.*

*The doctor explained the situation to her little brother, and asked the little boy if he would be willing to give his blood to his sister. I saw him hesitate for only a moment before taking a deep breath and saying,  
"Yes I'll do it if it will save her."*

*As the transfusion progressed, he lay in bed next to his sister and smiled, as we all did, seeing the color returning to her cheek. Then his face grew pale and his smile faded. He looked up at the doctor and asked with a trembling voice, "Will I start to die right away?" Being young, the little boy had misunderstood the doctor; he thought he was going to have to give his sister all of his blood in order to save her.*

Jesus gave us **all** of his holy blood to save us. John 17:3 *"And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.* He completed his work and this glorified God. From a worldly point of view Jesus didn't look to successful... no possessions, few followers, death on a cross. But no one else has impacted history like Jesus.

As we prepare to release children, move or even die we need to consider what really matters. This is the important question: **"Did I make lots of money?" NO! It is: Did I complete the work God gave me to do?** Our assignment in this life may not be very glorious from a success magazine point of view but being a faithful Christian at home and at work brings glory to God. Even dying with grace is a noble assignment that each of us will be called upon to do for God's glory.

We need to be willing to let our loved ones follow the Lord into God's plan. God is glorified when we do His will, even if it means an obscure life or premature death.

WE ARE SAVED FOR GOD'S GLORY.

## **II. KEPT BY GOD'S POWER**

When children leave home you wonder how they will make it in the sinful world. They make it. When I have left churches people have begged me to stay and said how much I am needed. But before long they have a new pastor and the work goes on fine. When people die, there is a great sense of grief and loss as their homes are emptied and sold. But before long there is a new family in the old house, young children out in the yard playing and new life continues on.

The reason that we can pass the torch with confidence is that it is God is in charge. God saves us and God keeps us. It is His work. Notice verses 6&12 where Jesus said:

John 17:6&12 *"I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. **They were yours; you gave them to me** and they have obeyed your word. 12 **While 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.***

There is a parallel verse in Philippians 1. Paul is reflecting on his coming death. He says *to live is Christ and to die is gain.* But he said: Philippians 1:6 *For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*

Jesus knew that his disciples were kept by the power of God.

Paul knew that the Philippians were kept by the power of God.

We can place loved ones in God's hands.

God is able to keep them better than we are. We have to let go or we will get in God's way.

I remember a farm couple who protected their daughter **too well**. They sent her away to a private Christian boarding school. The mother actually moved with her to that town to live with her in an apartment rather than letting her stay in the dorms. After high school they kept her on the farm under watchful eye. What happened to this sheltered girl with a private Christian education and pure upbringing? I'll tell you what happened; *she went crazy and ran off with a Muslim.* You see, her parents tried to keep her instead of trusting God to keep her. **God would have done a much better job.** It comes down to *trusting God* to keep that which he saves.

As we prepare to separate from loved ones remember that they are saved for God's glory and they are KEPT BY GOD'S POWER. Beloved, let go and keep them BY your prayers.

Finally, those we leave behind are:

### **III. LEFT FOR GOD'S WORK**

John 17:11 *"And I am no more in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, the name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are.*

If I were Jesus, I would not have prayed that way. I would have prayed that the Father would take the disciples out of the world with me.

When Jesus left the world, he left us **in the world**. The world is a difficult place to be left but it is our assignment. To be in the world meant a martyr's death for all the remaining disciples except John who was imprisoned on the island of Patmos.

After Jesus went to heaven, he sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in the lives of every believer. Jesus said that it was much better that he send the Spirit. The disciples were sad to see him leave but on Pentecost they all were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. Thousands were saved in a day... miracles abounded through the disciples *who could do very little when Jesus was on earth.*

As children leave home, they will only become strong as we let them struggle in the world. If you have ever tried to **rescue a chick** that is struggling to peck its way out of the shell you probably killed it. The struggle of getting out of the shell is necessary for it to survive.

We will not accomplish the greater assignments God has for us until we go out into the difficult world. It may mean falling. It may mean failing. But it is through struggle we become strong and courageous.

**GOD'S WORK IS IN THE WORLD.** Hiding doesn't work. But when we plunge right into the thick of this sinful needy world with the Gospel we find that we are kept safe and that we bear much fruit. **A tree can't bear fruit in hiding or in a cave.** It must be planted out in the sun and rain and storms. A branch or two may break off from time to time but the only place a tree can bear fruit is out in the weather. God protects the apple trees and God protects His children in the world. We are left here to "tend the farm" until the owner returns.

**CONCLUSION:** It is painful to separate from those you love. I don't look forward to our children leaving the home. I don't look forward to:

Children leaving

Moving

Dying

*Separation is difficult.* But we all have to do it. Separation is an unavoidable part of life. So let's be guided by the principles from Christ's high priestly prayer:

We are—

**SAVED FOR GOD'S GLORY**

So complete your assignment

**KEPT BY GOD'S POWER**

So let go and quit meddling

**LEFT FOR GOD'S WORK**

So plunge into the thick of it.

Jesus has led the way from earth, to the cross and on to heaven. If we believe in Him he will save us, keep us and use us for His glory. The great part of heaven is that there will be no more separation, only joyful reunions. **I look forward to that, don't you? Amen**