

Eternity Daily Devotional No. 308
John 17: 14-18
In The World But Not Of The World

John 17:14-18 I have given them Your Word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. (15) I do not pray for You to take them out of the world, but for You to keep them from the evil. (16) They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. (17) Sanctify them through Your truth. Your Word is truth. (18) As You have sent Me into the world, even so I have sent them into the world.

Twice Jesus says that He and the disciples were not of the world - "they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (V14,16). Thus all of God's true saints should be "unworldly", simple, uncluttered, unencumbered and holy.

We will certainly be mocked because of this - "and the world has hated them because they are not of the world". Simple, honest, straightforward Christians are often viewed as fools. But we have the wisdom of God, an eternal and unfading wisdom that brings true glory! The world hates those who have walked away from its pomp and its "rewards", who march to the beat of a different drummer, and who find holiness more attractive than sensuality.

Once you get a good glimpse of Heaven the world and all its vanities fade away. If you spend time before the Throne you will not spend so much time before the TV. Heaven does two things – it makes us content with a simple life on Earth, and it creates a deep longing for the permanent and the eternal, for the good and the beautiful and the noble and the wise. Such desires cannot be adequately satisfied here so we join in and sing, "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through. My treasure is laid up, way beyond the blue."

Jesus then goes on to pray: "(15) I do not pray for You to take them out of the world, but for You to keep them from the evil. " Jesus does not pray for them to go into the desert, join a monastery, or be raptured at once to glory. Such convenient solutions are escapes from duty. Our duty is to be in this world, to be leaven, to be salt and to be light.

Being "in the world" is not easy. Indeed it can be deeply disturbing. As Lot was tormented day and night by the behavior of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah (2 Peter 2:8) so Christians are assaulted by evil every time they go online, open their email, or watch the news.

Jesus' solution was to pray that the Father would "keep them from evil" – and many a Christian parent has prayed fervently for their children at college or in the army, that they would also be kept from evil – and such prayer works! In some places evil is like a thick cloud that presses in on every thought and action. To be kept from evil, in dark places, is indeed a very great miracle! And it is one that happened to the prophet Daniel!

Daniel was brought to Babylon, made a eunuch as a young man, and set among the wise men in the section that dealt with astrology, magic and conjuring. How much worse could it get for a young Jewish man? Yet God kept Daniel and his friends and they prospered and gave glory to God and were "better than all the astrologers". Now I do not

recommend joining an astrology guild in a pagan society - but even in such a place God can keep people from evil if their heart is set on remaining pure.

How can we be kept from evil? First do not indulge evil. Do not hanker after it or nurture it. Secondly stay close to God, remain in His Word and listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. Thirdly take some basic precautions – do not head into danger. For instance as a missionary who travels a lot I make sure that I am never alone in a private or semi-private situation with a woman other than my wife. Yet other people may need blocking software on their Internet connection. (I believe this can be obtained for free from www.we-blocker.com)

Jesus then goes on to pray the answer to being pure in an impure world: “(17) Sanctify them through Your truth. Your Word is truth.” How can a young man keep his way pure? By taking heed according to Thy word! (Ps 199:9) The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit that cuts through the mess, exposes evil and puts the world in its place – as a sham. Regular daily bible study is a great way to become sanctified as the Word works in you and through you. For a bible-reading plan go to:

<http://www.aibi.ph/aibi/biblereading.htm>

Then, in verse 18 Jesus says a most astonishing thing: “(18) As You have sent Me into the world, even so I have sent them into the world.” This is astonishing in two aspects – firstly that Jesus would actually send us into the big, bad, evil world. Secondly that He would connect this with His won being sent from Heaven! Our going into all the world to preach the gospel is connected to Christ being sent from the Father! We are being sent to “the world” to redeem it! We are to win the world for God.

Thus we are to overcome the world (it will not overcome us!) The light will shine in the darkness and the darkness cannot overthrow it. (John 1:5) For greater is He who is in us, than he who is in the world. (1 John 4:4) and 1 John 5:4-5 For everything that has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith. (5) Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Jesus is ending Christians to Iraq, Afghanistan and even to Los Vegas. There is no place so unholy that the saints cannot triumph there. We are being sent to overcome the darkness. A few weeks ago in Bangkok I came under tremendous spiritual attack. I became ill and had terrible nightmares. But through the prayers of the saints I had the victory. We can go anywhere for God, if we have folk praying for us as Jesus prayed for His disciples. Let us not be presumptuous but let us also be bold, in faith and in prayer. And if you are in the ministry – get a prayer shield.

Blessings,

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