

Easter 5: Sing! Rejoice! – John 17:9-17
You are Sanctified and Kept in God's Name by His Word

Rev. Samuel Gullixson Ser. #310-16 (Parkland Inaugural)

We pray: Blessed and holy Trinity, You have separated us from the world, not that we have deserved it, but You have bestowed Your grace upon us. While we yet remain in this world, keep us steadfast in Your Word, so that we may forever abide in Your Name and thereby glorify You. **Amen.**

In the name of Jesus, by Whom and through Whom you're sanctified, that is set apart from the world and kept in Yahweh's name.

The Name of the Triune God is a very important thing.
We see its importance by the prominence God gives it.
He would protect in the 2nd Commandment.
He teaches us to pray for it to be hallowed,
or set apart as holy, in our words and in our lives
in the 1st Petition of the Lord's Prayer.
He bestows it upon us as we are baptized in the name of
the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
And at the end of each Divine Service He would have us
depart with it by means of the Aaronic Benediction.

Our text for mediation today teaches that
you are sanctified and kept in God's name by His Word.

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We read as follows in Jesus' name.

⁹I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. ¹²While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ^{ESV} *So far the Words of our text.*

These are Your words, heavenly Father.

Sanctify [us] in the truth. Your Word is truth. (John 17:17)

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Perhaps you have heard a well-worn phrase in Christianity,
that Christians are “in the world but not of the world.”

That idea obviously comes from this text.

Jesus, in His own special way, was not “of the world.”

Actually, the world was originally “of” Him.

John tells us in the first chapter of his Gospel^[3]:

**All things were made through him, and without him
was not any thing made that was made.**

When the world was made, it was perfect, like Him,
including the epitome of His visible creation: man.

But when Adam and Eve fell into sin,
their disobedience set them apart from God.

They died spiritually; their souls separated from Him
They were no longer in perfect unity w/ their Creator.

They, who were made in His perfect image,
lost that image and with it, God's holy name.
He then restored that image through the promise
of the Savior to come through Eve's offspring.

But it's from here on out that we can speak of “the world”
as one of God's enemies, and the enemy of His people.
Cain was “of the world,” caring nothing for God's grace,
being ruled by the devil and his own sinful nature.
After killing his brother Abel, God sent him away,
separated him from the rest of Adam's godly children.
But soon that separation broke down as God's children
started to desire the ways and the people “of the world.”
Over the next generations, the wickedness increased...
to the point that God would no longer tolerate it.

But there was one man and his family whom the Lord
separated out “of the world,” Noah.
You could say that they were separated by the flood,
but that is actually the result of the real separation.
They were first separated from the world by faith.
They were “in the world,” among the heathen,
preaching to them,
demonstrating a life of repentance & grace, and
looking forward to the promised seed of Eve
who would die to take away their sins,
but they were not “of the world,”
ignoring the Words and promises of the one true God,
living in their sins, and
unconcerned about neglecting the love of God.

When the flood came, the world's spiritual separation
from God led to their eternal deaths,
the eternal separation of their souls from God.
Since the flood, they have received not a drop of grace,
no reprieve from guilt, no comfort from suffering,
no relief from sorrow, nor will they, forevermore.
“Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.”

Mark 9:48; Is. 66:24

But even so, soon after the flood, only a few generations,
the “world's” presence was once more evident
as man disregarded God's will and started to serve
the empty idols of their own creating,
so that Abraham was first separated, or set apart,
from his idolatrous family to be saved by Yahweh.

Let these things be a lesson to us:

The Christian should not be so proud as to think that
the world is “out there,”

that you are separated from it because you are “in here”
in the nave or “ark” of the Church.

The truth is that the “world” is “in here” (in the heart), too.

This heart of ours, by its very nature under sin,
is against the Lord, His enemy and separated from Him,
as we confess with King David,

**Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight...**

**Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.** Ps. 51:4-5

If God had not intervened...

if the Son of God had not stepped into the breach,

by uniting Himself with the human race,
we would still be spiritually separated from God
and doomed to an eternity this separation,
of evil, pain, suffering, and gracelessness.

But here in our text, we hear, as Jesus prepares to finish
the work of reconciling us to His heavenly Father
by dying on the cross and rising to life again,
that God has separated us, His people, from "the world."
But the Church likes to use a different word for that separation,
a more churchly word: sanctification.

To sanctify something is to set it apart, to holify it, if you will.

So when Jesus prays to His Father to "**sanctify them
in the truth**," He is asking His Father to set them apart,
to separate them from the lies of the devil, the world,
and their own sinful nature.

He is praying that the Father would continue to separate
them from their sin through His act of redemption
and Word of forgiveness,
and that the LORD would continue to keep them united
to Himself, in His name.

Because, you see, to be separated, sanctified, set apart,
from the world, is to be in the name of the Triune God,
to be united to your Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.

So how is it that God separates you, His people, today?

He does it by faith, just as He did it in Noah's day.

St. Paul tells us, **faith comes from hearing,
and hearing through Word of Christ.**^{Rom.10:17}

Consider Jesus' prayer in our text this morning,
**Holy Father, keep them in your name,
which you have given me, that they may be one,
even as we are one.**

¹²**While I was with them, I kept them in your name,
which you have given me.**

In Jesus' prayer, He tells us how they were kept: by Him,
the Word... Made-Flesh.

And today, His people are still separated from the world
and kept in God's name, by the Word-made-flesh,
the Word enfleshed by preaching,
even through the lips of a sinful man.

And if that weren't enough, St. Paul also writes:

**you were washed,
you were sanctified,
you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ
and by the Spirit of our God.**^{1Cor.6:11}

In your Baptism, you were washed w/ water & God's Word,
set apart from the world, **for His own possession.**^{1Peter2:9}

You were adopted into His family (along with Noah's family)
given God's name and faith to believe in Him.

You were made a son or daughter of the Father,
a brother or sister with Jesus Christ, the Son of God,
and the recipient of the Holy Spirit.

Briefly put, you were united with the Triune God.

And as a child of God, who has been brought
into His household.

He keeps you out "**of the world**";

He keeps you "**from the evil one.**"

That is to say, that He keeps you in His holy name.

So it's not these walls that separate Christian from heathen;
nor is it the Christian's will or decision which sets him apart.

It is the God Word and Sacraments, His holy things,
by which God sanctifies you,
as Jesus said, **Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.**

And yet, while you are not "of the world,"
you are "in the world", but in God's name, as well.

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit keep you here
as your time of grace,
a time to continue to receive His grace in forgiveness
as well as a time to share His name, His grace, His Word,
His forgiveness, with the world and fellow Christians
in the world.

As Christians, you bear His name, and He is **glorified in you.**

Not that you never sin, but that when you sin,
you look to no other person or thing for salvation,
than to the Son of God, Jesus Christ, crucified & risen,
and hear His Word and are once again sanctified,
set apart from your sin and the world-of-sin in your heart.

We pray: Heavenly Father, **sanctify [us] in the truth,**
Your Word is truth, that Jesus' joy may be fulfilled in us.^(John 17:17)

*Soli Deo Gloria*²