

Divine Witness Protection #3

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[0 : 00] John chapter 17, we're in the middle again of the high priestly prayer of our Lord Jesus. What I call the true Lord's prayer. We're going to be looking at verses 12 through 16 this morning.

Hear now the word of the living God. I 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.

I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

That is the word of the Lord. Please be seated. Shock and awe.

This phrase has become part of our vocabulary since Desert Storm. The U.S. attacked our enemy with overwhelming military force.

[1 : 46] That force was designed to discourage any further resistance. This is one of the ways that the devil attacks God's people.

With shock and awe. It can be very effective. But his best weapons are more subtle. When you never see him coming.

Like a lioness sneaking up on her prey, creeping slowly and silently into tall grass. You never see him coming.

So what do we do? Well, we need what Jesus prayed for us. Isn't it great that he prayed for us? We need divine witness protection so that we can withstand all the devil's attacks, whether we see them coming or not.

Because let's be honest. Sometimes we're not even looking. This prayer just blows my mind.

[2 : 51] Okay? I hope I've made that clear already, I think. But if I haven't, I'm doing it now. God is talking to God about us. Just let that sink in.

Put your name in there. God, Jesus, the Son of God, is talking to the Father, the Holy Father, God, about Sam. About Becky.

He's talking to his Father about you. He's praying for us. Last times we spent marveling at the fact that Jesus protects us because we belong to his Father.

We belong to God. We're no longer our own. We're his people. We're his possession. We're his treasure. And so Jesus prays that the Father will keep us.

We talked about that last time. He will keep us even as Jesus kept the disciples when he was with us. And again, I call this divine witness protection.

[4 : 00] But there is an exception to divine witness protection. Some of you may have seen the comedic classic, What About Bob?

Anybody? Oh, thank you. I'm not the only one. Y'all, sometimes y'all leave me hanging, man. I'm like, I'm the only one? Thank you for seeing that. That's a great movie. Richard Dreyfuss and Bill Murray are at their best in that movie, if you haven't seen it.

Dreyfuss plays this egotistical psychiatrist who is becoming famous because of a book he wrote. Murray, Bill Murray, is his neurotic and phobic-ridden patient, Bob.

Bob worships, basically, Dreyfuss, his psychiatrist, and swears by his book. Except Bob is very needy and dependent upon Dreyfuss, even when the good doctor is on vacation.

Bob shows up, looking through the window. He shows up, but he's such a likable guy, he becomes part of the family. And Dreyfuss spends the whole movie trying to get rid of Bob.

[5 : 15] I think he even tried to kill him at one point. He was so, this is his patient. But the family loves Bob. They love him.

And they would always ask that question. What about Bob? Now, this is not a comedy here in John 17.

It's very serious. The Christians reading, remember, these are letters. These are letters that the disciples wrote, in particular.

And John's letter, his gospel, would have been read to the congregations in which it was circulated. And they're listening.

Now, they would have been already exposed to Christianity. The gospels are written, in particular, to boost their faith. Okay? To nurture. Not just to be evangelistic, but to build up the church who already knew the story.

[6 : 19] So John and the other gospel writers are explaining the story more perfectly to make sure the church knows the truth about Jesus.

Listen, they knew that Jesus had been betrayed by one of his disciples. But Jesus is praying, I mean, abundantly praying in this passage, that the disciples would be kept by the Father, even as he kept them.

So the question in the disciples' mind would be this. What about Judas? And our Lord, being all-knowing, anticipates that very question in his prayer.

And so he's, in the middle of his prayer, he says, listen, I've kept everybody. Except one. He didn't have to mention Judas, but yes, he did.

He knew that we would ask the question, what about Judas? And so he says, I have guarded them, verse 12, second part of verse 12, I've guarded them, and not one of them has been lost, except the son of destruction, that the scripture might be fulfilled.

[7 : 41] Judas is the only one of the 12 that our Lord Jesus lost. Now, here's the thing. This was not a lapse in God's power or a lapse in God's wisdom.

Judas was not protected as the other disciples were because he was not a true disciple of Jesus. The Lord names him the son of destruction or sometimes the son of perdition.

Why the son of? That speaks of he has the nature of his father. Son of, in the Bible, is speaking of one's nature, one's progeny or ancestry, as it were.

He is a son of destruction. His nature and destiny were foretold in scripture hundreds of years before Christ walked the earth with his disciples.

It was foreshadowed way back in Psalm 41 in the life of King David. In Psalm 41.9, David cries out, Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

[9 : 04] David didn't know what he was saying. He was talking about his own experience. But the writers of scripture in the New Testament recognize that that is one of the key places where the betrayal of Christ is so clearly foretold.

Because you remember at the table, Jesus gives him bread. Now, of course, it's not just talking about that one time. To eat bread with somebody is to do life with them.

They have shared bread many a time. But it's funny, in a sad way, that the moment Jesus gives him that morsel of bread at the Lord's table, at the Last Supper, that's when Judas, the Bible says, Satan entered him and he went out and it was dark.

It was night. Now, the Lord chose him with this knowledge. He didn't make a mistake in choosing Judas. He knew exactly who he was.

Again, John 13, 21. After saying these things, after he washed the disciples' feet, Jesus says, it says, Jesus was troubled in his spirit and testified. That means he stated to the other disciples, including Judas sitting there, Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.

[10 : 28] What does that teach us? Let me make a suggestion. Listen, he was a disciple of convenience, not of conversion. What do I mean by that?

This is a Kevin Smithism. It may not be important, but I hope you'll get it. As long as it suited his purpose, he was all in with the Jesus movement. He was all in with the church.

He didn't know, even himself, that he was going to betray Jesus. I don't think he knew. He was all in. He wanted to be part of this new thing, this thing that was happening.

God was going to do something. But as soon as he realized Jesus was not going to run his kingdom the way he wanted, with him, Judas, getting what he desired, he turned on Christ.

That's what I call a disciple of convenience. As long as we like what God is doing in our lives, we attend church, read our Bibles, and show up.

[11 : 28] But if the preacher says something we don't like, or the church doesn't do what we want, or someone in the church offends us, we're gone.

I'm not just saying from that church. I'm saying from faith. From Christ. Many have joined churches appearing to walk with the Lord.

And this has frustrated many Christians. I just had someone ask this question recently. Many. It just shocks us, right? You see someone, part of the church, they walk the aisle.

They take the vows. They go through the classes. And they're in the church, and they're serving for a long period of time. Could be years. Could be months.

Whatever it is. But they're on fire. They're doing things, and they're helpful. But then all of a sudden, they're gone. They're gone from Christ and following Jesus altogether.

[12:26] What happened? It didn't happen because Jesus was unable to keep them. Because they were never kept to begin with. Keep in mind, saints, it took three years for Judas to reveal himself.

Three years he walked with Christ. Three years he's in the church. Three years he's serving. Everything the disciples did, Judas did. The preaching.

Even some miracles. Judas was in the mix of all of that. Don't ask me to explain all this. I can't. I'm just telling you what I know to be true. Judas was even the treasurer of the church.

In John chapter 12, verse 6, it tells us, I preached this some time ago, so you know. It tells us that Judas kept the money bag. But he used to pilfer out of it.

He was an embezzler. Before embezzling became a thing, Judas was already doing it. Three years.

[13:33] And then he was gone. Because he was a disciple of convenience. It was convenient to be part of the movement as long as it was going the way he wanted.

But here's the thing. God is creating disciples of conversion. One who has been given the spirit of God and thus has become a new creation whose heart is devoted to Jesus no matter what.

Such people are in love with Jesus because they've been amazed at how he's loved them. They recognize that they are unlovable to God in and of themselves because of their sin.

They recognize that they're rebels against God. And for God to love them is a mind-blowing fact.

They can't believe it. See, when you get to the place where you think you're loved by God and it makes sense to you, you probably miss something.

You should always be amazed that God would love you. That God would set his love upon you before the world began and draw you to himself out of the muck and mire.

[14:45] Because we're not better than anybody else. We're not better than Judas. God, you see, when you're so amazed by that love, by that kindness, it's the kindness of the Lord that leads us to repentance.

The gospel then is always, see, now this is why it's important that you recognize where God saved you from. The gospel will always be truly the best news you've ever heard.

And here's the thing that happens. I got to add this, y'all, because John's going to add it later. I'll show you in a minute. This is important. It goes, you've never heard this before. His people become our people.

Sound familiar? Your God will be my God. Your people will be my people. That's conversion. That's conversion. That's what happens when God gets a hold of your heart.

His people become your people. And you can't conceive of life without his church. You can't conceive of it. That's why this movement away from the church is so, it's wrong-headed.

[16:03] Something's gone wrong. Where people try to separate Christ from his church. You can't do it. It's impossible because he died to have her.

And you're going to come between them? You're going to separate Jesus. I love Jesus, but the church, I can't stand those people. Then you, I'm not sure where you are. Now, God knows.

I'm not saying you're definitely gone, but boy, you're on the wrong track. You're on the wrong track. If you love Christ, you will love his people.

Listen, 1 John 5.1. John, the writer of the gospel. He says, everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.

Now, listen, be careful here. John is not merely saying that we love our small group or our small Bible study. He's talking about the church.

[17:10] We love the church, the people, the people, not the institution per se, though that's important, but the people make up the institution. We love the people of the church.

We love the, not the small group of Christ, the body of Christ. We love the body. The temple of the Lord is the church.

And that's what Jesus said he would give his life for her. You can't separate. So when we love Jesus, when we've been converting, when we're disciples of conversion, we not only love Christ, we love his church because his people are now our people.

That's why we're called family. But our Lord says Judas falling away was that the scripture would be fulfilled. In other words, God planned it without violating his will or putting sin in his heart.

God allowed Judas to do what his sinful heart wanted to do. And in doing so, he achieved the Lord's will. See, that's called sovereignty.

[18 : 28] That's called omniscience, knowing all things. That's called above Kevin Smith pay grade. Because how does God do that?

If you can explain it, then I'll be worshiping you next. You are now the fourth member of the Trinity, if you can explain that to me. It's above our pay grade, but it's still true.

It's still true. Listen, this is a good thing. Even our sin is not out of sight of God's sovereign plan.

When you fail, God doesn't go, oh, plan B.

Okay, by now, I'm up to plan Z, me. It'd be over. I mean, we're going into the second alphabet by now. He doesn't, your sin does not trip him up.

Don't get me wrong. That's not saying we should sin because we know this. That we should turn again, do whatever we want to do because we know God's plan is going to keep going. Don't go there.

[19 : 29] That's presumption. Not a good place. Here's the thing. Without Judas' betrayal, the Lord does not go to the cross.

God is at work. But here's the other thing. Peter betrayed Jesus three times. And yet Peter is the apostle.

What happened? How come Peter didn't become a Judas? Luke 22. Thank you, sir.

Jesus is talking. Peter's all boasting and bragging about how he's going to stay with Jesus no matter what. And Jesus said to him, listen, Simon. Simon, Simon. When Jesus repeats your name, he's just trying to get your attention.

He's saying, my son, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded to have you. That he might sift you like wheat.

[20 : 33] He's going to shake you up and shake you out. But I have prayed for you. Hallelujah. But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.

And when you've turned again, when you've repented, strengthen your brothers. There's the secret. And we're living it in John 17. I've prayed for you.

Why doesn't Peter become a Judas? Why haven't you become a Judas? You've been prayed for. By the Son of God himself.

By the Holy One of Israel. By the bright and morning star. By the Lamb of God. You've been prayed for. He called your name to the Father.

And said, keep him. Keep her. Don't let him go. Because Father, they are your love gift to me.

[21 : 37] And you can't lose. We can't let not one of them get away. But Jesus doesn't give back his gifts. The Father gave you to the Son.

And the Son says, no, we ain't. You mind. I'm going to hold on. We're going to hold on to you. The sheep that the Father gives the Son are protected for eternity. And all eternity.

But we need to ask ourselves a question. I got to put it out there. I just. What kind of disciple are you? Are you a disciple of convenience?

But are you a disciple of conversion? How do you know? Are you walking with Jesus? Do you love the Savior?

Do you love his people? His church? Those are signs. He's done something in your heart. The next thing we need to notice is that our Lord prays for those who need protection because they have received his word.

[22 : 42] They received his word. Again, verse 13. While I was with them, I kept them in your name. Okay, we got that one. Verse. I'm sorry. Verse 13. But now I'm coming to you. These things I speak in the world that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

I've guarded them with. I've 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.

You see, this need to be kept implies that the Lord's disciples are always in danger. The world, which he mentions constantly throughout this prayer.

I mean, I think I caught, I remember now, maybe 11 times. He mentions the world constantly throughout this whole prayer. He keeps talking about the world. Why? Because the world is a dangerous place.

It's not safe. But it is a place of, listen, of witness and service for the people of God. We're not to leave it. It may be dangerous, but we're not called to leave it.

[23 : 48] Witness and service. This is spiritual warfare. This is the everyday Christian life. Jesus, once again, reiterates that he's leaving his disciples, but he's praying this way so that we, his people, can be full of his joy.

And I think the joy is one way in which he protects us. Because it's not just any joy, it's his joy. He said that back in chapter 15, verse 11, that he was giving us not just joy, his joy.

First of all, we can be full of the joy of Jesus' word. What is that word? What is that word he's talking about? The word is, we've heard him ask the Father to protect us.

He's praying out loud. Jesus could have prayed to himself. He could have went somewhere off to himself. He's praying out loud so his disciples can hear him praying for them.

Now, there is something about hearing someone pray for you. Have you ever heard anybody pray for you? I mean, I don't mean just use a pronoun, him, her, but call your name to the Father.

[25 : 09] Hearing people call your name to the Lord for blessing is a huge encouragement. That's why you should give your prayer request to God's people. And listen, fathers and mothers, pray for your children out loud.

Let them hear you calling their name to the Lord. Not because they've been bad, necessarily. Lord, do something with...

Because I won't... No, no, no. But don't hear them calling... Let them hear you calling their name to Jesus. Because you love them and you want God to do a work in their souls and lives.

Let them hear you calling. Listen, if that's a blessing. If it's a blessing to hear people praying for you, how much more should we have joyful confidence when hearing the Son of God himself pray for us?

This is meant to make us... To give us joy. I mean, to recognize that in this place of trial, in this place of sometimes darkness, sure, there's great good things happen.

[26 : 23] Thank you, Lord, for the good things that you allow and the good gifts that you give us and the creation that we get to enjoy. But let's be honest. There's something that's always around the corner.

You know, you feel... There are times... Okay, I don't know about you, but there are times when I'm in that tunnel and the light coming towards me, I think it's the light and it's a train. Smack!

Here we go again. Don't you understand that in this place of the world that Jesus says, Don't you leave it. I'm praying for you in it.

In this place where the people of God, he says, The world hates us. Hates us. In this place of pain and suffering and hatred, where the enemy of our souls is raging and running around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour all the time.

In the midst of that, Jesus gives us joy. He gives us joy. Why? Because we recognize what God has done for us, is doing for us, and will do for us.

[27 : 36] We're recognizing that we've been prayed for. Hallelujah. We've been... That's meant to get you going. You've been... Get up... Martin Luther.

When he would be facing some trials sometimes, he would remind himself of this. This is something we do as Protestants. We don't think this way. But he was a Lutheran.

Martin Luther. He would remind himself of this. I've been baptized. See, that meant something to him. Baptism. He said, I've been...

I've been marked with the covenant. I've been marked with the hand of God. I've been marked by the Lord himself. It's okay.

We can do that too. But it's even better than that. The Lord himself has prayed. Let your joy be increased as you meditate upon the goodness of Jesus to you.

[28 : 37] You have joy in the face of the world's attack. And that will display the power of the gospel. The power of the gospel to give life and hope.

The gospel. Listen, saints. The gospel is good news to sinners. Other than that, it's not good news. It's good news to those who realize that their sins have separated them from their God. But Jesus has come and bridged the chasm. He has bridged the gap. He has died in their place. He has gone to the Father on their behalf.

And he's made them his and will never let them go. No matter what happens. No matter what they're going through. Jesus says, I got you. I see you.

I know you. I will not forget you. That's meant to give us joy. That's why we sing.

[29 : 47] That's why music is so important, saints. Music. The gift of music that God has given us is so important because it helps us, not just with our thinking, but also with our emotions.

It helps us connect. The whole person connects with God as we sing and remind ourselves that we're protected, that we're loved.

Your faith will not fail. Neither sin nor the world will ever have the last word over you. Jesus prays for you. And Jesus admits also that he has marked us for attack.

I can almost, if I had been one of the apostles, I would have said, hold, hold, hold. What did you say, Lord? Hold. Would you? I have given, and you gave us your word.

Yeah, that's great. And the world hates us? Hold on. Hold on. One moment, please. Can we?

There's a lot of, there's a lot of, the world is big place.

[30 : 50] The world of fallen, you talk about the world of fallen humanity and opposition to God.

There's a lot going on there, Lord. You just, you mean receiving your word, knowing your word is true, knowing your word is right, knowing your word is God's word, that's causing a problem?

Because he says you're no longer of the world. To receive the word is to be taken out of the world.

You're no longer, see, the world hates traitors.

The world resents anyone who leaves it. Like a gang. You don't just leave the gang. The world says, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, what do you mean?

You feel, Mickey, sometimes you might, sometimes you might feel like the godfather. I thought I was out, but they keep pulling me back in.

You know? You're a, no, the world don't, the world will keep trying to pull you back in. The only way to leave the influence of the world is to be born again into the kingdom of God.

[32 : 07] And then, and then, watch this, to grow more and more influenced by Christ and his teaching. You see, once you've been taken out of the world, you're no longer part of the gang.

But the gang is still a part of you a little bit. You've been living the gang life. Okay? You've been living the thug life, as it were.

And, and you've been living the thug life. When you come into the kingdom of God, you're still thuggish. We're going to talk more about this next time.

But you're still thuggish. And then, and the Lord then begins to go to work on you. So you begin to leave your thug ways behind. But it's a process.

And, and the only way that you can begin to keep leaving the thug ways behind, the way you respond to when someone insults you. You know, in the thug life, I grew up with these guys, so forgive me.

[33 : 08] In the thug life, you, someone insults you. I saw a guy, I'll never forget. We were in the men's locker room, boys' locker room, high school. And we were in the locker room.

Next thing I know, I see one of the strongest guys in the school, who was a friend of mine. He's, he's got this guy, and he's stuffing him in a trash can. Picked him up, and he's pushing him into the trash can.

I'm like, he's out. You know what happened? My friend stepped on the guy's belt by accident on the ground in the locker room.

He didn't see it. He stepped on it by accident, and the guy took offense and went after one of the strongest men in the school. Didn't end well for him.

But the point being, that's, that's how, that's the thug life. Someone insults you, you've got to. You can't be pumped.

[34 : 07] You see, God deals with that. See, now, I know, I know, y'all didn't grow up in West Philly. I understand. But you got your own thug ways. Suburbanites. You still a thug.

You got your own ways of getting back at folk when they mess with you. And God's going to deal with that, too. God's going to deal with that.

Because we all got that thing. Come on, Cornell. I see you nine, brother. We all got that thing. Where you just want to say, hold it. You want, hey, you can't. Don't you know who I, you got that thing that kind of jumps up in you that says, you can't talk to me that way or do me like that. And Jesus, as you walk with Jesus, you begin to lose more and more of that thug way.

Yeah. Yeah. John said it so well. I don't want to save that for later, but I'm going to say it now anyway.

[35 : 13] If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples. And you know the truth. And the truth will set you free. We grow in knowing the truth.

And as we know more of the truth, we find freedom. We find freedom. You're marked for attack. We're traitors to the world. And the world don't want to let us go.

But we've been set free in Jesus. And the world can't hold us. It can't keep us. We've been given a new nature now. You're not the old guy.

You're not the old you. You've been given a new nature. That's why Peter says in 1 Peter 1, 2, 3. 1, 23. Since you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable through the living and abiding word of God.

That word that Jesus says he's given us and that we've received gives us a new nature. We've been transformed. We don't belong in the old world anymore. And so you're a traitor to the world and the world hates you for it.

[36 : 18] The world says, no, no, no. When the world goes to the post office, they see your picture on the wall. Wanted, dead or alive.

In the U.S. Marshal Services, they have a witness protection program known as WITSEC. People who testify against high-powered criminals are relocated and hidden, never to be heard from again by friends, family, and enemies.

But our Lord doesn't have a WITSEC. He doesn't hide you. He puts you right smack dab in the world.

And you stand, and then he stands up in us so that we can stand against the forces of darkness, not so we can hide from the world, but so we can have his victory in the world.

Oh, yeah, you'll be hated. Because we live in a fallen culture. But if you will walk according to his way, his word, you will find that he is more than able, more than capable of sustaining you, and strengthening you, and helping you.

[37 : 38] But you will be attacked. And if you're not, that's strange.

If you don't find the world coming after you in some way or another, that's strange. Jesus said the world will hate you.

But he said the world loves you. That's strange. Doesn't mean everything. Doesn't mean everybody's out to get you. Don't get me. Don't go. Let's not go there. But the world as a system will find you to be repugnant because darkness hates light.

At some point, you're going to find yourselves in conflict if you're walking with Jesus. But that's okay.

That's part of the plan. You're exactly, listen to me. You're exactly where Jesus wants you. I don't pray, Father, that you take them out of the world.

[38 : 46] But protect them from the evil one. The whole monastery thing and the convent thing, not of God.

We were never meant to leave the world. So we can meditate on God and his word. No, we do that in the midst of the world. We're meditating on God and his word and praying and seeking his face in the midst of the world.

That's where Jesus is glorified. Right where you are. And that's where he will build you up and strengthen you.

And you're going to take some shots. And it won't be pretty. But that's okay, too. You're destined for the glory.

Ain't nothing better than that. You're just, do you understand? Do we understand the glory? I mean, we spent weeks looking at the first part of the prayer. He's praying for glory.

[39 : 51] We're destined for that glory. That's got to hold us. That's got to motivate Jesus in all of his majesty and splendor. Listen, I can go through anything if I have to.

I don't want to go through anything. Don't get me wrong. I'm not trying. I'm not signing up for trials. If there's a line for trials, I'm getting in the other line. I'm glad he doesn't give us a choice.

Because if he gave me a choice, I probably would choose the other line. But he doesn't. This is the ordinary Christian life. He's light in me. And if I'm living in the darkness, the light will show up.

And the darkness will not be happy. But here's the beautiful thing. Now, we'll come back to this later. Oh, my. He will use your light to draw others out of the darkness.

All right. I got to stop here. That's all right. So above all else, guard your hearts.

[40 : 56] We are people whom Jesus has taken out of the world. What does the devil want to do?

He can't unsave you. If he could, we'd all be done. But what he wants to do is put stuff in front of your face, in front of your eyes. And tantalize your feelings.

And thinking and all that love, whatever. And pull your heart towards that which would not satisfy.

He don't want you loving Jesus.

He can't stop you from loving him. But he can kind of give you a mistress or two or three or four. Oh, sorry, ladies. Or a mister or two or three or four. He can kind of help you to, call you to divide your heart.

And what he wants to do, ultimately, is crush your faith. He can't trust, crush your saving faith.

That's a gift from God. But your active, practical faith of trusting God, he's going after that.

[42 : 12] Isn't that what happened with Job? When Satan attacks Job, he tells God, listen, the only reason Job loves you is because you put a hedge of protection around him.

But take his stuff, and he will crush you to your face. You see that? He said he did it twice. But you see what happens there?

If you take his stuff, including his children, by the way, his wealth, then he says, but touch the man.

Take his health.

If you take his health, he's going to cuss you to your face. What's he saying? What's he saying?

He's saying Job's faith is built upon circumstances.

As long as you are doing what he wants and blessing him with the way he wants, see, he'll trust you. But you do something he don't like.

[43 : 11] Start messing with his health. Mess with his stuff. And his faith, his trust in you will go out the door. He will cuss you to your face.

That's what the enemy's trying to do to you. If he could unsave you, he would, but he can't.

But he can, he can try, and it has happened, that he can render us ineffective or less effective for the kingdom of God.

Because we're so wounded and hurt, we don't want to trust God anymore. We're so wounded and hurt that we're just saying, Lord, hey, we want to keep our mouths shut now.

We're so wounded and hurt, we don't want to be around God's people because it reminds us of the pain. You see, that's all very human, isn't it? But it's also very debilitating because when you withdraw yourself from him, as it were, and from his people, you're actually isolating yourself.

[44 : 24] And you know what happens to animals in the wild when they get isolated? The roaring lion becomes a savage lion who eats them.

That's what he wants to do to you. And he tried to use Job's wife against him. Ladies, that's not a dig on women. Not a dig on women.

I'm not, I'm not, no. It's just what happened to him. Could have been the other way, too. She says to him, why are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die.

You want a spouse to say it to you? Or a good friend to say that to you? That's what the enemy wants to do. Discourage.

That doesn't have to be that way, though. The joy of the Lord can be your strength. The reality of Christ with you. Go back. Go back. Remember.

[45 : 26] Go back. Step back. Step back from the pain. Step back for a moment. And remember. Go and surround yourself with the people of God. Your people shall be my people.

Surround you with the people of God who know the Lord. Who know the word of God. And say, pray for me. Let me hear you call my name. Amen. And he will strengthen you.

Because that's why he gave you armor. So that you could stand. Trust the armor. Trust the work of Christ. That's what the armor is.

Trust the work of Christ. For you. Trust him working in his family. For you. For you. Maybe you're on the other side.

Maybe you can be the one to encourage the other. Amen. He prayed. Not for us to leave the world. Not for us to run and hide.

[46 : 29] And withdraw. But that the Father. Would protect us. From the evil one. In the midst of the world. And let me tell you something. Jesus didn't pray a prayer.

That the Father hasn't answered. He's got you. And by the grace of God. We've got you. In his name. Father. Oh Jesus. Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Thank you. Thank you that you didn't take us out of the world.

It's here that we can experience your light. And your joy. In ways we never saw coming. And boy do we need it. We need your presence. We need your love. We need you to remind us.

How safe we are in your presence. In your hands. You will never let us go. Remind us, Lord.

Remind us. That you're. That you're. That you're planned for us.

[47 : 27] You planned good for us. Not evil. That even though the devil may rage. And war. And the lion may attack. And pounce. Yet we are protected. We are kept by your power.

We are kept for inheritance. We are kept by your grace and mercy. Thank you, Lord. Help us to be agents of that same grace.

That same truth. That same power. So that others might escape the corruption in the world. And the death that awaits all of us.

If we do not put our faith in Jesus. Help us, Lord. Thank you for your mercy. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for praying for us. Thank you for letting us hear that prayer.

We trust you. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.