

# THE FIRST 15

Friday, July 19, 2024

Today is Friday, July 19 and we are learning what the Bible says about holiness.

## OPENING PRAYER

*In the morning, I seek the God who loves me. I quiet my mind, calm my breath and focus on the goodness of my Lord and Shepherd. He brings me to green pastures, leads me to still waters and guides me in paths of righteousness. He shows me the way of holiness and strengthens my steps to walk in the way that leads to life. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE

***I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. John 17:13-19***

## REFLECTION

In John chapter seventeen, Jesus concluded his farewell message to his disciples by praying for them and all future generations of believers. Jesus prayed for his followers to be sanctified. Sanctification is a state of holiness and the process of becoming holy that takes place over our lifetime. Sanctification is a work of the Holy Spirit and is achieved by God's grace, not our good deeds or efforts. According to the Methodist Articles of Religion, sanctification is a renewal of our fallen nature where we are not only pardoned from sin but saved from its power and enabled to love God with all our hearts and walk blameless in his commandments. We are cleansed from sin in our thoughts, words and actions and enabled to live according to God's will. This gift can be received in this lifetime both gradually and instantaneously and should be sought earnestly by every child of God. (The Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church).

Jesus prayed for his disciples gathered in the Upper Room as well as for all believers stretched out into the future for all time. That includes me. His final words to his followers are words I also receive. Jesus wants me to have a full measure of his joy within me. I am to live a life filled with supernatural joy despite my challenges and circumstances. I can claim that joy every moment of every day. I also claim God's protection from evil and comfort in times of difficulty. Jesus says, as a believer I am in the world but I am not of the world just as he was not. I desire the sanctification that Jesus wants for me and I endeavor to find the sacred truth in God's Word. I want to be made holy in this lifetime as only God's Spirit can accomplish in me. Spirit-filled, I am sent into the world to share the good news and love and serve others.

Jesus prayed this prayer for the body of believers spread out into history. What part of Christ's prayer resonates the most with the current benefits and deficits of my soul? Perhaps God wants me to see that he desires to provide whatever I am lacking if only I am ready to receive it.

Maybe Jesus wants me to give me a “full measure of his joy” or true sanctification. I consider what that would mean for my life.

**Ask:** Even though I live “in” the world, when are the instances I recognize I am not “of” the world? How can I better cooperate with the grace God wants to work in my life to grow in holiness?

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Blessed Lord Jesus, thank you for loving me and acting as my mediator and intercessor. I long for the good things you desire for me to attain in this lifetime. Reveal my next steps into sanctifying grace and spiritual maturity, so I can earnestly seek holiness of heart and life. Thank you for being my Good Shepherd and leading me in paths of righteousness. I invite you into my heart, soul and mind. I invite you into the events of my upcoming day. Remove any barriers or hesitation so I may cooperate fully with your loving promises. Amen.*