

The Truth That Reaches the Heart

John 17:17

STANDING FIRM IN THE TRUTH • JUNE 26 SERMON SERIES

BIG IDEA: You aren't sanctified by gripping the truth tightly enough — you're sanctified as the truth takes hold of you. The truth is the instrument, a holy and united people, the result, and it all begins with God.

1 BELONGING BEFORE BEHAVING (JOHN 17:17)

- Watch the grammar, because it carries the whole point. “You — sanctify them.” The Father is the one who acts; the disciples are the object. They don't sanctify themselves. Holiness is something you receive before it is ever something you do.
- “Holy” isn't first squeaky-clean behavior. It means set apart — belonging to God, like a temple vessel pulled from a common kitchen and given to him. You belong to him before you behave for him.

John 17:17 CSB Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

John 17:11 CSB Holy Father, protect them by your name that you have given me, so that they may be one as we are one.

KEY TRUTH: Sanctification is God taking common people and claiming them as his own. The belonging comes first; the behaving comes out of the belonging.

FILL IN THE BLANKS — SECTION 1

John 17:17 — “Sanctify them by the _____; your _____ is _____.”

John 17:11 — “_____ Father, protect them by your _____ that you have given me.”

John 17:19 — “I _____ myself for them, so that they also may be _____ by the truth.”

2 A FORCE, NOT A FILE (JOHN 1:1–14)

- God does the sanctifying — and he does it “by the truth.” So everything depends on one question: what kind of truth? We've treated it like a file of accurate facts to study and store. But in John, truth is never inert — it is always doing something.
- “Your word is truth” is an equation — the same construction as “the Word was God” (1:1). Truth isn't something the word contains; it's what the word is made of. And that Word became flesh: the truth that makes you holy isn't a file. It is a Person.

John 1:1 CSB In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 CSB The Word became flesh and dwelt among us... full of grace and truth.

KEY TRUTH: The truth that sanctifies isn't a beam you hold and aim. It's a dawn that breaks over you — God's living self-expression, the Word made flesh, with a face.

FILL IN THE BLANKS — SECTION 2

John 1:1 — “In the beginning was the _____, and the Word was _____.”

John 1:14 — “The Word became _____ and _____ among us... full of grace and _____.”

John 8:32 — “You will know the _____, and the truth will set you _____.”

3 THE HEART IT REACHES (JOHN 17:21)

- When the truth reaches you, what is it after? Commands still matter — “If you love me, you will keep my commands” (14:15) — but watch the order. Love comes first; obedience is what love does. Obedience is the evidence of belonging, never the price of admission.
- And watch where the prayer climbs: “May they all be one... so that the world may believe you sent me” (17:21). The whole point of being sanctified in the truth is a oneness so visible that the watching world finds the gospel believable.

John 17:21 CSB *May they all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I am in you... so that the world may believe you sent me.*

John 14:15 CSB *If you love me, you will keep my commands.*

KEY TRUTH: Love first; obedience follows. The truth knits a people together until a watching world believes. Stop clutching — stand in the dawn and let it rise on you.

FILL IN THE BLANKS — SECTION 3

John 14:15 — “If you _____ me, you will _____ my commands.”

John 17:21 — “May they all be _____ ... so that the world may _____ you sent me.”

John 17:23 — “that they may be made completely _____ ... that the world may _____ you have sent me.”

APPLICATION

Take one. Carry it into the week.

- One word to receive** — Before you do anything for God this week, hear that he claims you first. Where have you been trying to earn a belonging that’s meant to be received? Receive it.
- One file to drop** — Name one way you’ve carried truth like a flashlight — aimed at someone, switched off when inconvenient. This week, let it be a dawn that rises on you first.
- One sword to lay down** — Is there a brother or sister you’ve aimed 17:17 at like a weapon? Take one step toward the unity Jesus prayed for, “so that the world may believe.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Jesus prayed for you the night before the cross — and asked not for your comfort or success but for your holiness. How does it change things to hear sanctification as something prayed over you rather than achieved by you?
2. The grammar matters: the Father sanctifies, the disciples are the object. Where are you most tempted to make holiness a summit you climb instead of a gift you receive?
3. Flashlight or dawn — which has the truth more often been for you? What would change if you let it rise on you instead of carrying it in your pocket and aiming it?
4. “Your word is truth” is the same construction as “the Word was God.” Why does it matter that the truth that sanctifies has a face — that it’s a Person, not a file?
5. Jesus prayed for a unity so visible the world would believe. Where have we used 17:17 to draw swords instead? What would laying the sword down look like for us?

MY TAKEAWAY

ANSWER KEY

S1: truth · word · truth · Holy · name · sanctify · sanctified

S2: Word · God · flesh · dwelt · truth · truth · free

S3: love · keep · one · believe · one · know

