

John 17:9, 15-19, "I've set you aside for a purpose."

We are approaching the Holiday season, time to begin digging out those special dishes and utensils we only use at Thanksgiving and Christmas ... you know, that goofy Turkey shaped platter or the snow-man shaped candy dish. You store those items away for just this special time of year, dust 'em off, and enjoy them for a season.

You, are a goofy-shaped utensil God has reserved for a special purpose. The Bible word we use for this is "sanctified" or "holy." In today's Bible passage we see the claim of Jesus that we ARE a special-use people.

How is it that he prepares us for His special use?

A. We are prayed for.

John 17:9, "My prayer is not for the world, but for those you have given me, because they belong to you.

If you had to ask one person, in all of human history, to pray for you ... who would you ask? Billy Graham? Martin Luther? The Apostle Paul?

Jesus prayed for you. You, His chosen ones, are prayed for. How cool is that?

B. We are safe.

John 17:15, I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one.

Safe from the evil one, Satan. There are all sorts of hazards that Jesus-followers face just like all of human-kind does: natural disaster, disease and injury, crime, "wrong place at wrong time," but when it comes to being attacked by Satan ... the evil one ... a disciple of Jesus is bubble-wrapped by God's grace and power. I believe Jesus asked God to keep me safe from the Devil, there it is in John 17:15, and so I believe I *am* safe.

C. We are strangers.

John 17:16, They do not belong to this world any more than I do.

We are “in” the world, but not “of” the world. It’s like wearing a blue “Gators” shirt in a sea of orange Tennessee fans, I’m in the stadium, on the Tennessee side, but as a loud and proud Gator fan. In, but not of.

D. We are weird.

John 17:17, Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth.

“Holy” = “Sanctified” = “Set aside, chosen and prepared for a special purpose”

How do we learn the truth of God’s word? Ask 3 simple questions of any Bible passage:

1. What does this say about God?
2. What does this say about me or my relationships?
3. What should I do about this?

E. We are sent.

John 17:18, Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world.

We are weird for a reason: we are sent into the world around us to make a difference. If we are the *same* as everyone and everything else then we just blend in and don’t make a difference ... but if we are sanctified, holy, different, *weird*, then we can influence others!

You don’t have to send yourself across the world, just step outside your front door (or, for some of us, there’s plenty of mission work to do in our own family).

F. We are paid for.

John 17:19, And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth.

Why hang around where we don't belong, being weird, trying to make a difference?
Because we are not our own ... we are bought with a price ... the sacrifice of Jesus for
me on the Cross reorients my direction in life, so ...

I want to be weird.

I want to make a difference.

I want to be a stranger, passing through.

I want to go where I can telling and showing others the grace of Jesus.

MAIN POINT: Life has purpose when we see ourselves as being holy.

A closing prayer ... "Dear God, we are a bit weird and out of step with this world.
Thank You. Use us to reshape and refresh those around us with the grace You offer
through Jesus. Thank You for giving our life purpose. In Jesus' name, amen."