

“SAFE IN THE WORLD”

INTRODUCTION: The recent scandals at Penn State University have unsettled many, many people...

1. ...and rightly so: *An icon of the college sports world, a guy known as “Joe Pa” – a surrogate grandpa for tens of thousands of college students – and a revered coach known as “St. Jerry” because of his charitable work with little children, have been exposed as fake, in the wake of a huge scandal involving the abuse of children.*
2. I was driving down the road one clear, beautiful early morning, on the way to hunting, and I thought of my five grandchildren:
 - a. *Hannah (7), Harris (6), Mattie Jane (5), Liam (3), Abigail (1)*
 - b. And I asked myself, *“What kind of person would willingly molest, harm or abuse these little souls?”*
 - c. And a rare thing happened to me: I felt truly overwhelmed by the evil in our world.
 - d. Doesn't happen to me very often, but when it does the weight of all we deal with as pastors comes crushingly upon me.
 - e. I thought of Psalm 120...

*In my distress I called to the LORD,
and he answered me.*

*Deliver me, O LORD,
from lying lips,
from a deceitful tongue.*

*What shall be given to you,
and what more shall be done to you,
you deceitful tongue?*

*A warrior's sharp arrows,
with glowing coals of the broom tree!*

*Woe to me, that I sojourn in Meshech,
that I dwell among the tents of Kedar!*

*Too long have I had my dwelling
among those who hate peace.*

*I am for peace,
but when I speak, they are for war! (Psalm 120)*

3. I wanted to pause here this morning and give you parents some encouraging reassurance:
 - a. *Your children are very safe here at Christ Covenant Church.*
 - b. Screening: all who teach at CDS, who work with children, who keep our nurseries, and who minister to our youth are *screened with training called “CARE” (Karen Chambers).*
 - c. All faculty and staff at CDS and CCC undergo *background checks* for “registered” offences/police records.
 - d. Our *Administration Department* clearly reviews with the senior staff our safety, security and reporting procedures.

- e. Reason why *people on our campus must wear name tags*
 - f. As we worship, right now, armed police officers are both in our services and patrolling our campus where the children are.
4. All this to say: *At Christ Covenant Church we take very, very, very seriously the physical and spiritual safety of our Covenant Children.*
Do you as a congregation undertake the responsibility of assisting the parents in the Christian nurture of this child? (Vow of baptism)
5. Every once in a while (twice since I have been here) there comes to us an accusation of mistreatment on the part of those who teach our children or minister to our youth.
- a. In **every** instance, we notify our legal counsel and confer with law enforcement personnel.
 - b. In **both** instances since 2006, no evidence of misconduct was found on the part of our people.
 - c. In one instance there was improper behavior between an ex-staff member and a young adult who had once been at our church.
 - d. That ex-staff member, still a member of our church, was brought under discipline, and when there was resistance to our counsel, they were removed from our role.
 - e. **Bottom line:** *We will not play around where our infants, children or youth are preyed upon by adults.*
6. Let me make this **very clear:** *My grandkids call me “Pampa,” but I am no “Joe Pa.” If you attempt to abuse, violate or lead astray one of the children of this church, I will come after you! That is a promise.*
7. Now, if we love our children this much to so protect them, how much more does our Heavenly Father love us, His children? And how much more will He protect us.
- a. *See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.* (1 John 3:1)
 - b. Our spiritual (and physical) safety is of high priority to God.
 - c. And the reason we *know* that this is true is because Jesus prays that for us!
8. Jesus, in **John 17**, is praying for His Church: the apostles, the early disciples, and those who came after them (including us):
- a. The most *sublime* prayer in all of Scripture
 - b. God talking to God about *us*
 - c. Our *older brother* (Jesus) asking our *heavenly Father* (God) to enrich *us* (the church) with 9 special gifts
 - i. That we *glorify God* (17:1-5)
 - ii. That we be *saved in eternity* (17:3)
 - iii. That we be *faithful to the Word* (17:6-8)
 - iv. That we be *kept in the name* (17:9-12)
 - v. That we be *safe in the world* (17:13-16)
 - vi. That we be *sanctified in truth* (17:17-19)
 - vii. That we be *unified in Christ* (17:20-23)
 - viii. That we be *filled with God’s love* (17:24-26)
 - ix. That we be *sent into the world* (17:18)
 - d. We have already looked at the first four of these petitions...
 - e. We now turn to petition #5: *Safe in the World*
But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 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.
(John 17:13-16)

9. **George Newton** (1602-1681) was an English Puritan Pastor during the turbulent years of the English Civil War and the Restoration of the Monarchy.
- Threatened with dismissal under Charles I
 - Forced to change pastorates during the Civil War
 - Removed from the ministry by Charles II
 - Imprisoned for his faith in his later years
 - A man who knew what it was to ask God for safety in this world!*
 - He wrote a commentary on *John 17* in which he said (p. 6)
...this prayer of our Savior was evidently and unquestionably made before his coming to the garden of Gethsemane, just as he was about to go thither. He had been swan-like singing out his dying song in the ears of his disciples, for the space of three chapters, and speaking many things to comfort them, being at the point to leave them. And having finished what he had to say, he shuts up all with this prayer. You see, then, what a subject we have now to handle: a prayer, and a prayer made by Christ, the great high-priest, the advocate and intercessor of his people, and the last public, solemn prayer that he made with his apostles and disciples just as he was about to suffer. He took his last farewell of them in this prayer, and therefore you must think it was spiritual, a zealous, and a pithy one. And truly such a prayer, made by such a one as Jesus Christ, at such a time, and on such an occasion, and among such a company, must needs be heavenly and ravishing, and therefore will deserve our best attention, both in handling and in hearing. Christ was in heaven in his thoughts and his affections when he made it, 'These things spake Jesus, and lift up his eyes to heaven, and said.' The Lord in mercy grants that we may be in heaven while we hear it!
10. Jesus Christ was again very conscious of the fact that He was leaving this world and leaving us (His Church) behind...in this world!
- The **major theme** of this Upper Room Discourse
 - "I am going to the Father..."*
 - "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. (John 14:12-14)*
 - I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. (John 14:18-20)*
 - You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. (John 14:28-29)*
 - But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you. "I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning*

sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. (John 16:4-11)

- g. *"A little while, and you will see me no longer; and again a little while, and you will see me." (John 16:16)*
- h. *I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father. (John 16:28)*
- i. *"Father, the hour has come..." (17:1)*

11. Jesus wants us to know that while He leaves us in this world, the Holy Spirit will keep us safe in His grace...

But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 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. (John 17:13-16)

12. Jesus prays that we be *safe in the world*, and in so doing He asks God for four measures of safety for us.

13. Note: *These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33)

I. THE SAFETY OF SUPERNATURAL JOY (John 17:13)

But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. (John 17:13)

1. When Jesus says "...and these things I speak in the world..." He is making reference not to His prayer but to His *Upper Room Discourse*, of which John 17 is the concluding prayer.
 - a. i.e., the "closing prayer" of His Communion Sermon
 - b. Jesus prays out loud in order to encourage His apostles (and us).
 - c. Remember what He had prayed a week or so earlier:
 - i. At Lazarus' tomb
 - ii. *So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." (John 11:41-42)*
 - iii. God **always** hears Jesus' prayers.
 - iv. God **always** grants to Jesus what He asks.
2. Jesus is concerned about **danger #1** for Christians in the world: *The loss of their Spirit-given joy.*
 - a. *As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. (John 15:9-11)*
 - b. *Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. So also you have*

sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. (John 16:20-24)

- c. **D. A. Carson:** *Gospel of John: Pillar NTC*; p. 564.
Jesus is praying that the disciples may be kept safe, which is equivalent to praying that they may so be preserved that they remain in the Father's love, obedient to him and in hearty allegiance to the 'word' (v. 6) Jesus taught. What is now made clear is that Jesus' concern in such a prayer is not that the statistics on faithfulness be preserved, but that his disciples might share his joy.
3. Jesus is **not** worried that His disciples will defect from Him and deny the Father. He has already asked God that we be "*kept in the Name*" (eternally secure in grace).
4. No, His main concern is this: **He does not want His disciples to lose their joy!**
 - a. *Then he said to them, "Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." (Neh. 8:10)*
 - b. One of the fruit of the Spirit: "*Love, joy...*"
 - c. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:3-9)*
5. That joy can often leave a Christian – especially one who is 50, 60, or older, and who has walked with the Lord for 30, 40, or more years:
 - a. The *freshness* of their faith is no longer there.
 - b. The *excitement* in their salvation is gone.
 - c. They have no *enthusiasm* for anything about Church.
 - d. Their *ministry* has dried up: Committees, routines, budgets, and facilities.
 - e. Their *vision* has degenerated to maintaining the status quo.
 - f. **May the Lord take me home before this happens to me!**
6. Every once in a while an aging saint says to me, "*Pastor, I don't get excited about anything anymore.*"
7. What a statement of *self-condemnation!* In Christ, saved by grace, indwelt by the Spirit...and no joy, or excitement, or vision for the future?
8. **This is a fair question:** "*Why do young people show such joy and excitement in their immature, raw and unschooled faith while older, mature, informed Christians lose their joy?*"
9. There is only **one** answer to this. Jesus tells us...
 - a. He mentions the answer 7 times in vv. 13-16.
 - b. 7 times in 86 words; once every 12 words!

- c. The answer: *The World!*
10. The only thing that can rob you of your joy is *The World*:
- Worldliness* always brings with it the loss of joy.
 - Concern over income, career, homes, retirement, health care, portfolios and making life *comfortable in the world*.
 - I **never** thought about these things in 1976 when I was first saved, or in 1978 when I married Jane, or in 1979 when I left my job and went to Seminary.
 - I only thought of **one thing**: *I loved God, and I loved my young bride, Jane. And all I wanted was for us to follow Jesus. I knew He would take care of us in this world.*
 - By the time I came to be your pastor in 2006, I had badly slipped. My joy was *flagging*.
 - In 2008, everything collapsed, and my plan for my life caved in: *Jane had to go back to work; we sold our prized house in Mississippi at a loss, my portfolio for retirement lost 37% and shrunk back to the size it was a decade before, and I was an angry, fearful wreck with no joy!*
11. Then, one day in a deer stand, the Holy Spirit took me to a verse in the Bible –
- A verse I'd claimed for Jane and me in 1978 on a men's retreat
 - For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. (Jer. 29:11)*
 - But **this time** I read that verse in its larger context:

"Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the LORD.

"For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile. (Jer. 29:4-14)
 - And I **repented** of being a worldly-minded man...
 - I committed to seek the welfare of this Church, this City, and our area before my own.
 - I rejected the false dream of "financial freedom and a care-free retirement."
 - I reminded myself of how God has always cared for, provided for, and blessed me...unaided!
 - I sought to renew my search for a deeper walk with Christ, instead of coasting on past sermons.
 - This led to a sermon series in *Daniel*, to the idea of *Seek the City* and to a renewed sense of joy, of peace, of *resting in Christ*...and the **surrender** of my retirement to God.

12. When you gave your life to Christ you made a covenant with God. And God is displeased when you want to take that life back and give it to the things of this world.
- a. Need proof of this?
What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? (James 4:1-5)
 - b. **God is jealous over you.**
 - c. When you give yourself to *worldly* things, God will remove your joy, until you return to Him.
 - d. *Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory. (1 Peter 1:8)*
13. Jesus asks God for a second source of security for His saints.

II. THE SAFETY OF MORAL COURAGE (John 17:14)

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. (John 17:14)

1. When the Gospel pulled us out of the world and into the kingdom of God, we became a threat to the world order and a living witness against the world system.
2. And...the world **hates** people like that!
3. Under the pressure to compromise on our witness, we can forfeit our *moral courage* in order to regain our popularity in the world.
4. This is often seen in people who start out well in the faith but soon fold up and rejoin "the group."
Do your best to come to me soon. For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. (2 Tim. 4:9-10)
5. There is great safety, not in the world's approval, but in the *moral courage* the Spirit gives to His saints.
6. **Moral Courage**, found only in the Gospel, enables us to move the men of the world closer to the Kingdom of God, rather than make the church popular with the world.
7. **Archimedes** once famously said: "Give me a point outside the world for a fulcrum, and I will move the world with a lever."
8. Jesus Christ is the Christian fulcrum and the Gospel of God is the lever that moves the world.
 - a. *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Romans 1:16)*
 - b. *Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."*

Another angel, a second, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality."

And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name."

Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!" (Revelation 14:6-13)

9. **Lesslie Newbigin:** *The Light Has Come*; (p. 231).

If the Church does not rest on a point outside the world it has no leverage with the world. All its tugging and straining is but a minor disturbance within the life of the world, and therefore it is still under the power of the evil one. The Church is marked off from the world by the fact that it has received and must witness to the word of God which is the truth and which thereby calls in question all the so-called axioms, absolutes, and self-evident propositions which are the stock-in-trade of the world's life. Between the Church and the world, therefore, lies the boundary line which is called "conversion," and if the Church seeks a relation with the world which ignores this, it falls into the power of the evil one.

10. We are involved in a huge tug-of-war between us (the Church) and the world.

- a. The world is trying to *leverage* us with the fulcrum of popularity and the lever of moral compromise.
- b. The Church is trying to *leverage* the world with the fulcrum of the Gospel and the lever of moral courage.

11. If the world prevails, it will move the Church into two sad things: spiritual danger and a loss of joy.

12. If the Church prevails, it will move the world toward two great blessings: safety in Christ and the joy of salvation.

13. **Application:** *What bothers me most about the new churches the young people flock to is not primarily their music, their "punk" pastors, or their irreverent dismissal of historic faith. What troubles me is this: They lack the moral courage to call the world to repentance, faith, and holiness, even at the expense of their own "coolness" or the loss of their own popularity. They are so "hip" that they have been leveraged into the world!*

14. There is great safety in possessing the moral courage to stand with the Kingdom of God and not the world.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

15. Here is a third source of safety Jesus prays for us...

III. THE SAFETY OF DIVINE ENGAGEMENT (John 17:15)

I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. (John 17:15)

1. Jesus is not **naïve** about the world. It is hardly a “harmless” place.
2. In fact, the world is passing away, and its lord, Lucifer, has been defeated, but Satan still possesses great power to harm the Church and its saints...
 - a. *We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.* (1 John 5:19)
 - b. **D. A. Carson:** *The Gospel of John: Pillar NTC; p. 565.*
The death/exaltation of the Master spells the principal defeat of the ruler of this world (12:31; 14:30; 16:11), but that does not rob him of all power to inflict terrible damage on the Lord’s followers, if they are left without succour. Until the consummation, when the last enemy is destroyed, ‘the whole world is under the control of the evil one’ (1 John 5:19). The Christians’ task, then, is not to be withdrawn from the world, nor to be confused with the world, but to remain in the world, maintaining witness to the truth by the help of the Paraclete (15:26-27), and absorbing all the malice that the world can muster, finally protected by the Father himself, in response to the prayer of Jesus.
3. I served as an officer in the U. S. Army and a key point we learned was this: *an army on the offensive (engagement) was always safer than an army in retreat (disengagement).*
4. When Jesus teaches us to pray in the Lord’s Prayer: “*Deliver us from (the) evil (one),*” He is not recommending any disengagement from the world.
5. We are to be *in* the world, not *of* the world, but engaged *with* the world: salt, light, witness and friend.
6. When we “retreat” into our “holy huddles,” we are in more danger than when we live on the cutting edge of witness in the world.
 - a. Engagement keeps us sharp, prayerful, focused, and guarded by grace.
 - b. Disengagement makes us drop our guard, live in a false sense of security, and turn away from Christ.
 - c. **Our greatest enemy (Satan) always does more damage to us by using comfortable and cultural Christianity than by open opposition from the world!**
7. **Andreas J. Köstenberger:** *John: ECNT; p. 495.*
Believers, then, are neither to withdraw from the world nor to become indistinguishable from it, but rather, as ones consecrated by the truth and separated from evil, they are to witness to God’s Son, aided by the Spirit.
8. In other words: *Your children may not be as safe with their worldly and nominal Christian friends – Church-goers but not converts – than they are in the company of rank pagans. The first causes them to drop their guard; the second causes them to rely on grace. You tell me which way to live is the “safer” way!*
9. Here is a fourth and final prayer request, by Jesus, for our spiritual safety...

IV. THE SAFETY OF SPIRITUAL FORTITUDE (John 17:16)

They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. (John 17:16)

1. Short. To the point. No shades of gray: *Jesus and His saints do not belong to this world. Period!*
2. Jesus here is praying against **spiritual compromise**: giving up and seeking to live in spiritual *detenté* with the spirit of the age.
3. I see this all around me, especially when it comes to the great moral issues of our day. We have decided we can live at peace with the world *and* still get to heaven. How? By *compromising* on anything that irritates the world –
 - a. *There are more than just one way to heaven*
Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)
And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)
 - b. *People can be homosexuals and go to heaven and they don't need conversion; they need approval.*
Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)
 - c. *Abortion is not a sin; it's a private choice that is no one's business but your own. (And it's never going to be illegal in America, so why argue about it).*
For you formed my inward parts;
you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works;
my soul knows it very well.
My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them,
the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of them. (Psalm 139:13-16)
 - d. *Same sex marriage hurts nobody! What's the big deal? Nor is divorce a sin. Everyone does it!*
He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery." (Mt. 19:4-6, 8-9)
 - e. And on...and on...and on...the compromise goes, as we preach and teach about **personal peace and prosperity**.
4. Why do we think this way? It is **not** because the Word of God is not clear in this way, but because we fear the ridicule, rejection, and reaction of *the world*.

5. A leading evangelical pastor recently confided to a friend of mine that his greatest fear is this: *Some major U. S. magazine will brand him as an ignorant, irrelevant fundamentalist and all the young urban people in his church will go away! And that's why he doesn't talk about abortion, homosexuality, war, same-sex marriage, divorce, etc. in his pulpit.*
6. But then, this same pastor, worried about his church attendance figures, said this: *"You've got to love the souls of your friends more than you do their friendship, and the truth will force you to make that choice."*
7. **Bruce Milne:** *The Message of John: BST; p. 245.*
The world and the devil are daunting enemies, and Jesus' concern about them in his prayer is a summons to vigilance and prayer for protection. 'The spiritual dimensions of this prayer of Jesus are consistent and overwhelming. By contrast we spend much more time today praying about our health, our projects, our decisions, our finances, our family, and even our games than we do praying about the danger of the evil one.'
8. There is **safety** in *spiritual fortitude*: The honor and dignity you have for people that makes you speak the truth to them out of love for them and concern for their souls.
 - a. The security of uncompromising holiness...
Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14)
 - b. The security of not seeking ungodly compromise that ruins the souls of those who lack a clear Word from God...
Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Tim. 4:13-16)
 - c. The security of speaking truth out of love for souls...
Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ. (Ephesians 4:15)
Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth? (Galatians 4:16)
9. Safety comes from spiritual fortitude: *a commitment to truth for the sake of the salvation of lost souls.*

CONCLUSION: When Jesus prays for us to be *safe in the world*, He is not praying for what we think...

1. Not for temporal ease, popularity, lack of conflict or a false sense of peace in the world.
2. He is praying for the *safety that comes from being on the winning side in the great and cosmic conflict between Christ and His Church against the Devil and the World.*
3. We usually learn this the hard way: Adolf Hitler and Nazism; Communism and the Cold War; Muslims and *Jihad*. There is no safety in being at peace with evil. Won't work.
4. Jesus prays for us – then and now – to be safe in our mission, just as a soldier is in danger, surrounded by death, and often bruised and battered, yet he comes home, alive and victorious.
5. **F. F. Bruce:** *The Gospel of John; p. 331.*
I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. (John 17:9-10)

For his disciples, then, Jesus prays. If he does not pray for the world, it is not because he had no concern for the world; he is, indeed, the Saviour of the world. But the salvation of the world depends on the witness of those whom the Father has given him 'out of the world', and it is they who need his intercession at this junction. In themselves they were weak indeed, but with the Father's enabling grace and guidance and illumination of his Spirit, they would fulfill the mission with which they were now being entrusted and bring glory to their Master in fulfilling it. So confident of this is he that he speaks in the perfect tense: 'I have been glorified in them.'

6. We promise to do our best to protect your children from evil while here on the Christ Covenant campus.
7. And Jesus Christ promises to pray for you so that you are not confused, compromised, co-opted or cast down by the world.
8. And Jesus **always gets what He prays for...always!**
"Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it..." (John 11:42)
9. So...here is the **best protection** our School and our Church can give to you and your children.
To assist the Christian family by providing an education, a community and a worldview so that we and our children are equipped to be salt and light for God's glory. (Purpose Statement)