

The Gospel of John

Christ's Ministry of Intercession

John 17:6-10

INTRODUCTION:

This morning we are continuing in John 17 that records Jesus' "high priestly" prayer.

The famous and familiar Lord's Prayer from Matthew 6 is an example that Jesus used to teach the disciples how it pray. It was a prayer that Jesus would never pray because it is a prayer that asks for forgiveness of sin. That does not apply to Jesus. But John 17 is the true Lord's Prayer, because He prayed it. And this is a prayer that no human could ever pray. We will see why as we examine our scripture text this morning: John 17:6-10.

From beginning to end, this chapter is the Lord's Prayer. It is the Lord Jesus praying for His people. The eleven disciples heard Him pray these words. That is why John was able to record it in this gospel. The prayer was recorded so all believers, through all time, could also hear. This prayer was prayed early on Friday morning in the darkness as the disciples walked toward the garden of Gethsemane where our Lord would pray and then be arrested by a crowd led by Judas; and later on that Friday, He would be crucified.

He has now completed all that He wanted to say to the disciples before He will be arrested and taken away from them. Ever since the upper room earlier on Thursday night when they were celebrating Passover and He was instituting the Lord's Supper, He had made promise, after promise, after promise: promises of peace, promises of joy, promises of blessing, promises of persecution, promises of death, and, **promise of all promises**, that the Holy Spirit would come fulfill those promises in their and our lives.

Now, in our text, He prays that God the Father will fulfill all these promises, and fulfill them in an ultimate way by bringing His own to heaven. These are the Lord's final words to the eleven before His death. **What we have here is a preview of His new heavenly ministry which is about to begin.**

It won't begin yet. It won't begin until He ascends into heaven, 40 days after the resurrection. But when He does ascend into heaven, He will begin His new ministry, and it is a **ministry of intercession**. He will transform from being God's perfect sacrificial Lamb to becoming our great High Priest. He took on our sin but now He lives again. He will be the advocate between His people and God, and He will intercede for them.

He is soon to be arrested and executed on the cross, and He makes this long and loving petition for His people. He prayed out loud in front of the eleven so they could hear and it is written down for us to hear as well.

His work of intercession is often overlooked. Now, I want to say something that you may not, at first, understand. We look at His work on the cross, and we elevate that, and

rightly we should. We look at the resurrection and we exalt Him for His resurrection, and rightly we should. But He has a more glorious work. It is the work of intercession. Jesus stepped in and paid the price for our sins on the cross. We deserved the penalty because we broke God's law. But Jesus took the penalty of death for us.

The apostle Paul understood that Christ's intercession was a greater extension of atonement.

Romans 5:8 (NASB)

⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Then notice the next phrase: "Much more then,"

Wait a minute. How can anything be more than that? But he says...

Romans 5:9-10 (NASB)

⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

What is much more than His death? It is His life! His death provides the atonement for sin, but He now lives to make intercession for us and ensure that we are carried all the way to glory. That is the "much more". His ministry now is to intercede for us.

So when the Lord said on the cross, "It is finished," the work of sacrifice was finished, the work of atonement was finished, and the penalty for sin was paid in full. But His work on behalf of elect sinners was not finished. It is going on even now. It began when He went back to heaven and took His place at the right hand of God to intercede for us.

Stand and Read Scripture

John 17:6-10 (NASB)

⁶ "I have revealed Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have followed Your word. ⁷ Now they have come to know that everything which You have given Me is from You; ⁸ for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received *them* and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me. ⁹ I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but on the behalf of those whom You have given Me, because they are Yours; ¹⁰ and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them.

Prayer

Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He came to seek and to save the lost. He came to give His life as ransom. As the great High Priest, Jesus intercedes on behalf of all God's people so that they can join Him in Heaven. And it takes His intercession to get us there.

We all know what is going to happen with the eleven. When Jesus is arrested, they are going to scatter in fear. Their faith is going to be shaken. Their hearts are going to be even more grieved than they have been. Peter is going to deny Him. But though His suffering is infinitely greater than theirs, His love for them causes Him to pray this prayer.

Our Lord must overpower all of their shortcomings and bring them to glory, and that is why He intercedes.

BODY:

I. MISSION ACHIEVED.

Beginning in verse 6 Jesus identifies the people He's praying for, the disciples. In this prayer He **identifies** them from the **DIVINE SIDE** and from the **HUMAN SIDE**. Here we face the interplay of that great mystery of **divine sovereignty** and **human responsibility**.

Verse 6 introduces it, so let's look at it. Jesus tells God that He is praying for this group of eleven men.

John 17:6 (NASB)

6 "I have revealed Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have followed Your word.

Jesus is praying for those, **first of all**, who are marked by belonging to God and being given to Him from God, and, **secondly**, to those who are marked on the human side by a believing, obedient faith. Those two always go together.

He starts by saying "**I have revealed Your name.**" He said essentially the same thing in verse 4:

John 17:4 (NASB)

4 I glorified You on the earth by accomplishing the work which You have given Me to do.

What was His work? A part of it was to reveal God to mankind.

Christ's **earthly mission** was to reveal the Father and all that was true about the Father to the disciples through His teaching and His works. "**I have revealed You to them –**" He says " – Your person, Your nature, Your attributes, Your works, Your will, Your plan." That is all wrapped up in the word "**name**". All that God is, all that God wills, and all that God promises.

Then He says " **whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me,**" Back in verse 2, He says,

John 17:2b (NASB)

2 just as You gave Him authority over all mankind, so that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.

Let me talk about that. Before they were ever converted, before they were ever called, before they ever knew anything, before they ever believed, they **were** Yours (**past tense**).

What is the world? The world is the evil anti-God, anti-Christ, satanically ruled system of evil and sin, composed of demons and all the unredeemed human beings who oppose God and belong to Satan. They live in the kingdom of darkness. Within the realm of darkness, there are some sinners who belong to God. "They were Yours – " Notice He uses the word "**Were**", **not are** but "were". Even when they **were** in the world, "**they were Yours, and You gave them to Me**".

This is repeated many times throughout the New Testament. God has known from the foundation of the world those who will be saved.

Revelation 13:8 (NASB)

⁸ All who live on the earth will worship him, *everyone* whose name has not been written since the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slaughtered.

Did you get that? The names of the saved have been written in the Book of Life before the foundation of the world. God chose them before He ever created them. God wrote their names down.

Much earlier in our Lord's ministry, He made it clear to the disciples that anyone who came to salvation was a gift from the Father.

John 6:37,41 (NASB)

³⁷ Everything that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I certainly will not cast out. ... ⁴⁴ No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

There are people throughout all of human history who are born sinners in the world. They are spiritually dead and blind and ignorant, but they belong to God. And in God's time, He plucks them out of the world and they become love gifts to His Son. The Father chooses, the Father gives; the Son receives, the Son keeps, and the Son raises, and no one is lost.

So that is the **divine** side: Jesus has done everything that He was sent to do. He has accomplished His mission on earth and now He is interceding for us in Heaven. Then there is the **human** side.

II. WORDS BELIEVED.

John 17:6b (NASB)

...they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and **they have followed Your word.**

"They have followed Your word" That is the side that marks the believer: obedience to the Word of God. A person who is saved is a person who is obeying the gospel.

The gospel is a command, not a suggestion. We talk about it being a gift. It is a gift in the sense that you do not have to pay a price for it. But it is a command, "Believe or die."

So believing and obeying are the same thing. Believing is simply **obeying** the command to believe. So He says about the disciples, "Not only did You choose them, not only were

they Yours, not only did You give them to Me, **but they have kept Your word.** They believed the gospel and they believed the truth of everything else I said to them.”

Obedient faith is the mark of love. What have we read in John 14 and 15, “**If you love Me, you will – “ what? “ – keep My commandments**”. “Whoever obeys Me, loves Me.”

It is not only that they were chosen by God, that they belonged to Him and were handed over to Christ, there had to be this other aspect of it. The **human** response had to be there. **They believed.** And that becomes the theme of **verses 7 and 8.**

John 17:7-8 (NASB)

⁷ Now they have come to know that everything which You have given Me is from You; ⁸ for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received *them* and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me.

What a statement! They believed. This is not false faith like John 2. Jesus did not commit Himself to people who had false faith. This is not like the false believers in John 6, “**Many of His disciples walked no more with Him.**” These eleven disciple really received the word, they truly understood, and they believed.”

John 6:66-69 (NASB)

⁶⁶ As a result of this many of His disciples left, and would no longer walk with Him. ⁶⁷ So Jesus said to the twelve, “You do not want to leave also, do you?” ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ And we have *already* believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.”

That essentially is what ministry is about. That is our Lord giving us a model of ministry. He came so that they would know the truth, so that they would receive the truth, so that they would understand the truth and believe the truth. They believed that Jesus worked by the power of God. They believed that Jesus had come from God.

Repeatedly in this prayer, Jesus says, “They know that You sent Me.” They believe that I am the Son of God, co-equal with God, co-existent with God, and co-eternal with God. They believed that He was the Creator, the source of life.

What they were having trouble believing was the suffering that Jesus was telling them that He had to do. But they would be okay by Sunday night. This is Friday morning. On Sunday night, they would have a lesson from the Old Testament where our Lord would go through the scriptures and speak to them of all the things that the Messiah had to suffer, and rise again, and then be glorified. But they had a true faith, all the way up to and including everything that had been taught them by Christ. That is the evidence of true salvation. They knew, they received, they understood, and they believed. They were genuine believers.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if you knew that the Lord was before the Father now saying about you, “By the way, that is a true believer. I want to give You, Father, My testimony that that person knows, receives, understands, and believes – and not just the part up to the cross, but the part including the cross: the resurrection, the ascension, the exaltation.” Well, that’s exactly what He is doing for us.

III. ETERNAL LIFE RECEIVED.

John 17:9-10 (NASB)

⁹ I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but on the behalf of those whom You have given Me, because they are Yours; ¹⁰ and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them.

And then in verses 9 and 10, He goes back to the divine side. Jesus once again says that He is not praying just because they believe, but that He is praying for them also because the Father has given them to Him. They are one and the same. The Son of God was certain that the Father would hear His prayer, first of all, because they were true believers; and secondly, because they belonged to God to start with. "They are Yours and You gave them to Me. I ask on their behalf, not on behalf of the world.

And then in **verse 10** He says this, "All things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine." Now, that is a staggering statement. I can understand, "They're Yours; You gave them to Me." But, "all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine;"? That is a very, very significant statement.

What does our Lord mean by that?

Well, you may say "All I have belongs to God." You can say that. But that is much different than saying, "All that belongs to God is mine." There is no creature able to say that before God. But Jesus can! Jesus is saying "I am God!".

He continues in verse 10 "I have been glorified in them." He is not talking about heaven, He is saying, "Already My glory is in them. They are Mine and they are Yours. They have obeyed. My glory is shining through them by their love and obedience.

CONCLUSION:

You may ask "How does these two verses infer eternal life?"

John 10:27-29 (NASB)

²⁷ My sheep listen to My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand.

Since the Father has given them to Christ, they belong to the Father and the Son and no one can pull you away from them. Christ will intercede for us and keep us safe. Listen how eternal life is defined in John 17:3.

John 17:2b-3 (NASB)

...so that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. ³ And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

If God has given us over to Christ, if we were selected before the foundations of the world, then we have eternal life, and Christ will protect us. So we live here to the glory of the Lord; and **the Lord, always interceding, will, one day, bring us to full glory in eternity.**

Family of God.