

# CHAPTER 17

This chapter is a prayer, it is the Lord's prayer, the Lord Christ's prayer. There was one Lord's prayer which he taught us to pray, and did not pray himself, for he needed not to pray for the forgiveness of sin; but this was properly and peculiarly his, and suited him only as a Mediator, and is a sample of his intercession, and yet is of use to us both for instruction and encouragement in prayer. Observe,

- I.** The circumstances of the prayer (v. 1).
- II.** The prayer itself.
  - 1.** He prays for himself (v. 1-5).
  - 2.** He prays for those that are his. And in this see,
    - (1.)** The general pleas with which he introduces his petitions for them (v. 6-10).
    - (2.)** The particular petitions he puts up for them
      - [1.]** That they might be kept (v. 11-16).
      - [2.]** That they might be sanctified (v. 17-19).
      - [3.]** That they might be united (v. 11 and 20-23).
      - [4.]** That they might be glorified (v. 24-26).

## JOHN 17:1-5

### CHRIST'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Here we have,

**I.** The circumstances of this prayer, v. 1. Many a solemn prayer Christ made in the days of his flesh (sometimes he continued all night in prayer), but none of his prayers are recorded so fully as this. Observe,

**1.** The time when he prayed this prayer; when he had *spoken these words*, had given the foregoing farewell to his disciples, he prayed this prayer in their hearing; so that,

**(1.)** It was a prayer after a sermon; when he had spoken from God to them, he turned to speak to God for them. Note, Those we preach to we must

pray for. He that was to prophesy upon the dry bones was also to pray, *Come, O breath, and breathe* upon them. And the word preached should be prayed over, for God *gives the increase*.

(2.) It was a prayer after sacrament; after Christ and his disciples had eaten the passover and the Lord's supper together, and he had given them a suitable exhortation, he closed the solemnity with this prayer, that God would preserve the good impressions of the ordinance upon them.

(3.) It was a family-prayer. Christ's disciples were his family, and, to set a good example before the masters of families, he not only, as the son of Abraham, taught his household (<sup>4189</sup>Genesis 18:19), but, as a son of David, blessed his household (<sup>4162</sup>2 Samuel 6:20), prayed for them and with them.

(4.) It was a parting prayer. When we and our friends are parting, it is good to part with prayer, <sup>4186</sup>Acts 20:36. Christ was parting by death, and that parting should be sanctified and sweetened by prayer. Dying Jacob blessed the twelve patriarchs, dying Moses the twelve tribes, and so, here, dying Jesus the twelve apostles.

(5.) It was a prayer that was a preface to his sacrifice, which he was now about to offer on earth, specifying the favours and blessings designed to be purchased by the merit of his death for those that were his; like a deed *leading the uses of a fine*, and directing to what intents and purposes it shall be levied. Christ prayed then as a priest now offering sacrifice, in the virtue of which all prayers were to be made.

(6.) It was a prayer that was a specimen of his intercession, which he ever lives to make for us within the veil. Not that in his exalted state he addresses himself to his Father by way of humble petition, as when he was on earth. No, his intercession in heaven is a presenting of his merit to his Father, with a suing out of the benefit of it for all his chosen ones.

2. The outward expression of fervent desire which he used in this prayer: He *lifted up his eyes to heaven*, as before (<sup>4144</sup>John 11:41); not that Christ needed thus to engage his own attention, but he was pleased thus to sanctify this gesture to those that use it, and justify it against those that ridicule it. It is significant of the lifting up of the soul to God in prayer, <sup>4181</sup>Psalms 25:1. *Sursum corda* was anciently used as a call to prayer, *Up with your hearts*, up to heaven; thither we must direct our desires in prayer, and thence we must expect to receive the good things we pray for.

**II.** The first part of the prayer itself, in which Christ prays for himself. Observe here,

**1.** He prays to God as a Father: He *lifted up his eyes, and said, Father.* Note, As prayer is to be made to God only, so it is our duty in prayer to eye him as a Father, and to call him *our Father.* All that have the Spirit of adoption are taught to cry *Abba, Father,* v. 25. For it will be of great use to us in prayer, both for direction and for encouragement, to call God as we hope to find him.

**2.** He prayed for himself first. Though Christ, as God, was prayed to, Christ, as man, prayed; thus *it became him to fulfill all righteousness.* It was said to him, as it is said to us, *Ask, and I will give thee,* <sup><HBB></sup>Psalm 2:8. What he had purchased he must ask for; and shall we expect to have what we never merited, but have a thousand times forfeited, unless we pray for it? This puts an honour upon prayer, that it was the messenger Christ sent on his errands, the way in which even he corresponded with Heaven. It likewise gives great encouragement to praying people, and cause to hope that even the *prayer of the destitute* shall not be despised; time was when he that is advocate for us had a cause of his own to solicit, a great cause, on the success of which depended all his honour as Mediator; and this he was to solicit in the same method that is prescribed to us, *by prayers and supplications* (<sup><KFB></sup>Hebrews 5:7), so that he knows the heart of a petitioner (<sup><Q39></sup>Exodus 23:9), he knows the way. Now observe, Christ began with prayer for himself, and afterwards prayed for his disciples; this charity must begin at home, though it must not end there. We must love and pray for our neighbor as ourselves, and therefore must in a right manner love and pray for ourselves first. Christ was much shorter in his prayer for himself than in his prayer for his disciples. Our prayers for the church must not be crowded into a corner of our prayers; in making *supplication for all saints,* we have room enough to enlarge, and should not straiten ourselves. Now here are two petitions which Christ puts up for himself, and these two are one — that he might be glorified. But this one petition, *Glorify thou me,* is twice put up, because it has a double reference. To the prosecution of his undertaking further: *Glorify me, that I may glorify thee,* in doing what is agreed upon to be yet done, v. 1-3. And to the performance of his undertaking hitherto: “*Glorify me, for I have glorified thee.* I have done my part, and now, Lord, do thine,” v. 4, 5.

(1.) Christ here prays to be *glorified*, in order to his *glorifying God* (v. 1): *Glorify thy Son* according to thy promise, *that thy Son may glorify thee* according to his understanding. Here observe,

[1.] What he prays for — that he might be glorified in this world: “*The hour is come* when all the powers of darkness will combine to vilify thy Son; now, Father, glorify him.” The Father glorified the *Son* upon earth, *First*, Even in his sufferings, by the signs and wonders which attended them. When they that came to take him were thunder-struck with a word, — when Judas confessed him innocent, and sealed that confession with his own guilty blood, — when the judge's wife asleep, and the judge himself awake, pronounced him righteous, — when the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple rent, then the Father not only justified, but glorified the Son. Nay, *Secondly*, Even by his sufferings; when he was crucified, he was magnified, he was glorified, <sup><413></sup>John 13:31. It was in his cross that he conquered Satan and death; his thorns were a crown, and Pilate in the inscription over his head wrote more than he thought. But, *Thirdly*, Much more after his sufferings. The Father glorified the Son when he *raised him from the dead*, showed him openly to chosen witnesses, and poured out the Spirit to support and plead his cause, and to set up his kingdom among men, then he *glorified him*. This he here prays for, and insists upon.


[2.] What he pleads to enforce this request.

*First*, He pleads relation: *Glorify thy Son*; thy Son as God, as Mediator. It is in consideration of this that the heathen are *given him for his inheritance*; for *thou art my Son*, <sup><410></sup>Psalms 2:7, 8. The devil had tempted him to renounce his sonship with an offer of the kingdoms of this world; but he rejected the offer with disdain, and depended upon his Father for his preferment, and here applies himself to him for it. Note, Those that have received the adoption of sons may in faith pray for the inheritance of sons; if sanctified, then glorified: *Father, glorify thy Son*.

*Secondly*, He pleads the time: *The hour is come*; the season prefixed to an hour. The hour of Christ's passion was determined in the counsel of God. He had often said his hour was not yet come; but now it was come, and he knew it. *Man knows not his time* (<sup><290></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:12), but the Son of man did. He calls it *this hour* (<sup><427></sup>John 12:27), and here, *the hour*; compare <sup><445></sup>Mark 14:35; ch. 16:21. For the hour of the Redeemer's death, which was also the hour of the Redeemer's birth, was the most signal and

remarkable hour, and, without doubt, the most critical, that ever was since the clock of time was first set a going. Never was there such an hour as that, nor did ever any hour challenge such expectations of it before, nor such reflections upon it after.


1. *“The hour is come in the midst of which I need to be owned.”* Now is the hour when this grand affair is come to a crisis; after many a skirmish the decisive battle between heaven and hell is now to be fought, and that great cause in which God's honour and man's happiness are together embarked must now be either won or lost for ever. The two champions David and Goliath, Michael and the dragon, are now entering the lists; the trumpet sounds for an engagement that will be irretrievably fatal either to the one or to the other: *“Now glorify thy Son, now give him victory over principalities and powers, now let the bruising of his heel be the breaking of the serpent's head, now let thy Son be so upheld as not to fail nor be discouraged.”* When Joshua went forth conquering and to conquer, it is said, *The Lord magnified Joshua*; so he glorified his Son when he made the cross his triumphant chariot.

2. *“The hour is come in the close of which I expect to be crowned; the hour is come when I am to be glorified, and, set at thy right hand.”* Betwixt him and that glory there intervened a bloody scene of suffering; but, being short, he speaks as if he made little of it: *The hour is come that I must be glorified*; and he did not expect it till then. Good Christians in a trying hour, particularly a dying hour, may thus plead: *“Now the hour is come, stand by me, appear for me, now or never: now the earthly tabernacle is to be dissolved, the hour is come that I should be glorified.”*  2 Corinthians 5:1.

Thirdly, He pleads the Father's own interest and concern herein: *That thy Son may also glorify thee*; for he had consecrated his whole undertaking to his Father's honour. He desired to be carried triumphantly through his sufferings to his glory, that he might glorify the Father two ways: —

1. *By the death of the cross*, which he was now to suffer. *Father, glorify thy name*, expressed the great intention of his sufferings, which was to retrieve his Father's injured honour among men, and, by his satisfaction, to come up to the glory of God, which man, by his sin, came short of: *“Father, own me in my sufferings, that I may honour thee by them.”*

2. By the doctrine of the cross, which was now shortly to be published to the world, by which God's kingdom was to be re-established among men. He prays that his Father would so grace his sufferings, and crown them, as not only to take off *the offence of the cross*, but to make it, *to those that are saved, the wisdom of God and the power of God*. If God had not glorified Christ crucified, *by raising him from the dead*, his whole undertaking had been crushed; therefore *glorify me, that I may glorify thee*. Now thereby he hath taught us,

(1.) What to eye and aim at in our prayers, in all our designs and desires — and that is, the honour of God. It being our chief end to glorify God, other things must be sought and attended to in subordination and subserviency to the Lord. “Do this and the other for thy servant, that thy servant may glorify thee. Give me health, that I may glorify thee with my body; success, that I may glorify thee with my estate,” etc. *Hallowed be thy name* must be our first petition, which must fix our end in all our other petitions,  1 Peter 4:11.

(2.) He hath taught us what to expect and hope for. If we sincerely set ourselves to glorify our Father, he will not be wanting to do that for us which is requisite to put us into a capacity of glorifying him, to give us the grace he knows sufficient, and the opportunity he sees convenient. But, if we secretly honour ourselves more than him, it is just with him to leave us in the hand of our own counsels, and then, instead of honouring ourselves, we shall shame ourselves.

*Fourthly*, He pleads his commission (v. 2, 3); he desires to glorify his Father, in conformity to, and in pursuance of, the commission given him: “*Glorify thy Son, as thou hast given him power, glorify him in the execution of the powers thou hast given him*,” so it is connected with the petition; or, *that thy Son may glorify thee according to the power given him*, so it is connected with the plea. Now see here the power of the Mediator.

*a.* The origin of his power: *Thou hast given him power*; he has it from God, *to whom all power belongs*. Man, in his fallen state, must, in order to his recovery, be taken under a new model of government, which could not be erected but by a special commission under the broad seal of heaven, directed to the undertaker of that glorious work, and constituting him sole arbitrator of the grand difference that was, and sole guarantee of the grand alliance that was to be, between God and man; so as to this office, he

received his power, which was to be executed in a way distinct from his power and government as Creator. Note, The church's king is no usurper, as the prince of this world is; Christ's right to rule is incontestable.

**b.** The extent of his power: He has *power over all flesh*.

**(a.)** Over all mankind. He has power in and over the world of spirits, the powers of the upper and unseen world are subject to him (~~40E2~~ 1 Peter 3:22); but, being now mediating between God and man, he here *pleads his power over all flesh*. They were men whom he was to subdue and save; out of that race he had a remnant given him, and therefore all that rank of beings was *put under his feet*.

**(b.)** Over mankind considered as corrupt and fallen, for so he is called *flesh*, ~~40E6~~ Genesis 6:3. If he had not in this sense been flesh, he had not needed a Redeemer. Over this sinful race the Lord Jesus has all power; and *all judgment*, concerning them, *is committed to him*; power to bind or loose, acquit or condemn; *power on earth to forgive sins* or not. Christ, as Mediator, has the government of the whole world put into his hand; he is king of nations, has power even over those *that know him not, nor obey his gospel*; whom he does not rule, he over-rules, ~~40E8~~ Psalm 22:28; 72:8; ~~40E8~~ Matthew 28:18; ~~40E5~~ John 3:35.

**c.** The grand intention and design of this power: *That he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him*. Here is the mystery of our salvation laid open.

**(a.)** Here is the Father making over the elect to the Redeemer, and giving them to him as his charge and trust; as the crown and recompence of his undertaking. He has a sovereign power over all the fallen race, but a peculiar interest in the chosen remnant; *all things were put under his feet*, but they were *delivered into his hand*.

**(b.)** Here is the Son undertaking to secure the happiness of those that were given him, that he would *give eternal life to them*. See how great the authority of the Redeemer is. He has lives and crowns to give, eternal lives that never die, immortal crowns that never fade. Now consider how great the Lord Jesus is, who has such preferments in his gift; and how gracious he is in giving eternal life to those whom he undertakes to save.

**[a.]** He sanctifies them in this world, gives them the spiritual life which is eternal life in the bud and embryo, ~~John~~ John 4:14. Grace in the soul is heaven in that soul.

**[b.]** He will glorify them in the other world; their happiness shall be completed in the vision and fruition of God. This only is mentioned, because it supposes all the other parts of his undertaking, teaching them, satisfying for them, sanctifying them, and preparing them for that eternal life; and indeed all the other were in order to this; we are *called to his kingdom and glory, and begotten to the inheritance*. What is last in execution was first in intention, and *that is eternal life*.

**(c.)** Here is the subserviency of the Redeemer's universal dominion to this: He has *power over all flesh*, on purpose that he might give eternal life to the select number. Note, Christ's dominion over the children of men is in order to the salvation of the children of God. *All things are for their sakes*, ~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 4:15. All Christ's laws, ordinances, and promises, which are given to all, are designed effectually to convey spiritual life, and secure eternal life, to all that were given to Christ; he is *head over all things to the church*. The administration of the kingdoms of providence and grace are put into the same hand, that all things may be made to concur for good to the called.

**d.** Here is a further explication of this grand design (v. 3): “*This is life eternal, which I am empowered and have undertaken to give, this is the nature of it, and this the way leading to it, to know thee the only true God, and all the discoveries and principles of natural religion, and Jesus Christ whom, thou has sent, as Mediator, and the doctrines and laws of that holy religion which he instituted for the recovery of man out of his lapsed state.*” Here is,

**(a.)** The great end which the Christian religion sets before us, and that is, eternal life, the happiness of an immortal soul in the vision and fruition of an eternal God. This he was to reveal to all, and secure to all that were given him. By the gospel *life and immortality are brought to light*, are brought to hand, a life which transcends this as much in excellency as it does in duration.

**(b.)** The sure way of attaining this blessed end, which is, by the right knowledge of God and Jesus Christ: “*This is life eternal, to know thee,*” which may be taken two ways —



[a.] *Life eternal* lies in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ; the present principle of this life is the believing knowledge of God and Christ; the future perfection of that life will be the intuitive knowledge of God and Christ. Those that are brought into union with Christ, and live a life of communion with God in Christ, know, in some measure, by experience, what eternal life is, and will say, “If this be heaven, heaven is sweet.” See <sup><175></sup>Psalm 17:15.

[b.] The knowledge of God and Christ leads to life eternal; this is the way in which Christ gives eternal life, by the knowledge of him that has called us (<sup><103></sup>2 Peter 1:3), and this is the way in which we come to receive it. The Christian religion shows us the way to heaven, *First*, By directing us to God, as the author and felicity of our being; for Christ died to *bring us to God*. To know him as our Creator, and to love him, obey him, submit to him, and trust in him, as our owner ruler, and benefactor, — to devote ourselves to him as our sovereign Lord, depend upon him as our chief good, and direct all to his praise as our highest end, — *this is life eternal*. God is here called the *only true God*, to distinguish him from the false gods of the heathen, which were counterfeits and pretenders, not from the person of the Son, of whom it is expressly said that he is *the true God and eternal life* (<sup><151></sup>1 John 5:20), and who in this text is proposed as the object of the same religious regard with the Father. It is certain there is but one only living and true God and the God we adore is he. He is the true God, and not a mere name or notion; the only true God, and all that ever set up as rivals with him are vanity and a lie; the service of him is the only true religion. *Secondly*, By directing us to Jesus Christ, as the Mediator between God and man: *Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent*. If man had continued innocent, the knowledge of the only true God would have been life eternal to him; but now that he is fallen there must be something more; now that we are under guilt, to know God is to know him as a righteous Judge, whose curse we are under; and nothing is more killing than to know this. We are therefore concerned to know Christ as our Redeemer, by whom alone we can now have access to God; it is life eternal to believe in Christ; and this he has undertaken to give to as many as were given him. See <sup><159></sup>John 6:39 40. Those that are acquainted with God and Christ are already in the suburbs of life eternal.

**(2.)** Christ here prays to be glorified in consideration of his having glorified the Father hitherto, v. 4, 5. The meaning of the former petition was, Glorify me in this world; the meaning of the latter is, Glorify me in the other world. *I have glorified thee on the earth, and now glorify thou me.* Observe here,

**[1.]** With what comfort Christ reflects on the life he had lived on earth: *I have glorified thee, and finished my work;* it is as good as finished. He does not complain of the poverty and disgrace he had lived in, what a weary life he had upon earth, as ever any man of sorrows had. He overlooks this, and pleases himself in reviewing the service he had done his Father, and the progress he had made in his understanding. This is here recorded, *First*, For the honour of Christ, that his life upon earth did in all respects fully answer the end of his coming into the world. Note,

**1.** Our Lord Jesus had work given him to do by him that sent him; he came not into the world to live at ease, but to go *about doing good*, and to *fulfill all righteousness*. His Father gave him his work, his work in the vineyard, both appointed him to it and assisted him in it.

**2.** *The work that was given him to do* he finished. Though he had not, as yet, gone through the last part of his undertaking, yet he was so near being *made perfect through sufferings* that he might say, I have finished it; it was as good as done, he was giving it its finishing stroke *eteleiosa* — *I have finished*. The word signifies his performing every part of his undertaking in the most complete and perfect manner.

**3.** Herein he glorified his Father; he pleased him, he praised him. It is the glory of God that *his work is perfect*, and the same is the glory of the Redeemer; what he is the author of he will be the finisher of. It was a strange way for the Son to glorify the Father by abasing himself (this looked more likely to disparage him), yet it was contrived that so he should glorify him: *“I have glorified thee on the earth, in such a way as men on earth could bear the manifestation of thy glory.”* *Secondly*, It is recorded for example to all, *that we may follow his example*.

**1.** We must make it our business to do the work God has appointed us to do, according to our capacity and the sphere of our activity; we must each of us do all the good we can in this world.

**2.** We must aim at the glory of God in all. We must glorify him on the earth, which he has given *unto the children of men*, demanding only this quit-rent; on the earth, where we are in a state of probation and preparation for eternity.

**3.** We must persevere herein to the end of our days; we must not sit down till we have finished our work, and *accomplished as a hireling our day*. *Thirdly*, It is recorded for encouragement to all those that rest upon him. If he has *finished the work that was given him to do*, then he is a complete Saviour, and did not do his work by the halves. And he that finished his work for us will finish it in us *to the day of Christ*.

[2.] See with what confidence he expects *the joy set before him* (v. 5): *Now, O Father, glorify thou me*. It is what he depends upon, and cannot be denied him.

*First*, See here what he prayed for: *Glorify thou me*, as before, v. 1. All repetitions in prayer are not to be counted *vain repetitions*; Christ prayed, *saying the same words* (<sup><484></sup>Matthew 26:44), and yet *prayed more earnestly*. What his Father had promised him, and he was assured of, yet he must pray for; promises are not designed to supercede prayers, but to be the guide of our desires and the ground of our hopes. Christ's being glorified includes all the honours, powers, and joys, of his exalted state. See how it is described.

**1.** It is a glory with God; not only, *Glorify my name on earth*, but, *Glorify me with thine own self*. It was paradise, it was heaven, to be with his Father, as <sup><383></sup>Proverbs 8:30; <sup><273></sup>Daniel 7:13; <sup><381></sup>Hebrews 8:1. Note, The brightest glories of the exalted Redeemer were to be displayed within the veil, where the Father manifests his glory. The praises of the upper world are offered up *to him that sits upon the throne and to the lamb* in conjunction (<sup><613></sup>Revelation 5:13), and the prayers of the lower world draw out grace and peace *from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ* in conjunction; and thus the Father has glorified him with himself.

**2.** It is *the glory he had with God before the world was*. By this it appears,

**(1.)** That Jesus Christ, as God, had a being *before the world was*, co-eternal with the Father; our religion acquaints us with one that *was before all things, and by whom all things consist*.

(2.) That his glory with the Father is from everlasting, as well as his existence with the Father; for he was from eternity *the brightness of his Father's glory*, <sup>300B</sup> Hebrews 1:3. As God's making the world only declared his glory, but made no real additions to it; so Christ undertook the work of redemption, not because he needed glory, for he had a glory *with the Father before the world*, but because we needed glory.

(3.) That Jesus Christ in his state of humiliation divested himself of this glory, and drew a veil over it; though he was still God, yet he was *God manifested in the flesh*, not in his glory. He laid down this glory for a time, as a pledge that he would go through with his undertaking, according to the appointment of his Father.

(4.) That in his exalted state he resumed this glory, and clad himself again with his former robes of light. Having performed his undertaking, he did, as it were, *repscere pignus* — *take up his pledge*, by this demand, *Glorify thou me*. He prays that even his human nature might be advanced to the highest honour it was capable of, his body a glorious body; and that the glory of the Godhead might now be manifested in the person of the Mediator, Emmanuel, God-man. He does not pray to be glorified with the princes and great men of the earth: no; he that knew both worlds, and might choose which he would have his preferment in, chose it in the glory of the other world, as far exceeding all the glory of this. He had despised *the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them*, when Satan offered them to him, and therefore might the more boldly claim the glories of the other world. *Let the same mind be in us*. “Lord, give the glories of this world to whom thou wilt give them, but let me have my portion of glory in the world to come. It is no matter, though I be vilified with men; but, *Father, glorify thou me with thine own self.*”

*Secondly*, See here what he pleaded: *I have glorified thee*; and now, in consideration thereof, *glorify thou me*. For,

1. There was an equity in it, and an admirable becomingness, *that if God was glorified in him, he should glorify him in himself*, as he had observed, <sup>483B</sup> John 13:32. Such an infinite value there was in what Christ did to glorify his Father that he properly merited all the glories of his exalted state. If the Father was a gainer in his glory by the Son's humiliation, it was fit the Son should be no loser by it at long run, in his glory.

2. It was according to the covenant between them, that if the Son would *make his soul an offering for sin* he should *divide the spoil with the strong* (~~250~~ Isaiah 53:10, 12), and *the kingdom should be his*; and this he had an eye to, and depended upon, in his sufferings; it was *for the joy set before him that he endured the cross*: and now in his exalted state he still expects the completing of his exaltation, because he perfected his undertaking, ~~303~~ Hebrews 10:13.

3. It was the most proper evidence of his Father's accepting and approving the work he had finished. By the glorifying of Christ we are satisfied that God was satisfied, and therein a real demonstration was given that the Father was well pleased in him as his beloved Son.

4. Thus we must be taught that those, and only those, who glorify God on earth, and persevere in the work God hath given them to do, shall be glorified with the Father, when they must be no more in this world. Not that we can merit the glory, as Christ did, but our glorifying God is required as an evidence of our interest in Christ, through whom eternal life is God's free gift.

## ~~306~~ JOHN 17:6-10

### CHRIST'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Christ, having prayed for himself, comes next to pray for those that are his, and he knew them by name, though he did not here name them. Now observe here,

**I.** Whom he did not pray for (v. 9): *I pray not for the world*. Note, There is a world of people that Jesus Christ did not pray for. It is not meant of the world of mankind general (he prays for that here, v. 21, *That the world may believe that thou hast sent me*); nor is it meant of the Gentiles, in distinction from the Jews; but the world is here opposed to the elect, who are given to Christ out of the world. Take the world for a heap of unwinnowed corn in the floor, and God loves it, Christ prays for it, and dies for it, *for a blessing is in it*; but, *the Lord perfectly knowing those that are his*, he eyes particularly those *that were given him out of the world*, extracts them; and then take the world for the remaining heap of rejected, worthless chaff, and Christ neither prays for it, nor dies for it, but

abandons it, and *the wind drives it away*. These are called *the world*, because they are governed by the spirit of this world, and have their portion in it; for these Christ does not pray; not but that there are some things which he intercedes with God for on their behalf, as the dresser for the reprieve of the barren tree; but he does not pray for them in this prayer, that *have not part nor lot* in the blessings here prayed for. He does not say, I pray against the world, as Elias made intercession against Israel; but, *I pray not for them*, I pass them by, and leave them to themselves; they are *not written in the Lamb's book of life*, and therefore not in the breast-plate of the great high-priest. And miserable is the condition of such, as it was of those whom the prophet was forbidden to pray for, and more so, <sup>2076</sup>Jeremiah 7:16. We that know not who are chosen, and who are passed by, must *pray for all men*, <sup>3411</sup>1 Timothy 2:1, 4. While there is life, there is hope, and room for prayer. See <sup>9023</sup>1 Samuel 12:23.

## II. Whom he did pray for; not for angels, but for the children of men.

1. He prays *for those that were given him*, meaning primarily the disciples that had attended *him in this regeneration*; but it is doubtless to be extended further, to all who come under the same character, who receive and believe the words of Christ, v. 6, 8.

2. He prays *for all that should believe on him* (v. 20), and it is not only the petitions that follow, but those also which went before, that must be construed to extend to all believers, in every place and every age; for he has a concern for them all, and calls *things that are not as though they were*.

## III. What encouragement he had to pray for them, and what are the general pleas with which he introduces his petitions for them, and recommends them to his Father's favour; they are five: —

1. The charge he had received concerning them: *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me* (v. 6), and again (v. 9), *Thou whom thou hast given me*. “Father, those I am now praying for are such as thou hast entrusted me with, and what I have to say for them is in pursuance of the charge I have received concerning them.” Now,

(1.) This is meant primarily of the disciples that then were, who were given to Christ as his pupils to be educated by him while he was on earth, and his agents to be employed for him when he went to heaven. They were

given him to be the learners of his doctrine, the witnesses of his life and miracles, and the monuments of his grace and favour, in order to their being the publishers of his gospel and the planters of his church. When they left all to follow him, this was the secret spring of that strange resolution: they were given to him, else they had not given themselves to him. Note, The apostleship and ministry, which are Christ's gift to the church, were first the Father's gift to Jesus Christ. As under the law the Levites were given to Aaron (<sup><403></sup>Numbers 3:9), to him (the *great high priest of our profession*) the Father gave the apostles first, and ministers in every age, *to keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation, and to do the service of the tabernacle*. See <sup><404></sup>Ephesians 4:8, 11; <sup><405></sup>Psalms 68:18. Christ received this gift for men, that he might give it to men. As this puts a great honour upon the ministry of the gospel, and magnifies that office, which is so much vilified; so it lays a mighty obligation upon the ministers of the gospel to devote themselves entirely to Christ's service, as being *given to him*,

(2.) But it is designed to extend to all the elect, for they are elsewhere said to be given to Christ (<sup><406></sup>John 6:37, 39), and he often laid a stress upon this, that those he was to save were given to him as his charge; to his care they were committed, from his hand they were expected, and concerning them he received commandments. He here shows,

[1.] That the Father had authority to give them: *Thine they were*. He did not give that which was none of his own, but covenanted that he had a good title. The elect, whom the Father gave to Christ, were his own in three ways: — *First*, they were creatures, and their lives and beings were derived from him. When they were given to Christ to be *vessels of honour*, they were *in his hand, as clay in the hand of the potter*, to be disposed of as God's wisdom saw most for God's glory. *Secondly*, They were criminals, and their lives and beings were forfeited to him. It was a remnant of fallen mankind that was given to Christ to be redeemed, that might have been made sacrifices to justice when they were pitched upon to be the *monuments of mercy*; might justly have been *delivered to the tormentors* when they were delivered to the Saviour. *Thirdly*, They were chosen, and their lives and beings were designed, for him; they were set apart for God, and were consigned to Christ as his agent. This he insists upon again (v. 7): *All things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee*, which, though it may take in all that appertained to his office as Mediator, yet seems especially to be meant of those that were given him. “They *are*

of thee, their being is of thee as the God of nature, their well-being is of thee as the God of grace; they *are all of thee*, and therefore, Father, I bring them all to thee, that they may be all for thee.”

[2.] That he did accordingly give them to the Son. *Thou gavest them to me*, as sheep to the shepherd, to be kept; as patients to the physician, to be cured; children to a tutor, to be educated; thus he will deliver up his charge (<sup>303</sup>Hebrews 2:13), *The children thou hast given me*. They were delivered to Christ, *First*, That the election of grace might not be frustrated, *that not one, no not of the little ones, might perish*. That great concern must be lodged in some one good hand, able to give sufficient security, *that the purpose of God according to election might stand*. *Secondly*, That the undertaking of Christ might not be fruitless; they were *given to him as his seed*, in whom he should *see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied* (<sup>253</sup>Isaiah 53:10, 11), and might not *spend his strength*, and shed his blood, *for nought, and in vain*, (<sup>298</sup>Isaiah 49:4. We may plead, as Christ does, “Lord, keep my graces, keep my comforts, for *thine they were, and thou gavest them to me.*”

2. The care he had taken of them to teach them (v. 6): *I have manifested thy name to them. I have given to them the words which thou gavest to me*, v. 8. Observe here,

(1.) The great design of Christ's doctrine, which was to manifest God's name, to declare him (<sup>418</sup>John 1:18), to instruct the ignorant, and rectify the mistakes of a dark and foolish world concerning God, that he might be better loved and worshipped.

(2.) His faithful discharge of this undertaking: *I have done it*. His fidelity appears,

[1.] In the truth of the doctrine. It agreed exactly with the instructions he received from his Father. He gave not only the things, but the very *words, that were given him*. Ministers, in wording their message, must have an eye to *the words which the Holy Ghost teaches*.

[2.] In the tendency of his doctrine, which was to manifest God's name. He did not seek himself, but, in all he did and said, aimed to magnify his Father. Note, *First*, It is Christ's prerogative to manifest God's name to the souls of the children of men. *No man knows the Father, but he to whom the Son will reveal him*, (<sup>417</sup>Matthew 11:27. He only has acquaintance with



the Father, and so is able to open the truth; and he only has access to the spirits of men, and so is able to open the understanding. Ministers may *publish the name of the Lord* (as Moses, <sup>GEN</sup>Deuteronomy 32:3), but Christ only can manifest that name. By the word of Christ God is revealed to us; by the Spirit of Christ God is revealed in us. Ministers may speak the words of God to us, but Christ can give us his words, can put them in us, as food, as treasure. *Secondly*, Sooner or later, Christ will manifest God's name to all that were given him, and will give them his word, to be the seed of their new birth, the support of their spiritual life, and the earnest of their everlasting bliss.

**3.** The good effect of the care he had taken of them, and the pains he had taken with them, (v. 6): *They have kept they word* (v. 7), *they have known that all things are of thee* (v. 8); *they have received thy words*, and embraced them, have given their assent and consent to them, *and have known surely that I came out from thee, and have believed that thou didst send me*. Observe here,

**(1.)** What success the doctrine of Christ had among those *that were given to him*, in several particulars: —

**[1.]** “They have received the words which I gave them, as the ground receives the seed, and the earth drinks in the rain.” They attended to the words of Christ, apprehended in some measure the meaning of them, and were affected with them: they received the impression of them. The word was to them an *ingrafted word*.

**[2.]** “*They have kept thy word*, have continued in it; they have conformed to it.” Christ's commandment is then only kept when it is obeyed. Those that have to teach others the commands of Christ ought to be themselves observant of them. It was requisite that these should *keep what was committed to them*, for it was to be transmitted by them to every place for every age.

**[3.]** “They have understood the word, and have been sensible on what ground they went in receiving and keeping it. They have been aware that thou art the original author of that holy religion which I am come to institute, *that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee*.” All Christ's offices and powers, all the gifts of the Spirit, all his graces and comforts, which God *gave without measure to him*, were all from God, contrived by his wisdom, appointed by his will, and designed by his grace,

for his own glory in man's salvation. Note, It is a great satisfaction to us, in our reliance upon Christ, that he, and all he is and has, all he said and did, all he is doing and will do, are of God, ~~and~~ 1 Corinthians 1:30. We may therefore venture our souls upon Christ's mediation, for it has a good bottom. If the righteousness be of God's appointing, we shall be justified; if the grace be of his dispensing, we shall be sanctified.

[4.] They have set their seal to it: *They have known surely that I came out from God*, v. 8. See here, *First*, What it is to believe; it is to *know surely*, to know *that it is so of a truth*. The disciples were very weak and defective in knowledge; yet Christ, who knew them better than they knew themselves, passes his word for them that they did believe. Note, We may know surely that which we neither do nor can know fully; *may know the certainty of the things which are not seen*, though we cannot particularly describe the nature of them. *We walk by faith*, which knows surely, *not yet by sight*, which knows clearly. *Secondly*, What it is we are to believe: *that Jesus Christ came out from God*, as he is the Son of God, in his person *the image of the invisible God*, and that God did not send him; that in his undertaking he is the ambassador of the eternal king: so that the Christian religion stands upon the same footing, and is of equal authority, with natural religion; and therefore all the doctrines of Christ are to be received as divine truths, all his commands obeyed as divine laws, and all his promises depended upon as divine securities.

(2.) How Jesus Christ here speaks of this: he enlarges upon it,

[1.] As pleased with it himself. Though the many instances of his disciples' dulness and weakness had grieved him, yet their constant adherence to him, their gradual improvements, and their great attainments at last, were his joy. Christ is a Master that delights in the proficiency of his scholars. He accepts the sincerity of their faith, and graciously passes by the infirmity of it. See how willing he is to make the best of us, and to say the best of us, thereby encouraging our faith in him, and teaching us charity to one another,

[2.] As pleading it with the Father. He is praying for *those that were given to him*; and he pleads that they had given themselves to him. Note, The due improvement of grace received is a good plea, according to the tenour of the new covenant, for further grace; for so runs the promise. *To him that hath shall be given*. Those that keep Christ's word, and believe on him, let

Christ alone to commend them, and, which is more, to recommend them to his Father.

**4.** He pleads the Father's own interest in them (v. 9): *I pray for them, for they are thine*; and this by virtue of a joint and mutual interest, which he and the Father have in what pertained to each: *All mine are thine, and thine are mine*. Between the Father and Son there can be no dispute (as there is among the children of men) about *meum* and *tuum* — *mine and thine*, for the matter was settled from eternity; *all mine are thine, and thine are mine*. Here is,

**(1.)** The plea particularly urged for his disciples: *They are thine*. The consigning of the elect to Christ was so far from making them less the Father's that it was in order to making them the more so. Note,

**[1.]** All that receive Christ's word, and believe in him, are taken into covenant-relation to the Father, and are looked upon as his; Christ presents them to him, and they, through Christ, present themselves to him. Christ has *redeemed us*, not to himself only, but *to God, by his blood*, <sup>(618)</sup>Revelation 5:9, 10. They are *first-fruits unto God*, <sup>(619)</sup>Revelation 14:4.

**[2.]** This is a good plea in prayer, Christ here pleads it, *They are thine*; we may plead it for ourselves, *I am thine, save me*; and for others (as Moses, <sup>(620)</sup>Exodus 32:11), “*They are thy people. They are thine*; wilt thou not provide for thine own? Wilt thou not secure them, that they may not be run down by the devil and the world? Wilt thou not secure thy interest in them, that they may not depart from thee? *They are thine*, own them as thine.”

**(2.)** The foundation on which this plea is grounded: *All mine are thine, and thine are mine*. This bespeaks the Father and Son to be,

**[1.]** One in essence. Every creature must say to God, *All mine are thine*; but none can say to him, *All thine are mine*, but he that is the same in substance with him and equal in power and glory.

**[2.]** One in interest; no separate or divided interests between them. *First*, What the Father has as Creator is delivered over to the Son, to be used and disposed of in subserviency to his great undertaking. *All things are delivered to him* (<sup>(621)</sup>Matthew 11:27); the grant is so general that nothing is excepted but *he that did put all things under him*. *Secondly*, What the Son has as Redeemer is designed for the Father, and his kingdom shall shortly

be delivered up to him. All the benefits of redemption, purchased by the Son, are intended for the Father's praise, and in his glory all the lines of his undertaking centre: *All mine are thine*. The Son owns none for his that are not devoted to the service of the Father; nor will any thing be accepted as a piece of service to the Christian religion which clashes with the dictates and laws of natural religion. In a limited sense, every true believer may say, *All thine are mine*; if God be ours in covenant, all he is and has is so far ours that it shall be engaged for our good; and in an unlimited sense every true believer does say, Lord, *all mine are thine*; all laid at his feet, to be serviceable to him. And what we have may be comfortably committed to God's care and blessing when it is cheerfully submitted to his government and disposal: "Lord, take care of what I have, for it is *all thine*."

**5.** He pleads his own concern in them: *I am glorified in them — dedoxasmai*.

**(1.)** *I have been glorified in them*. What little honour Christ had in this world was among his disciples; he had been glorified by their attendance on him and obedience to him, their preaching and working miracles in his name; and therefore *I pray for them*. Note, Those shall have an interest in Christ's intercession in and by whom he is glorified.

**(2.)** "*I am to be glorified in them* when I am gone to heaven; they are to bear up my name." The apostles preached and wrought miracles *in Christ's name*; the Spirit in them glorified Christ (~~right~~ John 16:14): "*I am glorified in them*, and therefore,"

**[1.]** "I concern myself for them." What little interest Christ has in this degenerate world lies in his church; and therefore it and all its affairs lie near his heart, within the veil.

**[2.]** "Therefore I commit them to the Father, who has engaged to glorify the Son, and, upon this account, will have a gracious eye to those in whom he is glorified." That in which God and Christ are glorified may, with humble confidence, be committed to God's special care.

## ◀87▶ JOHN 17:11-16

### CHRIST'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER

After the general pleas with which Christ recommended his disciples to his Father's care follow the particular petitions he puts up for them; and,

**1.** They all relate to spiritual blessings in heavenly things. He does not pray that they might be rich and great in the world, that they might raise estates and get preferments, but that they might be kept from sin, and furnished for their duty, and brought safely to heaven. Note, The prosperity of the soul is the best prosperity; for what relates to this Christ came to purchase and bestow, and so teaches us to seek, in the first place, both for others and for ourselves.

**2.** They are such blessings as were suited to their present state and case, and their various exigencies and occasions. Note, Christ's intercession is always pertinent. Our *advocate with the Father* is acquainted with all the particulars of our wants and burdens, our dangers and difficulties, and knows how to accommodate his intercession to each, as to Peter's peril, which he himself was not aware of (◀222▶ Luke 22:32), *I have prayed for thee.*

**3.** He is large and full in the petitions, orders them before his Father, and *fills his mouth with arguments*, to teach us fervency and importunity in prayer, to be large in prayer, and dwell upon our errands at the throne of grace, wrestling as Jacob, *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.*

Now the first thing Christ prays for, for his disciples, is their preservation, in these verses, in order to which he commits them all to his Father's custody. Keeping supposes danger, and their danger arose *from the world*, the world wherein they were, *the evil* of this he begs they might be kept from. Now observe,

**I.** The request itself: *Keep them from the world.* There were two ways of their being delivered from the world: —

**1.** By taking them out of it; and he does not pray that they might be so delivered: *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world;* that is,

(1.) “I pray not that they may be speedily removed by death.” If the world will be vexatious to them, the readiest way to secure them would be to hasten them out of it to a better world, that will give them better treatment. Send chariots and horses of fire for them, to fetch them to heaven; Job, Elijah, Jonah, Moses, when that occurred which fretted them, prayed that they might be *taken out of the world*; but Christ would not pray so for his disciples, for two reasons: —

[1.] Because he came to conquer, not to countenance, those intemperate heats and passions which make men impatient of life, and importunate for death. It is his will that we should take up our cross, and not outrun it.

[2.] Because he had work for them to do in the world; the world, though sick of them (<sup><402></sup>Acts 22:22), and therefore not worthy of them (<sup><318></sup>Hebrews 11:38), yet could ill spare them. In pity therefore to this dark world, Christ would not have these lights removed out of it, but continued in it, especially for the sake of those in the world that were to *believe in him through their word*. Let not them be taken out of the world when their Master is; they must each in his own order die a martyr, but not till they have finished their testimony. Note, *First*, The taking of good people out of the world is a thing by no means to be desired, but rather dreaded and laid to heart, (<sup><350></sup>Isaiah 57:1. *Secondly*, Though Christ loves his disciples, he does not presently send for them to heaven, as soon as they are effectually called, but leaves them for some time in this world, that they may do good and glorify God upon earth, and be ripened for heaven. Many good people are spared to live, because they can ill be spared to die.

(2.) “I pray not that they may be totally freed and exempted from the troubles of this world, and taken out of the toil and terror of it into some place of ease and safety, there to live undisturbed; this is not the preservation I desire for them.” *Non ut omni molestia liberati otium et delicias colant, sed ut inter media pericula salvi tamen maneat Dei auxilio* — *Not that, being freed from all trouble, they may bask in luxurious ease, but that by the help of God they may be preserved in a scene of danger*; so Calvin. Not that they may be kept from all conflict with the world, but that they may not be overcome by it; not that, as Jeremiah wished, they might *leave their people, and go from them* (<sup><240></sup>Jeremiah 9:2), but that, like Ezekiel, *their faces may be strong against the faces of wicked men*, (<sup><388></sup>Ezekiel 3:8. It is more the honour of a Christian soldier by faith to *overcome the world* than by a monastical vow

to retreat from it; and more for the honour of Christ to serve him in a city than to serve him in a cell.

2. Another way is by keeping them from the corruption that is in the world; and he prays they may be thus kept, v. 11, 15. Here are three branches of this petition: —

(1.) *Holy Father, keep those whom thou hast given me.*

[1.] Christ was now leaving them; but let them not think that their defence was departed from them; no, he does here, in their hearing, commit them to the custody of his Father and their Father. Note, It is the unspeakable comfort of all believers that Christ himself has committed them to the care of God. Those cannot but be safe whom the almighty God keeps, and he cannot but keep those whom the Son of his love commits to him, in the virtue of which we may by faith *commit the keeping of our souls to God*, ~~609~~ 1 Peter 4:19; ~~512~~ 2 Timothy 1:12. *First*, He here puts them under the divine protection, that they may not be run down by the malice of their enemies; that they and all their concerns may be the particular care of the divine Providence: “*Keep their lives, till they have done their work; keep their comforts, and let them not be broken in upon by the hardships they meet with; keep up their interest in the world, and let it not sink.*” To this prayer is owing the wonderful preservation of the gospel ministry and gospel church in the world unto this day; if God had not graciously kept both, and kept up both, they had been extinguished and lost long ago. *Secondly*, He puts them under the divine tuition, that they may not themselves run away from their duty, nor be led aside by the treachery of their own hearts: “*Keep them in their integrity, keep them disciples, keep them close to their duty.*” We need God's power not only to put us into a state of grace, but to keep us in it. See, ~~613~~ John 10:28, 29; ~~615~~ 1 Peter 1:5.

[2.] The titles he gives to him he prays to, and them he prays for, enforce the petition. *First*, He speaks to God as a *holy Father*. In committing ourselves and others to the divine care, we may take encouragement,

1. From the attribute of his holiness, for this is engaged for the preservation of his holy ones; he hath *sworn by his holiness*, ~~685~~ Psalm 89:35. If he be a holy God and hate sin, he will make those holy that are his, and keep them from sin, which they also hate and dread as the greatest evil.

2. From this relation of a Father, wherein he stands to us through Christ. If he be a Father, he will take care of his own children, will teach them and keep them; who else should? *Secondly*, He speaks of them as those whom the Father had *given him*. What we receive as our Father's gifts, we may comfortably remit to our Father's care. "Father, keep the graces and comforts thou hast given me; the children thou hast given me; the ministry *I have received*."

(2.) *Keep them through thine own name*. That is,

[1.] Keep them for thy name's sake; so some. "Thy name and honour are concerned in their preservation as well as mine, for both will suffer by it if they either revolt or sink." The Old Testament saints often pleaded, for *thy name's sake*; and those may with comfort plead it that are indeed more concerned for the honour of God's name than for any interest of their own.

[2.] Keep them in thy name; so others; the original is so, *en to onomati*. "Keep them in the knowledge and fear of thy name; keep them in the profession and service of thy name, whatever it cost them. Keep them in the interest of thy name, and let them ever be faithful to this; keep them in thy truths, in thine ordinances, in the way of thy commandments."

[3.] Keep them by or through thy name; so others. "Keep them by thine own power, in thine own hand; keep them thyself, undertake for them, let them be thine own immediate care. Keep them by those means of preservation which thou hast thyself appointed, and by which thou hast made thyself known. Keep them by thy word and ordinances; let thy name be their strong tower, thy tabernacle their pavilion."

(3.) *Keep them from the evil*, or out of the evil. He had taught them to pray daily, *Deliver us from evil*, and this would encourage them to pray.

[1.] "Keep them from the evil one, the devil and all his instruments; that wicked one and all his children. Keep them from Satan as a tempter, that either he may not have leave to sift them, or that their faith may not fail. Keep them from him as a destroyer, that he may not drive them to despair."

[2.] "Keep them from the evil thing, that is sin; from every thing that looks like it, or leads to it. Keep them, that they do no evil," <sup><471E></sup>2 Corinthians 13:7. Sin is that evil which, above any other, we should dread and deprecate.



[3.] “Keep them from the evil of the world, and of their tribulation in it, so that it may have no sting in it, no malignity;” not that they might be kept from affliction, but kept through it, that the property of their afflictions might be so altered as that there might be no evil in them, nothing to them any harm.

**II.** The reasons with which he enforces these requests for their preservation, which are five: —

**1.** He pleads that hitherto he had kept them (v. 12): “*While I was with them in the world, I have kept them in thy name*, in the true faith of the gospel and the service of God; those that thou gavest me for my constant attendants I have kept, they are all safe, and none of them missing, none of them revolted nor ruined, *but the son of perdition*; he is lost, that the scripture might be fulfilled.” Observe,

**(1.)** Christ's faithful discharge of his undertaking concerning his disciples: *While he was with them, he kept them*, and his care concerning them was not in vain. He kept them in God's name, preserved them from falling into any dangerous errors or sins, from striking in with the Pharisees, who would have *compassed sea and land to make proselytes* of them; he kept them from deserting him, and returning to the little all they had left for him; he had them still under his eye and care when he sent them to preach; *went not his heart with them?* Many that followed him awhile took offence at something or other, and went off; but he kept the twelve that they should not go away. He kept them from falling into the hands of persecuting enemies that sought their lives; kept them when he surrendered himself, ~~889~~ John 18:9. *While he was with them* he kept them in a visible manner by instructions till sounding in their ears, miracles still done before their eyes; when he was gone from them, they must be kept in a more spiritual manner. Sensible comforts and supports are sometimes given and sometimes withheld; but, when they are withdrawn, yet they are not left comfortless. What Christ here says of his immediate followers is true of all the saints while they are here in this world; Christ keeps them *in God's name*. It is implied,

**[1.]** That they are weak, and cannot keep themselves; their own hands are not sufficient for them.

**[2.]** That they are, in God's account, valuable and worth the keeping; precious in his sight and honourable; his treasure, his jewels.

[3.] That their salvation is designed, for to this it is that they are kept, <sup><415></sup>1 Peter 1:5. As the wicked are reserved for the day of evil, so the righteous are preserved for the day of bliss.

[4.] That they are the charge of the Lord Jesus; for as his charge he keeps them, and exposed himself like the good shepherd for the preservation of the sheep.

(2.) The comfortable account he gives of his undertaking: *None of them is lost*. Note, Jesus Christ will certainly keep all that were given to him, so that none of them shall be totally and finally lost; they may think themselves lost, and may be nearly lost (in imminent peril); but it is the Father's will that he should *lose none*, and none he will lose (<sup><416></sup>John 6:39); so it will appear when they come all together, and none of them shall be wanting.

(3.) A brand put upon Judas, as none of those whom he had undertaken to keep. He was among those that were given to Christ, but not of them. He speaks of Judas as already lost, for he had abandoned the society of his Master and his fellow-disciples, and abandoned himself to the devil's guidance, and in a little time would *go to his own place*; he is as good as lost. But the apostasy and ruin of Judas were no reproach at all to his Master, or his family; for,

[1.] He was *the son of perdition*, and therefore not one of those that were given to Christ to be kept. He deserved perdition, and God left him to throw himself headlong into it. He was the *son of the destroyer*, as Cain, *who was of that wicked one*. That great enemy whom the Lord will *consume* is called a *son of perdition*, because he is a *man of sin*, <sup><417></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:3. It is an awful consideration that one of the apostles proved a son of perdition. No man's place or name in the church, no man's privileges or opportunities of getting grace, no man's profession or external performances, will secure him from ruin, if his heart be not right with God; nor are any more likely to prove sons of perdition at last, after a plausible course of profession, than those that like Judas love the bag; but Christ's distinguishing Judas from those that were given him (for *ei me* is adversative, not exceptive) intimates that the truth and true religion ought not to suffer for the treachery of those that are false to it, <sup><418></sup>1 John 2:19.

[2.] The scripture was fulfilled; the sin of Judas was foreseen of God's counsel and foretold in his word, and the event would certainly follow

after the prediction as a consequent, though it cannot be said necessarily to follow from it as an effect. See ~~448~~ Psalm 41:9; 69:25; 109:8. We should be amazed at the treachery of apostates, were we not *told of it before*.

**2.** He pleads that he was now under a necessity of leaving them, and could no longer watch over them in the way that he had hitherto done (v. 11): “Keep them now, that I may not lose the labour I bestowed upon them while I was with them. Keep them, *that they may be one* with us *as we are* with each other.” We shall have occasion to speak of this, v. 21. But see here,

**(1.)** With what pleasure he speaks of his own departure. He expresses himself concerning it with an air of triumph and exultation, with reference both to the world he left and the world he removed to.

**[1.]** “*Now I am no more in the world.* Now farewell to this provoking troublesome world. I have had enough of it, and now the welcome hour is at hand when I shall be *no more in it*. Now that I have finished the work I had to do in it, I have done with it; nothing remains now but to hasten out of it as fast as I can.” Note, It should be a pleasure to those that have their home in the other world to think of being *no more in this world*; for when we have done what we have to do in this world, and are made meet for that, what is there here that should court our stay? When we receive a sentence of death within ourselves, with what a holy triumph should we say, “*Now I am no more in this world*, this dark deceitful world, this poor empty world, this tempting defiling world; no more vexed with its thorns and briars, no more endangered by its nets and snares; now I shall wander no more in this howling wilderness, be tossed no more on this stormy sea; *now I am no more in this world*, but can cheerfully quit it, and give it a final farewell.”

**[2.]** *Now I come to thee.* To get clear of the world is but the one half of the comfort of a dying Christ, of a dying Christian; the far better half is to think of going to the Father, to sit down in the immediate, uninterrupted, and everlasting enjoyment of him. Note, Those who love God cannot but be pleased to think of coming to him, though it be through the valley of the shadow of death. When we go, to be *absent from the body*, it is to be *present with the Lord*, like children fetched home from school to their father’s house. “Now come I to thee whom I have chosen and served, and whom my soul thirsteth after; to thee the fountain of light and life, the

crown and centre of bliss and joy; now my longings shall be satisfied, my hopes accomplished, my happiness completed, for *now come I to thee.*”

**(2.)** With what a tender concern he speaks of those whom he left behind: “*But these are in the world.* I have found what an evil world it is, what will become of these dear little ones that must stay in it? *Holy Father, keep them;* they will want my presence, let them have thine. They have now more need than ever to be kept, for I am sending them out further into the world than they have yet ventured; they must *launch forth into the deep,* and have business to do in these great waters, and will be lost if thou do not keep them.” Observe here,

**[1.]** That, when our Lord Jesus was going to the Father, he carried with him a tender concern for *his own that are in the world;* and continued to compassionate them. He bears their names upon his breast-plate, nay, upon his heart, and has *graven them* with the nails of his cross *upon the palms of his hands;* and when he is out of their sight they are not out of his, much less out of his mind. We should have such a pity for those that are launching out into the world when we are got almost through it, and for those that are left behind in it when we are leaving it.

**[2.]** That, when Christ would express the utmost need his disciples had of divine preservation, he only says, *They are in the world;* this bespeaks danger enough to those who are bound for heaven, whom a flattering world would divert and seduce, and a malignant world would hate and persecute.

**3.** He pleads what a satisfaction it would be to them to know themselves safe, and what a satisfaction it would be to him to see them easy: *I speak this, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves,* v. 13. Observe,

**(1.)** Christ earnestly desired the fulness of the joy of his disciples, for it is his will that they should rejoice evermore. He was leaving them in tears and troubles, and yet took effectual care to *fulfil their joy.* When they thought their joy in him was brought to an end, then was it advanced nearer to perfection than ever it had been, and they were fuller of it. We are here taught,

**[1.]** To found our joy in Christ: “It is *my joy,* joy of my giving, or rather joy that I am the matter of.” Christ is a Christian's joy, his chief joy. Joy in the world is withering with it; joy in Christ is everlasting, like him.

[2.] To build up our joy with diligence; for it is the duty as well as privilege of all true believers; no part of the Christian life is pressed upon us more earnestly, <sup><081></sup>Philippians 3:1; 4:4.

[3.] To aim at the perfection of this joy, that we may have it fulfilled in us, for this Christ would have.

(2.) In order hereunto, he did thus solemnly commit them to his Father's care and keeping and took them for witnesses that he did so: *These things I speak in the world*, while I am yet with them in the world. His intercession in heaven for their preservation would have been as effectual in itself; but saying this in the world would be a greater satisfaction and encouragement to them, and would enable them to *rejoice in tribulation*.  
Note,

[1.] Christ has not only treasured up comforts for his people, in providing for their future welfare, but has given out comforts to them, and said that which will be for their present satisfaction. He here condescended in the presence of his disciples to publish his last will and testament, and (which many a testator is shy of) lets them know what legacies he had left them, and how well they were secured, that they might have strong consolation.

[2.] Christ's intercession for us is enough to fulfil or joy in him; nothing more effectual to silence all our fears and mistrusts, and to furnish us with strong consolation, than this, that he always appears in the presence of God for us; therefore the apostle puts a *yea rather* upon this, <sup><083></sup>Romans 8:34. And see <sup><072></sup>Hebrews 7:25.

4. He pleads the ill usage they were likely to meet with in the world, for his sake (v. 14): "*I have given them thy word to be published to the world, and they have received it*, have believed it themselves, and accepted the trust of transmitting it to the world; and therefore *the world hath hated them*, as also because they are *not of the world*, any more than I." Here we have,

(1.) The world's enmity to Christ's followers. While Christ was with them, though as yet they had given but little opposition to the world, yet it hates them, much more would it do so when by their more extensive preaching of the gospel they would *turn the world upside down*. "Father, stand their friend," says Christ, "for they are likely to have many enemies; let them have thy love, for the world's hatred is entailed upon them. In the midst of

those fiery darts, let them be *compassed with thy favour as with a shield.*” It is God's honour to take part with the weaker side, and to help the helpless. *Lord, be merciful to them, for men would swallow them up.*

**(2.)** The reasons of this enmity, which strengthen the plea.

**[1.]** It is implied that one reason is because they had received the word of God as it was sent them by the hand of Christ, when the greatest part of the world rejected it, and set themselves against those who were the preachers and professors of it. Note, Those that receive Christ's good will and good word must expect the world's ill will and ill word. Gospel ministers have been in a particular manner hated by the world, because they call men out of the world, and separate them from it, and teach them not to conform to it, and so condemn the world. “*Father, keep them* for it is for thy sake that they are exposed; they are sufferers for thee.” Thus the psalmist pleads, *For thy sake I have borne reproach,* ~~(69)~~ Psalm 69:7. Note, Those that keep the word of Christ's patience are entitled to special protection in the hour of temptation, ~~(69)~~ Revelation 3:10. That cause which makes a martyr may well make a joyful sufferer.

**[2.]** Another reason is more express; the world hates them, because they *are not of the world.* Those to whom the word of Christ comes in power are not of the world, for it has this effect upon all that receive it in the love of it that it weans them from the wealth of the world, and turns them against the wickedness of the world, and therefore the world bears them a grudge.

**5.** He pleads their conformity to himself in a holy non-conformity to the world (v. 16): “*Father, keep them, for they are of my spirit and mind, they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*” Those may in faith commit themselves to God's custody,

**(1.)** Who are *as Christ was in this world,* and tread in his steps. God will love those that are like Christ.

**(2.)** Who do not engage themselves in the world's interest, nor devote themselves to its service. Observe,

**[1.]** That Jesus Christ was not of this world; he never had been of it, and least of all now that he was upon the point of leaving it. This intimates, *First,* His state; he was none of the world's favourites nor darlings, none of its princes nor grandees; worldly possessions he had none, not even *where*

*to lay his head;* nor worldly power, he was no judge nor divider. *Secondly,* His Spirit; he was perfectly dead to the world, the prince of this world had nothing in him, the things of this world were nothing to him; not honour, for he *made himself of no reputation;* not riches, for *for our sakes he became poor;* not pleasures, for he *acquainted himself with grief.* See ~~483~~John 8:23.

[2.] That therefore true Christians are not of this world. The Spirit of Christ in them is opposite to the spirit of the world. *First,* It is their lot to be despised by the world; they are not in favour with the world any more than their Master before them was. *Secondly,* It is their privilege to be delivered from the world; as Abraham out of the land of his nativity. *Thirdly,* It is their duty and character to be dead to the world. Their most pleasing converse is, and should be, with another world, and their prevailing concern about the business of that world, not of this. Christ's disciples were weak, and had many infirmities; yet this he could say for them, They were not of the world, not of the earth, and therefore he recommends them to the care of Heaven.

## ~~487~~JOHN 17:17-19

### CHRIST'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER

The next thing he prayed for for them was that they might be sanctified; not only kept from evil, but made good.

**I.** Here is the petition (v. 17): *Sanctify them through thy truth,* through thy word, for *thy word is truth;* it is true — it is truth itself. He desires they may be sanctified,

**1.** As Christians. Father, make them holy, and this will be their preservation, ~~5123~~1 Thessalonians 5:23. Observe here,

(**1.**) The grace desired — sanctification. The disciples were sanctified, for they were not of the world; yet he prays, *Father sanctify them,* that is,

[**1.**] “Confirm the work of sanctification in them, strengthen their faith, inflame their good affections, rivet their good resolutions.”

[2.] “Carry on that good work in them, and continue it; let the *light shine more and more.*”

[3.] “Complete it, crown it with the perfection of holiness; sanctify them throughout and to the end.” Note, *First*, It is the prayer of Christ for all that are his that they may be sanctified; because he cannot for shame own them as his, either here or hereafter, either employ them in his work or present them to his Father, if they be not sanctified. *Secondly*, Those that through grace are sanctified have need to be sanctified more and more. Even disciples must pray for sanctifying grace; for, if he that was the author of the good work be not the finisher of it, we are undone. Not to go forward is to go backward; *he that is holy must be holy still*, more holy still, pressing forward, soaring upward, as those that have not attained. *Thirdly*, It is God that sanctifies as well as God that justified, ~~☞~~2 Corinthians 5:5. *Fourthly*, It is an encouragement to us, in our prayers for sanctifying grace, that it is what Christ intercedes for for us.

(2.) The means of conferring this grace — *through thy truth, thy word is truth*. Not that the Holy One of Israel is hereby limited to means, but in the *counsel of peace* among other things it was settled and agreed,

[1.] That all needful truth should be comprised and summed up in the word of God. Divine revelation, as it now stands in the written word, is not only pure truth without mixture, but entire truth without deficiency.

[2.] That this word of truth should be the outward and ordinary means of our sanctification; not of itself, for then it would always sanctify, but as the instrument which the Spirit commonly uses in beginning and carrying on that good work; it is the seed of the new birth (~~☞~~1 Peter 1:23), and the food of the new life, ~~☞~~1 Peter 2:1-2.

2. As ministers. “*Sanctify them*, set them apart for thyself and service; let their call to the apostleship be ratified in heaven.” Prophets were said to be sanctified, ~~☞~~Jeremiah 1:5. Priests and Levites were so. *Sanctify them*; that is,

(1.) “Qualify them for the office, with Christian graces and ministerial gifts, to make them able ministers of the New Testament.”

(2.) “Separate them to the office, ~~☞~~Romans 1:1. I have called them, they have consented; Father, say *Amen* to it.”



**(3.)** “Own them in the office; let thy hand go along with them; sanctify them by or in thy truth, as truth is opposed to figure and shadow; sanctify them really, not ritually and ceremonially, as the Levitical priests were, by anointing and sacrifice. Sanctify them to thy truth, the word of thy truth, to be the preachers of thy truth to the world; as the priests were sanctified to serve at the altar, so let them be to preach the gospel.” <sup><403></sup>1 Corinthians 9:13, 14. Note,

**[1.]** Jesus Christ intercedes for his ministers with a particular concern, and recommends to his Father's grace those stars he carries in his right hand.

**[2.]** The great thing to be asked of God for gospel ministers is that they may be sanctified, effectually separated from the world, entirely devoted to God, and experimentally acquainted with the influence of that word upon their own hearts which they preach to others. Let them have the *Urim and Thummim, light and integrity.*

**II.** We have here two pleas or arguments to enforce the petition for the disciples' sanctification: —

**1.** The mission they had from him (v. 18): “*As thou hast sent me into the world, to be thine ambassador to the children of men, so now that I am recalled have I sent them into the world, as my delegates.*” Now here,

**(1.)** Christ speaks with great assurance of his own mission: *Thou hast sent me into the world.* The great author of the Christian religion had his commission and instructions from him who is the origin and object of all religion. He was sent of God to say what he said, and do what he did, and be what he is to those that believe on him; which was his comfort in his undertaking, and may be ours abundantly in our dependence upon him; his record was on high, for thence his mission was.

**(2.)** He speaks with great satisfaction of the commission he had given his disciples “*So have I sent them on the same errand, and to carry on the same design;*” to preach the same doctrine that he preached, and to confirm it with the same proofs, with a charge likewise to commit to other faithful men that which was committed to them. He gave them their commission (<sup><404></sup>John 20:21) with a reference to his own, and it magnifies their office that it comes from Christ, and that there is some affinity between the commission given to the ministers of reconciliation and that given to the Mediator; he is called an *apostle* (<sup><405></sup>Hebrews 3:1), a *minister*

(<sup><518></sup>Romans 15:8), a *messenger*, (<sup><301></sup>Malachi 3:1). Only they are sent as servants, he as a Son. Now this comes in here as a reason,

[1.] Why Christ was concerned so much for them, and laid their case so near his heart; because he had himself put them into a difficult office, which required great abilities for the due discharge of it. Note, Whom Christ sends he will stand by, and interest himself in those that are employed for him; what he calls us out to he will fit us out for, and bear us up in.

[2.] Why he committed them to his Father; because he was concerned in their cause, their mission being in prosecution of his, and as it were an assignment out of it. Christ *received gifts for men* (<sup><488></sup>Psalm 68:18), and then gave them to men (<sup><408></sup>Ephesians 4:8), and therefore *prays aid* of his Father to warrant and uphold those gifts, and confirm his grant of them. The Father *sanctified him when he sent him into the world*, (<sup><516></sup>John 10:36). Now, they being sent as he was, let them also be sanctified.

2. The merit he had for them is another thing here pleaded (v. 19): *For their sakes I sanctify myself*. Here is,

(1.) Christ's designation of himself to the work and office of Mediator: *I sanctified myself*. He entirely devoted himself to the undertaking, and all the parts of it, especially that which he was now going about — the *offering up of himself without spot unto God, by the eternal Spirit*. He, as the priest and altar, sanctified himself as the sacrifice. When he said, Father, *glorify thy name* — Father, *thy will be done* — Father, *I commit my spirit into thy hands*, he paid down the satisfaction he had engaged to make, and so sanctified himself. This he pleads with his Father, for his intercession is made in the virtue of his satisfaction; *by his own blood he entered into the holy place* (<sup><302></sup>Hebrews 9:12), as the high priest, on the day of atonement, sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice at the same time that he burnt incense within the veil, (<sup><512></sup>Leviticus 16:12, 14).

(2.) Christ's design of kindness to his disciples herein; it is *for their sakes*, that *they may be sanctified*, that is, that they may be martyrs; so some. "I sacrifice myself, that they may be sacrificed to the glory of God and the church's good." Paul speaks of his being offered, (<sup><317></sup>Philippians 2:17; <sup><506></sup>2 Timothy 4:6). Whatever there is in the *death of the saints* that is *precious in the sight of the Lord*, it is owing to the death of the Lord Jesus. But I rather

take it more generally, that they may be saints and ministers, duly qualified and accepted of God.

[1.] The office of the ministry is the purchase of Christ's blood, and one of the blessed fruits of his satisfaction, and owes its virtue and value to Christ's merit. The priests under the law were consecrated with the blood of bulls and goats, but gospel ministers with the blood of Jesus.

[2.] The real holiness of all good Christians is the fruit of Christ's death, by which the gift of the Holy Ghost was purchased; he *gave himself for his church, to sanctify it*, <sup><495></sup>Ephesians 5:25, 26. And he that designed the end designed also the means, that they might be sanctified *by the truth*, the truth which Christ came into the world to bear witness to and died to confirm. The word of truth receives its sanctifying virtue and power from the death of Christ. Some read it, that they may be sanctified *in truth*, that is, truly; for as God must be served, so, in order to this, we must be sanctified, *in the spirit, and in truth*. And this Christ has prayed for, for all that are his; for *this is his will, even their sanctification*, which encourages them to pray for it,

## <872> JOHN 17:20-23

### CHRIST'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Next to their purity he prays for their unity; for the wisdom from above is *first pure, then peaceable*; and amity is amiable indeed when it is like the ointment on Aaron's holy head, and the dew on Zion's holy hill. Observe,

**I.** Who are included in this prayer (v. 20): “*Not these only, not these only that are now my disciples*” (the eleven, the seventy, with others, men and women that followed him when he was here on earth), “*but for those also who shall believe on me through their word, either preached by them in their own day or written by them for the generations to come; I pray for them all, that they all may be one in their interest in this prayer, and may all receive benefit by it.*” Note, here,

**1.** Those, and those only, are interested in the mediation of Christ, that do, or shall, believe in him. This is that by which they are described, and it comprehends all the character and duty of a Christian. They that lived

then, *saw and believed*, but they in after ages *have not seen*, and yet *have believed*.

2. It is *through the word* that souls are brought to believe on Christ, and it is for this end that Christ appointed the scriptures to be written, and a standing ministry to continue in the church, while the church stands, that is, while the world stands, for the raising up of a seed.

3. It is certainly and infallibly known to Christ who shall believe on him. He does not here pray at a venture, upon a contingency depending on the treacherous will of man, which pretends to be free, but by reason of sin is *in bondage with its children*; no, Christ knew very well whom he prayed for, the matter was reduced to a certainty by the divine prescience and purpose; he knew who were given him, who being ordained to eternal life, were *entered in the Lamb's book*, and should undoubtedly believe, <sup><4138></sup>Acts 13:48.

4. Jesus Christ intercedes not only for great and eminent believers, but for the meanest and weakest; not for those only that are to be employed in the highest post of trust and honour in his kingdom, but for all, even those that in the eye of the world are inconsiderable. As the divine providence extends itself to the meanest creature, so does the divine grace to the meanest Christian. The good Shepherd has an eye even to *the poor of the flock*.

5. Jesus Christ in his mediation had an actual regard to those of the chosen remnant that were yet unborn, the people that *should be created* (<sup><4273></sup>Psalm 22:31), the *other sheep* which he *must yet bring*. Before they are *formed in the womb he knows them* (<sup><3405></sup>Jeremiah 1:5), and prayers are filed in heaven for them beforehand, by him who *declareth the end from the beginning, and calleth things that are not as though they were*.

II. What is intended in this prayer (v. 21): *That they all may be one*. The same was said before (v. 11), *that they may be one as we are*, and again, v. 22. The heart of Christ was much upon this. Some think that the oneness prayed for in v. 11 has special reference to the disciples as ministers and apostles, that they might be one in their testimony to Christ; and that the harmony of the evangelists, and concurrence of the first preachers of the gospel, are owing to this prayer. Let them be not only of *one heart*, but of *one mouth*, speaking the same thing. The unity of the gospel ministers is both the beauty and strength of the gospel interest. But it is certain that the

oneness prayed for in v. 21 respects all believers. It is the prayer of Christ for all that are his, and we may be sure it is an answered prayer — *that they all may be one, one in us* (v. 21), *one as e are one* (v. 22), *made perfect in one*, v. 23. It includes three things: —

**1.** That they might all be *incorporated in one body*. “Father, look upon them all as one, and ratify that great charter by which they are embodied as one church. Though they live in distant places, from one end of heaven to the other, and in several ages, from the beginning to the close of time, and so cannot have any personal acquaintance or correspondence with each other, yet let them be united in me their common head.” As Christ died, so he prayed, to *gather them all in one*, ~~John~~ John 11:52; ~~Ephesians~~ Ephesians 1:10.

**2.** That they might all be animated by one Spirit. This is plainly implied in this — *that they may be one in us*. Union with the Father and Son is obtained and kept up only by the Holy Ghost. *He that is joined to the Lord in one spirit*, ~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 6:17. Let them all be stamped with the same image and superscription, and influenced by the same power.

**3.** That they might all be *knit together* in the bond of love and charity, all of one heart. *That they all may be one*,

**(1.)** In judgment and sentiment; not in every little thing — this is neither possible nor needful, but in the great things of God, and in them, by the virtue of this prayer, they are all agreed — that God's favour is better than life — that sin is the worst of evils, Christ the best of friends — that there is another life after this, and the like.

**(2.)** In disposition and inclination. All that are sanctified have the same divine nature and image; they have all a new heart, and it is *one heart*.

**(3.)** They are all one in their designs and aims. Every true Christian, *as far as he is so*, eyes the glory of God as his highest end, and the glory of heaven as his chief good.

**(4.)** They are all one in their desires and prayers; though they differ in words and the manner of expressions, yet, having received the same *spirit of adoption*, and observing the same rule, they pray for the same things in effect.

**(5.)** All one in love and affection. Every true Christian has that in him which inclines him to love all true Christians as such. That which Christ

here prays for is that *communion of saints* which we profess to believe; the fellowship which all believers have with God, and their intimate union with all the saints in heaven and earth, ~~1~~1 John 1:3. But this prayer of Christ will not have its complete answer till all the saints come to heaven, for then, and not till then, they shall be *perfect in one*, v. 23; ~~4~~Ephesians 4:13.

**III.** What is intimated by way of plea or argument to enforce this petition; three things: —

**1.** The oneness that is between the Father and the Son, which is mentioned again and again, v. 11, 21-23.

**(1.)** It is taken for granted that the Father and Son are one, one in nature and essence, equal in power and glory, one in mutual endearments. The *Father loveth the Son*, and the Son always pleased the Father. They are one in design, and one in operation. The intimacy of this oneness is expressed in these words, *thou in me, and I in thee*. This he often mentions for his support under his present sufferings, when his enemies were ready to fall upon him, and his friends to fall off from him; yet he was in the Father, and the Father in him.

**(2.)** This is insisted on in Christ's prayer for his disciples' oneness,

**[1.]** As the pattern of that oneness, showing how he desired they might be one. Believers are one in some measure as God and Christ are one; for, *First*, The union of believers is a strict and close union; they are united by a divine nature, by the power of divine grace, in pursuance of the divine counsels. *Secondly*, It is a holy union, in the Holy Spirit, for holy ends; not a body politic for any secular purpose. *Thirdly*, It is, and will be at last, a complete union. Father and Son have the same attributes, properties, and perfections; so have believers now, as far as they are sanctified, and when grace shall be perfected in glory they will be exactly consonant to each other, all changed into the same image.

**[2.]** As the centre of that oneness; that they may be *one in us*, all meeting here. There is *one God* and *one Mediator*; and herein believers are one, that they all agree to depend upon the favour of this one God as their felicity and the merit of this one Mediator as their righteousness. That is a conspiracy, not a union, which doth not centre in God as the end, and

Christ as the way. All who are truly united to God and Christ, who *are one*, will soon be *united one to another*.

[3.] As a plea for that oneness. The Creator and Redeemer are one in interest and design; but to what purpose are they so, if all believers be not one body with Christ, and do not jointly receive grace for grace from him, as he has received it for them? Christ's design was to reduce revolted mankind to God: "Father," says he, "let all that believe be one, that *in one body* they may be reconciled" (~~4015~~ Ephesians 2:15, 16), which speaks of the uniting of Jews and Gentiles in the church; that great mystery, that the Gentiles should be *fellow-heirs, and of the same body* (~~4016~~ Ephesians 3:6), to which I think this prayer of Christ principally refers, it being one great thing he aimed at in his dying; and I wonder none of the expositors I have met with should so apply it. "Father, let the Gentiles that believe be incorporated with the believing Jews, and *make of twain one new man*." Those words, *I in them, and thou in me*, show what that union is which is so necessary, not only to the beauty, but to the very being, of his church. *First*, Union with Christ: *I in them*. Christ dwelling in the hearts of believers is the life and soul of the new man. *Secondly*, Union with God through him: *Thou in me*, so as by me to be in them. *Thirdly*, Union with each other, resulting from these: *that they hereby may be made perfect in one*. We are complete in him.

2. The design of Christ in all his communications of light and grace to them (v. 22): "*The glory which thou gavest me, as the trustee or channel of conveyance, I have accordingly given them, to this intent, that they may be one, as we are one; so that those gifts will be in vain, if they be not one.*" Now these gifts are either,

(1.) Those that were conferred upon the apostles, and first planters of the church. The glory of being God's ambassadors to the world — the glory of working miracles — the glory of gathering a church out of the world, and erecting the throne of God's kingdom among men — this glory was given to Christ, and some of the honour he put upon them when he sent them to *disciple all nations*. Or,

(2.) Those that are given in common to all believers. The glory of being in covenant with the Father, and accepted of him, of being laid in his bosom, and designed for a place at his right hand, was the glory which the Father gave to the Redeemer, and he has confirmed it to the redeemed.

[1.] This honour he says he *hath given them*, because he hath intended it for them, settled it upon them, and secured it to them upon their believing Christ's promises to be real gifts.

[2.] This was given to him to give to them; it was conveyed to him in trust for them, and he was faithful to him that appointed him.

[3.] He gave it to them, that they *might be one*. *First*, to entitle them to the privilege of unity, that by virtue of their common relation to *one God the Father*, and *one Lord Jesus Christ*, they might be truly denominated one. The gift of the Spirit, that great glory which the Father gave to the Son, by him to be given to all believers, makes them one, for he works *all in all*, ~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 12:4, etc. *Secondly*, To engage them to the duty of unity. That in consideration of their agreement and communion in one creed and one covenant, one Spirit and one Bible — in consideration of what they have in one God and one Christ, and of what they hope for in one heaven, they may be of one mind and one mouth. Worldly glory sets men at variance; for if some be advanced others are eclipsed, and therefore, while the disciples dreamed of a temporal kingdom, they were ever and anon quarrelling; but spiritual honours being conferred alike upon all Christ's subjects, they being all *made to our God kings and priests*, there is no occasion for contest nor emulation. The more Christians are taken up with the glory Christ has given them, the less desirous they will be of vain-glory, and, consequently, the less disposed to quarrel.

3. He pleads the happy influence their oneness would have upon others, and the furtherance it would give to the public good. This is twice urged (v. 21): *That the world may believe that thou hast sent me*. And again (v. 23): *That the world may know it*, for without knowledge there can be no true faith. Believers must know what they believe, and why and wherefore they believe it. Those who believe *at a venture*, venture too far. Now Christ here shows,

(1.) His good-will to the world of mankind in general. Herein he is of his Father's mind, as we are sure he is in every thing, that he would have all men to be saved, and to *come to the knowledge of the truth*, ~~1~~ 1 Timothy 2:4; ~~2~~ 2 Peter 3:9. Therefore it is his will that all means possible should be used, and no stone left unturned, for the conviction and conversion of the world. We know not who are chosen, but we must in our places do our utmost to further men's salvation, and take heed of doing any thing to hinder it.



**(2.)** The good fruit of the church's oneness; it will be an evidence of the truth of Christianity, and a means of bringing many to embrace it.

**[1.]** In general, it will recommend Christianity to the world, and to the good opinion of those that are without. *First*, The embodying of Christians in one society by the gospel charter will greatly promote Christianity. When the world shall see so many of those that were its children called out of its family, distinguished from others, and changed from what they themselves sometimes were, — when they shall see this society raised by the foolishness of preaching, and kept up by miracles of divine providence and grace, and how admirably well it is modelled and constituted, they will be ready to say, *We will go with you, for we see that God is with you.* *Secondly*, The uniting of Christians in love and charity is the beauty of their profession, and invites others to join with them, as the love that was among those primo-primitive Christians, ~~AND~~ Acts 2:42, 43; 4:32, 33. When Christianity, instead of causing quarrels about itself, makes all other strifes to cease, — when it cools the fiery, smooths the rugged, and disposes men to be kind and loving, courteous and beneficent, to all men, studious to preserve and promote peace in all relations and societies, this will recommend it to all that have any thing either of natural religion or natural affection in them.

**[2.]** In particular, it will beget in men good thoughts, *First*, Of Christ: They will know and believe that *thou hast sent me*, By this it will appear that Christ was sent of God, and that his doctrine was divine, in that his religion prevails to join so many of different capacities, tempers, and interests in other things, in one body by faith, with one heart by love. Certainly he was sent by the God of power, who fashions men's hearts alike, and the God of love and peace; when the worshippers of God are one, he is one, and his name one. *Secondly*, Of Christians: They will *know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me*. Here is,

1. The privilege of believers: *the Father* himself loveth them with a love resembling his love to his Son, for they are loved in him with an everlasting love.
2. The evidence of their interest in this privilege, and that is their being one. By this it will appear that God loves us, if we *love one another with a pure heart*; for wherever *the love of God is shed abroad in the heart* it will change it into the same image. See how much good it would do to the world to know better how dear to God all good

Christians are. The Jews had a saying, *If the world did but know the worth of good men, they would hedge them about with pearls.* Those that have so much of God's love should have more of ours.

## JOHN 17:24-26

### CHRIST'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Here is,

**I.** A petition for the glorifying of all those that were given to Christ (v. 24), not only these apostles, but all believers: *Father, I will that they may be with me.* Observe,

**1.** The connection of this request with those foregoing. He had prayed that God would preserve, sanctify, and unite them; and now he prays that he would crown all his gifts with their glorification. In this method we must pray, first for grace, and then for glory (<sup>PSALM</sup> Psalm 84:11); for in this method God gives. Far be it from the only wise God to come under the imputation either of that *foolish builder who without a foundation built upon the sand*, as he would if he should glorify any whom he has not first sanctified; or of that *foolish builder who began to build and was not able to finish*, as he would if he should sanctify any, and not glorify them.

**2.** The manner of the request: *Father, I will.* Here, as before, he addresses himself to God as a Father, and therein we must do likewise; but when he says, *thelo* — *I will*, he speaks a language peculiar to himself, and such as does not become ordinary petitioners, but very well became him who paid for what he prayed for.

**(1.)** This intimates the authority of his intercession in general; his word was with power in heaven, as well as on earth. He entering *with his own blood into the holy place*, his intercession there has an uncontrollable efficacy. He intercedes as a king, for he is a priest upon his throne (like Melchizedek), a king-priest.

**(2.)** It intimates his particular authority in this matter; he had a power to *give eternal life* (v. 2), and, pursuant to that power, he says, *Father, I will.* Though now he *took upon him the form of a servant*, yet that power being to be most illustriously exerted when he shall come the second time in the

glory of a judge, to say, *Come ye blessed*, having that in his eye, he might well say, *Father, I will*.

**3.** The request itself — that all the elect might come to be with him in heaven at last, to see his glory, and to share in it. Now observe here,

**(1.)** Under what notion we are to hope for heaven? wherein does that happiness consist? three things make heaven: —

**[1.]** It is to be where Christ is: *Where I am*; in the paradise whither Christ's soul went at death; in the third heavens whither his soul and body went at his ascension: — *Where I am*, am to be shortly, am to be eternally. In this world we are but *in transitu* — *on our passage*; there we truly are where we are to be for ever; so Christ reckoned, and so must we.

**[2.]** It is to be with him where he is; this is not tautology, but intimates that we shall not only be in the same happy place where Christ is, but that the happiness of the place will consist in his presence; this is *the fulness of its joy*. The very heaven of heaven is to be with Christ, there in company with him, and communion with him, <sup><4123></sup>Philippians 1:23.

**[3.]** It is to *behold his glory, which the Father* has given him. Observe, *First*, The glory of the Redeemer is the brightness of heaven. That glory before which angels cover their faces was his glory, <sup><424></sup>John 12:41. The Lamb is the light of the new Jerusalem, <sup><423></sup>Revelation 21:23. Christ will *come in the glory of his Father*, for *he is the brightness of his glory*. God shows his glory there, as he does his grace here, through Christ. “*The Father has given me this glory*,” though he was as yet in his low estate; but it was very true, and very near. *Secondly*, The felicity of the redeemed consists very much in the beholding of this glory; they will have the immediate view of his glorious person. *I shall see God in my flesh*, <sup><426></sup>Job 19:26, 27. They will have a clear insight into his glorious undertaking, as it will be then accomplished; they will see into those springs of love from which flow all the streams of grace; they shall have an appropriating sight of Christ's glory (*Uxor fulget radiis mariti* — *The wife shines with the radiance of her husband*), and an assimilating sight: they shall *be changed into the same image, from glory to glory*.

**(2.)** Upon what ground we are to hope for heaven; no other than purely the mediation and intercession of Christ, because he hath said, *Father, I will*. Our sanctification is our evidence, for *he that has this hope in him purifies*

himself; but it is the will of Christ that is our title, *by which will we are sanctified*, <sup><300></sup>Hebrews 10:10. Christ speaks here as if he did not count his own happiness complete unless he had his elect to share with him in it, for it is *the bringing of many sons to glory that makes the captain of our salvation perfect*, <sup><300></sup>Hebrews 2:10.

**4.** The argument to back this request: *for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world*. This is a reason,

**(1.)** Why he expected this glory himself. Thou wilt *give it to me, for thou lovedst me*. The honour and power given to the Son as Mediator were founded in the Father's love to him (<sup><450></sup>John 5:20): *the Father loves the Son*, is infinitely well pleased in his undertaking, and *therefore has given all things into his hands*; and, the matter being concerted in the divine counsels from eternity, he is said to love him as Mediator *before the foundation of the world*. Or,

**(2.)** Why he expected that those who *were given to him* should be with him to share in his glory: "*Thou lovedst me, and them in me, and canst deny me nothing I ask for them.*"

**II.** The conclusion of the prayer, which is designed to enforce all the petitions for the disciples, especially the last, that they may be glorified. Two things he insists upon, and pleads: —

**1.** The respect he had to his Father, v. 25. Observe,

**(1.)** The title he gives to God: *O righteous Father*. When he prayed that they might be sanctified, he called him *holy Father*; when he prays that they may be glorified, he calls him *righteous Father*; for it is a *crown of righteousness which the righteous Judge shall give*. God's righteousness was engaged for the giving out of all that good which the Father had promised and the Son had purchased.

**(2.)** The character he gives of the world that lay in wickedness: *The world has not known thee*. Note, Ignorance of God overspreads the world of mankind; this is the darkness they sit in. Now this is urged here,

**[1.]** To show that these disciples need the aids of special grace, both because of the necessity of their work — they were to bring a world that knew not God to the knowledge of him; and also, because of the difficulty

of their work — they must bring light to those that rebelled against the light; therefore keep them.

[2.] To show that they were qualified for further peculiar favours, for they had that knowledge of God which the world had not.

(3.) The plea he insists upon for himself: *But I have known thee*. Christ knew the Father as no one else ever did; knew upon what grounds he went in his undertaking, knew his Father's mind in every thing, and therefore, in this prayer, came to him with confidence, as we do to one we know. Christ is here suing out blessings for those that were his; pursuing this petition, when he had said, *The world has not known thee*, one would expect it should follow, *but they have known thee*; no, their knowledge was not to be boasted of, *but I have known thee*, which intimates that there is nothing in us to recommend us to God's favour, but all our interest in him, and intercourse with him, result from, and depend upon, Christ's interest and intercourse. We are unworthy, but he is worthy.

(4.) The plea he insists upon for his disciples: *And they have known that thou hast sent me*; and,

[1.] Hereby they are distinguished from the unbelieving world. When multitudes to whom Christ was sent, and his grace offered, would not *believe that God had sent him*, these knew it, and believed it, and were not ashamed to own it. Note, To know and believe in Jesus Christ, in the midst of a world that persists in ignorance and infidelity, is highly pleasing to God, and shall certainly be crowned with distinguishing glory. Singular faith qualifies for singular favours.

[2.] Hereby they are interested in the mediation of Christ, and partake of the benefit of his acquaintance with the Father: *“I have known thee, immediately and perfectly; and these, though they have not so known thee, nor were capable of knowing thee so, yet have known that thou hast sent me, have known that which was required of them to know, have known the Creator in the Redeemer.”* Knowing Christ as sent of God, they have, in him, known the Father, and are introduced to an acquaintance with him; therefore, *“Father, look after them for my sake.”*

2. The respect he had to his disciples (v. 26): *“I have led them into the knowledge of thee, and will do it yet more and more; with this great and*

kind intention, *that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.*” Observe here,

**(1.)** What Christ had done for them: *I have declared unto them thy name.*

**[1.]** This he had done for those that were his immediate followers. *All the time that he went in and out among them,* he made it his business to declare his Father's name to them, and to beget in them a veneration for it. The tendency of all his sermons and miracles was to advance his Father's honours, and to spread the knowledge of him, ~~40B~~John 1:18.

**[2.]** This he had done for all that believe on him; for they had not been brought to believe if Christ had not made known to them his Father's name. Note, *First,* We are indebted to Christ for all the knowledge we have of the Father's name; he declares it, and he opens the understanding to receive that revelation. *Secondly,* Those whom Christ recommends to the favour of God he first leads into an acquaintance with God.

**(2.)** What he intended to do yet further for them: *I will declare it.* To the disciples he designed to give further instructions after his resurrection (~~40B~~Acts 1:3), and to bring them into a much more intimate acquaintance with divine things by the pouring out of the Spirit after his ascension; and to all believers, into whose hearts he hath shined, he shines more and more. Where Christ has *declared his Father's name, he will declare it; for to him that hath shall be given;* and those that know God both need and desire to know more of him. This is fitly pleaded for them: “Father, own and favour them, for they will own and honour thee.”

**(3.)** What he aimed at in all this; not to fill their heads with curious speculations, and furnish them with something to talk of among the learned, but to secure and advance their real happiness in two things: —

**[1.]** Communion with God: “Therefore I have given them the knowledge of thy name, of all that whereby thou hast made thyself known, *that thy love,* even that *wherewith thou hast loved me, may be,* not only towards them, but *in them;*” that is, *First,* “Let them have the fruits of that love for their sanctification; let *the Spirit of love,* with which thou hast filled me, *be in them.*” Christ declares his Father's name to believers, that with that divine light darted into their minds a divine love may be shed abroad in their hearts, to be in them a commanding constraining principle of holiness, that they may partake of a divine nature. When God's love to us

comes to be in us, it is like the virtue which the loadstone gives the needle, inclining it to move towards the pole; it draws out the soul towards God in pious and devout affections, which are as the spirits of the divine life in the soul. *Secondly*, “Let them have the taste and relish of that love for their consolation; let them not only be interested in the love of God, by having God’s name declared to them, but, by a further declaration of it, let them have the comfort of that interest; that they may not only know God, but *know that they know him*,” <sup>411B</sup>1 John 2:3. It is *the love of God* thus *shed abroad in the heart* that fills it with joy, <sup>411B</sup>Romans 5:3, 5. This God has provided for, that we may not only be satisfied with his loving kindness, but be satisfied of it; and so may live a life of complacency in God and communion with him; this we must pray for, this we must press after; if we have it, we must thank Christ for it; if we want it, we may thank ourselves.

[2.] Union with Christ in order hereunto: *And I in them*. There is no getting into the love of God but through Christ, nor can we keep ourselves in that love but by abiding in Christ, that is, having him to abide in us; nor can we have the sense and apprehension of that love but by our experience of the indwelling of Christ, that is, the Spirit of Christ in our hearts. It is *Christ in us* that is *the only hope of glory* that will *not make us ashamed*, <sup>502Z</sup>Colossians 1:27. All our communion with God, the reception of his love to us with our return of love to him again, passes through the hands of the Lord Jesus, and the comfort of it is owing purely to him. Christ had said but a little before, *I in them* (v. 23), and here it is repeated (though the sense was complete without it), and the prayer closed with it, to show how much the heart of Christ was sent upon it; all his petitions centre in this, and with this *the prayers of Jesus, the Son of David, are ended*: “*I in them*; let me have this, and I desire no more.” It is the glory of the Redeemer to dwell in the redeemed: it is his *rest for ever*, and he has desired it. Let us therefore make sure our union with Christ, and then take the comfort of his intercession. *This* prayer had an end, but *that* he ever lives to make.