Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Jesus Prays for His Disciples, Part 1
Scripture: John 17:6-11
Code: 1566

Turn in your Bibles to the seventeenth chapter of John, continuing in our study of the gospel of John, as we go through verse by verse ... we have come to chapter 17, as we have taken great length to give you an overall view of chapter 17 and the importance of it so I don't want to belabor that point this morning. But you do understand, I trust, the total significance of this particular chapter.

As we have seen in the last two weeks, verse 1 through 5 deals with Jesus praying for His own glory. Then I told You that verse 6to 19, Jesus prays for the disciples alive at the time of His death. Verses 20 to 26, He prays for all Christians throughout all ages to come. This then has become known as the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus Christ, prayer in which He, in a limited sense, prays for His own glory in verses I to 5 and then from verse 6 to 26, prays for those whom He loves and who are His very own.

And may I hasten to add this thought? (Clears throat) ... excuse me. The reasonthat Jesus prays for Himself and for His own glory in verses 1 to 5 is because His glory is to be found ... where? ... at the cross. And unless the cross be accomplished, there will be none of these who will belong to Him that He can pray for. And so before He can begin to pray for us and those He loves in verse 6, He must pray that He be glorified in His cross because it is the cross that draws us to Himself and makes us His own and then He begins to intercede for us. And so, we've seen in the last two weeks, that Jesus must, needs pray for His own glory in the cross, once that is accomplished, we then become His and He prays for us interceding on our behalf.

And so, we come to the tremendous passage that opens us the ... opens to us the inner sanctuary of the trinity. We are on holy ground. There is no more holy ground than this in all the Word of God. This is sacred territory. We are standing, hearing the Son of God talk to the Father God, the intercommunication of the trinity, deep, mysterious and beautiful. And it's a glorious picture of Christ's intercessory prayer ministry on our behalf.

Now prayer is a tremendous thing. We saw the Spirit of God move on so manyhearts. The greatest miracle, friends, the greatest miracle which we Christians experience, watch it, is communion with the living God. It's exciting, isn't it? Just to realize it as we walk and as we move through our life, we are in constant communication with a living God, the God of the universe. What a fantastic thought that is ... that we can come before Him boldly in time of need to a throne that is not a throne of judgment, as in the Old Testament, breathing out fire, but is the throne of ... what? ... of grace. And He gives grace to help in time of need. Prayer is a tremendous, tremendous thing; the greatest miracle we

experience is communion with God.

The fact, also, added to that that others pray for us, that others communion to God brings blessing to us multiplies the blessings of prayer, doesn't it? Fantastic thing it is.

But have you ever thought past that? Prayer is not just a tremendous thing as we pray, as others pray and collectively the body of Christ prospers because we're praying for each other, but did you realize, too, that Romans 8 verse 26, 27 tells us that the Holy Spirit also prays for us? The Spirit of God who dwells within us, whose habitation we are, whose sanctuary we are, whose temple we are, the Spirit of God dwelling within us constantly intercedes for US. He makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; He speaks in a divine language on our behalf. I'll tell you, that's exciting. Not only can I pray, but you can pray. Together we pray. Beyond that, the Spirit of God is praying also ... always according to the will of God. And you know what the result of the Spirit's prayers are? Romans 8:28: "All things work together ... what? ... for good." Why? Because in verse 27 the Spirit's praying for us.

I'll tell you, as if that isn't enough, we come to chapter 17 of John and you know what else we find? There is one other who prays for US. Who is it? Jesus Christ Himself. And where is He? Seated at the right hand of the Father in this picture here interceding for us.

When you put it all together, my friends, and you have tapped divine resources. You and I in constant communion with the living God. The body of Christ praying on our behalf to the living God. The Spirit of God never ceasing in intercession in a divine language on our behalf and Jesus Christ, seated at the right hand of the Father, praying ceaselessly for us. Ohh, I'll tell you, to be a Christian and to have that kind of resource is indeed the greatest miracle.

And as we come to chapter 17, we just get a glimpse of the intercessory work of Jesus Christ on t he behalf of those He dearly loves. I think I love this chapter as well as I love any other chapter because in it I see more clearly than I think I see anywhere else the tremendous love of Jesus Christ for me. It overwhelms me, it absolutely overwhelms me. And I suppose it overwhelms me because I realize I'm not worth it, tight? I don't deserve to be loved like that. So, I just say -- Halleluiah for grace and I don't worry about it.

All right, as we come to this chapter then we're going to see Jesus pray for His own. Now let me lay this thought on you because it's very important. So many times we take Christ and we exalt the cross, you know, the cross is everything and it is. You want to know something? Think of this thought. The cross was only a vehicle to get to the intercessory work. Did you ever think of that? You see, what God wanted was a people for Himself, wasn't it? What Jesus wanted was those who were gathered around Him that He could love and be loved by, He wanted them. What the Father wanted to do was choose out a people of His own that He could love and that He could bestow His love on and bestow

His blessing on and that Ephesians tells us He could display before the angels as a picture of His wisdom. God wanted a people of His own.

The reason for the cross was just to secure that people. Then the intercessory work is to enable God to pour out His mercy for all ages. Do you see? The intercessory work, what's going on now in your behalf, and incidentally what Ephesians 2 tells us, will go on forever. He'll pour out His riches in His grace and His kindness forever. That is the thing God really wanted to get at. The cross just opened that possibility. So, when you look at Jesus Christ and you glorify the cross, don't minimize His intercessory work on your behalf. The cross made you His people. The intercessory work is that which allows Him to show His love and to constantly bless you which is why He wanted you in the first place. You got it? That's good, isn't it? I like it. It blesses my heart...to realize that my salvation is not just a negative, it's not just get them out of hell and turn them loose but is to make us His very own in order that He might pour out His love on us and thus His intercessory work becomes as magnificent, as beautiful, as comprehensive as did His saving work on the cross.

And you see, that's exactly what Paul means to tell us in Romans 5:10. And I think I'll take a moment just to read it to you. Romans 5, verse 10: "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God," listen to this, "by the death of His Son." You know, what reconciled us to God was the death of His Son, right? Sure. But watch the next statement. "Much more," ho, ho, ho, you like those two words? You think the cross was important? "Much more being," listen to this, "reconciled we shall be saved by His life." What a thought.

If His death could do so much for you, can you imagine what His living intercession must be doing for you? Ohhh, that's what Paul's saying. Much more ... I mean, in death He could redeem you, imagine what He can do in life and the Bible says, watch this one, Hebrews 7, He ever lives to make ... what? ... intercession for us. Don't minimize the intercessory work of Christ. The cross is fantastic but watch those two words -- much ... what? ... more. He only saved you so He could shower His love on you. Boy, you'd think some Christians got saved just to be made miserable. God saved you to shower His love on you. Much more ... His mediation on the throne, friends, is as real and indispensable as His work on the cross and don't you ever forget it. And you're continually being delivered, being saved by His life as He ever lives to make intercession for you. And every ... every grace that comes into your life through ... through all of your existence as a believer is a result of the intercessory work of Christ.

All right, as we come to 17 then this is what we I re going to see. Just a glimpse of this intercessory work on our behalf.

Now, keep in mind that when Jesus had finished His work on the cross, He didn't finish His work. He just started to do something different, intercession. He became the intercessor who is now at the right hand of the Father, carrying on faithful petition for the saints, for our healing, for our helplessness, for our weakness, for our immaturity, for whatever it is, He prays for us. That's His ministry. He knows

our limitations. He knows where we're weak. He knows where we hurt. He knows our capabilities and He knows our needs. And the Bible says, I love it, I love it, He says He is the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. You know what the word bishop means? Caretaker. He's the Shepherd and Caretaker of our souls.

You see, the High Priest in the Old Testament interceded but his intercession didn't last because it was always ended by death. Wasn't it? Every priest died, that's the book of Hebrews. They all kept dying all the time. And the writer of Hebrews says in verse 25 of chapter 7, "But He ever ... what? ... lives to make intercession for us." It's not only effective, it's unending intercession. That's why Ephesians 2 says that His glories and grace are poured out forever.

Now, may I add that the intercessory work of Christ, a little doctrinal, historical, chronological point here, for your file, may I add that the intercessory work of Christ didn't really begin until after He ar ... He ascended into the Father's presence, right? The Father exalted Him, set Him at His right hand after the resurrection, forty days later, ten days later He ascended. I should say -- forty days later He ascended ... 10, the Spirit of God came. But after His ascension, then the intercessory work really began. But John 27 is like a preview. Here is a little glimpse of His intercessory work done in front of the disciples so they could record it for us ... so that we would have a preview insight into the intercessory work of Christ. Oh would we be the losers if this chapter wasn't here. Just to know how Jesus prays for us, fantastic truths. And so, we get a little preview, this is tremendous truth. We look at this marvelous, thrilling chapter and we are enriched as we see the Mediator Jesus Christ.

And as I said earlier, it can't start until He's been glorified at the cross and that's where He purchases us. That's why He has to have verses 1 to 5 first in which He prays that the cross would be accomplished.

All right, now let's look at verses 6 to 19, don't worry, we'll neverget anywhere near verse 19. The Lord could come before that. But we will get a good start on it. Now I want you to see in verses 6 to 19, as Jesus prays for His disciples, that it is a very specific prayer, He's praying for the eleven Apostles and for the few disciples that were also with Him. Now you know that there's a difference between an apostle and a disciple. There are only eleven Apostles plus Matthias who made up the twelfth, plus whom? Paul. But then they were specific. But of all of the others who believed in Him, they are all disciples. They are all disciples. Now apostles are also disciples, but not all disciples are apostles, there were only eleven plus Matthias, plus Paul. There are a total of thirteen if you want to include Judas in there; he was by name an apostle, not in fact.

All right, so you and I are disciples but we're not apostles. Right? So, others who followed Jesus were disciples but they weren't in that group that belonged to the Apostles.

Now, Jesus then in this prayer, verses 6 to 19, directs His thoughts to this little group of eleven plus the others who believed in Him. How many were there? We don't know. Maybe 500, for that's how many saw Him after His resurrection, there were 120 in the upper room praying together, waiting for the Spirit of God and so perhaps somewhere around 500 would be a maximum. Can you imagine the Son of God in human flesh, 33 years on the earth and when it was all over with, 500 believed? But Jesus was pleased because they were the 500 the Father gave Him, see. And they were the 500 who were about to do the impossible.

Now, as we look at this I want you to see three things: the subjects of His prayer (you have an outline in your bulletin if you'd like to look), the subjects of His prayer (we won't get all of these ... to all of these points), but the subjects of His prayer, the reasons for His prayer and then sometime later we'll talk about the requests themselves, the requests in His prayer.

Let's look at the subjects of His prayer and this is so beautiful and such an insight into Christ. In verses 6 to 8, Jesus describes who it is that He's praying for. Verse 6, "I've manifested Thy name," talking to the Father now, just hours before the cross, "I've manifested Thy name unto the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world. Thine they were and Thou gavest them to Me and they have kept Thy word."

Now, you see, there He identifies who it is that He's praying for. Who? The men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world. That's who. And He's referring to those that are His at that point. And later on we'll see that it's diref ... it's a direct reference to the Apostles and those disciples who believed in Him.

You say -- Well, He's just specifically praying for them? Yes, but in a general sense you will see in this the pattern of His mediating work for all believers because it's so ... it's so much the same for us. It's very general.

Now, the disciples, as you know including the eleven and I'll use the word disciples collectively to refer to all of them; the disciples had really depended upon Jesus Christ. So much so that the thought of losing Him paralyzed them, didn't it? And He knew in His own heart that even with all the promises that He'd given them in the table-talks in chapter 14, 15 and 16, with all of those wonderful promises, it was really going to be trauma when it all finally broke and when they saw what happened, they were going to scatter as sheep just to the winds ... when the shepherd was smitten. And He knew that. And He knew that it would hurt. And He knew that it was going to be a shock like no shock they had ever had. And so, He comes to the Father, not only does He lay on them all these promises one after the other, but He comes to the Father and He prays -- Now, Father, make it all happen, care for them. I have to give them to You.

While He was going to go to the cross and bear the sins of the world, He committed them to the care of the Father, that's essentially what we see here. And though Jesus had promised that He would return, in the form of the Holy Spirit, and that that would even be better because He would not be just with them, He'd be in them, though He had given them all kinds of promises He knew that they were still heading to a trial that would shatter them and so He now prays that the Father would keep them. He had always been their guide, He had always been their guardian, He'd always been their all-sufficient friend, He had borne their infirmities, He had upheld their weaknesses, He had protected them from evil. And He loves them with the fullest capacity of God to love, in the gentleness that is uniquely Jesus Christ; He gives the Father the task of caring for them while He goes to the cross to die for them. You know, you'd think that Jesus Christ somewhere along the line would get a little bit preoccupied with His own problem, but He never does. All He can think about is -- Father, Listen, I love them so much I'm going to go die for them, and while I'm dying for them will You watch them?

I mean, He is so concerned with them. I like to know that, don't you? He cares more about me than I do, or anybody else.

Now, notice what He prays and we'll just move into it, verse 6, "I have manifested Thy name unto the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world." Now I want to stop there for a minute, 'cause there's a footnote there that's very important. In that statement you have the work of Christ ... right there. Jesus came into the world to do this, to manifest the name of God. That little statement there is loaded, friends, grab that one, that is loaded. "I have manifested Thy name ..." Jesus Christ came into this world to declare God, did you knowthat? He came into this world to manifest God to men.

Now, let me show you two thoughts that are inherent in that statement. Number one thought is: in the Old Testament the use of the expression "the name" was very special. It does not mean simply the name of a person. He's not saying -- I have declared the name of God in the sense that I've told people Your name. It's not as if He were to say -- Listen, I've told people Your name is Jehovah, now I've done my job ... running around saying God's name is Jehovah. That's not it. It's not like, you know, saying Joe or Mary or Bill, it's not like giving somebody's name. When it uses the word "name" it means the whole character and the nature of the person as far as it is known. And when Jesus says, "I have declared Your name," He means I have revealed Your character. That's what He means.

Illustration: Psalm 9:10 says: "They that know Thy name will put trust in Thee." And the point of the verse is anybody who really knows the character of God will trust Him. Right? A lot of people know His name. Why ... there are some people halfway down the street, they know God's name. They don't know God. They know His name, title and letters, they don't know His character. If they knew His character they'd trust Him. There are people all over the world who know His name. Just listen, next time, in a shop and hear how many people know His name.

In Psalm 20 verse 7 it says, "Some trust in chariots," ridiculous, imagine trusting in a chariot? "Some trust in horses," listen to this, "but we'll remember the name of the Lord our God." And it's talking about putting your trust in a person. The name implies all the character. Psalm 22:22, listen to this, it's a prefacy of the Messiah and it says this, here's the words of Messiah centuries before He was born: "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren." And what did Jesus do? He came into the world a Jew and He declared God's name unto the brethren. And what does it mean when it says He declared His name? It means He opened up to men the entire character of God. Did He not manifest God's character? He said to Philip, "Philip, have you been with Me so long and you don't know who I am? If you have seen Me ... what? ... you've seen the Father." He came to manifest God. And when it says "I will declare His name," ohh, it means a lot more than He just gave the title. So, He rightly says -- I have manifested Your name.

Oh listen, every attribute of God was on display in Jesus, wasn't it? Boy, there's a Bible study for you. Just get a list' of all the attributes of God out of the Old Testament and go back over that list and mark every New Testament passage where every one of those attributes is on display ... every attribute of God was displayed in Jesus Christ ... every one of them. Most of them all together displayed on the cross. You want to know what God's like? Who do you look at? Jesus Christ. So, He said -- I have manifested Thy name. Isn't that a beautiful insight into His work?

Let me give you a second thought here. The name of God was so sacred that no Jew would ever say it. In fact, it was so sacred that they tried to make up a word to substitute for it and they did. They took ... for example, the word for God's name is the verb to be, "I am that I am," remember that's God's name in the Old Testament? I am that I am, see. But the Jew didn't want to say that...no mortal lips could ever say God's name which in the Hebrew is yahweh... yahweh. They wouldn't say it. Only the high priest on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement could say it, and no other time by no other person ... too sacred. But they had to refer to God and they didn't want to say: "Dear you know, so they decided -- We'll make up a name. So they took the consonants, the consonants out of Yahweh, YHWH, or JHWH, Hebrew, either way, and they took the vowels out of Adoniwhich is a word that means Lord and they stuck the vowels out of adoniinto the consonants of yahwehand they came up with Yahhovawor Jehovah. So in your Bible when you read Jehovah, that's a non-word that has been placed there so that Jews will not have to say the name of God, too sacred to be spoken. But you want to know something wonderful? You know what I can say? I can say God. I can say Yahweh. I can say Jehovah. I can say Abba Father. I can say anything I want. You know why? Because Jesus came to declare and manifest ... what? ... His name. And I don't go to God in any kind of fear and I don't have to go as the high priest, once a year, I can say God's name, it's on my lips continually because Jesus came to place the name of God on human lips, did He not? And when I go to prayer, I talk to God as my intimate Father, I don't go into His presence wit: any fear, I don't go in His presence with any reservations, I go into His presence and I say -- Abba Father -- which in English is "Daddy," Daddy ... intimate ... intimate.

Yes, Jesus said, I came to declare the name of God. And He did. He showed us God's character and He brought men so near to God that they could speak to God in intimacy ... as a loving Father.

All right, that's just a footnote. Now I'll get to the message. Verse 6, 7 and 8 deal with the subjects of His prayer. Now I want you to watch this. Now Jesus is about to put His beloved on divine welfare, you see. He is committing them into the Father's unlimited grace, right? Where no strings are attached, see ... just complete welfare ... that's all it is. Now before He does this and He doesn't really get to the requests way on down till verses ... well, 12 or 13 or so ... before He does this, He gives their credentials as to why they deserve divine welfare. You know, if you go to get welfare today, you've to to ... you've to fill out all this ... I don't know, you know, I'm not on welfare, but I understand about this, see ... I'm on divine welfare and it's glorious. But anyway, if you go down and get welfare, I understand, you've got to fill all kinds of things and you've got to prove this and prove that and verify this and verify that and so forth and so on so you qualify for welfare. So, you know what Jesus is doing here? He gives the two great qualifications for welfare ... divine welfare. And they are beautiful. And these are the validating credentials for the Father's care for His disciples and He tells Him, -- Father, there are two reasons that You should care for these:

Reason number one is in verse 6: "I have manifested Thy name unto the men," watch this one, "whom Thou gavest Me out of theworld." Now watch the next three words, "... Thine they ... what? ... were." Why should they be on divine welfare? Well, who do they belong to? They're Your's, Father. This isn't even welfare. This is just taken care of Your own kids. They belong to You. Thine they were **,** watch it there, and Thou gavest them to Me. Father, they have a right to Your care because they've belonged to You since before... what? ... the foundation of the world.

You see, Jesus is praying and saying -- They have a right to Your care because they ... they're Your's, You chose them to be the objects of Your grace. And so, He's only asking the Father to to what He's already designed to do. Right? Jesus always prays so good, Jesus always prays consistent with the known plan of God ... Right? Always ... always! He says -- Father, now these are Your's, You chose them, elect before the foundation of the world,' You predetermined to love them. They ... they're the ones that belong to You. You chose to pour Your grace out. Now all I'm doing is saying -- Father, go ahead and do it ... do what You designed to do.

Now, that's how Jesus intercedes for you and me. Have you ever thought about that? He looks down at us and He says -- You know those down there, Father? They need Your welfare, they need Your grace. And after all, Father, they deserve it not because of their own polished holy character but because they're Your's, You chose them. And so, that's the first credential.

Notice in verse 6 that it says: "... whom Thou gavest Me out of the world." Anybody who is not a Christian is in the world, in the system. And by the word "world" John uses it in the sense of a system,

Satan's evil, godless, anti-Christ system. And the unsaved man is a part of the system. And when you're saved ... of course, born into the system, when you're saved you're re-born and you no longer live in the world, our citizenship is where? In heaven. You say -- I'm a Christian; I'm a citizen of heaven? Yeah. You say Well, I'm in the earth. That's all right. You're just a visitor. You're a citizen of heaven. Our warfare is in the heavenlies, all we possess is in the heavenlies, we live in the heavenlies. As I've said so many times, we just dangle our feet in this world, but we don't belong here. We have been taken out of the world and we exist in a new kind of existence, remember that? Eternal life? Breathing anew kind of air, walking a new kind of walk, living in the heavenlies.

We have been taken out of the world. You say -- You mean every Christian's overcome the world? Absolutely! Absolutely!

You say -- Well, I have a lot of trouble with the world; it really tempts me and messes me up. That's your own problem. The world has no power over you except that which you give it. You've been taken out of the system. Listen to this, I John 5:4, "For whatever," got that one? "For whatever is born of God overcometh the world." Pretty simple, right? You don't have a lot of problem understanding that statement. Listen, "And this is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." Have you been saved? Whhiiist You've overcome the world. That's right. Now if you choose to go around hanky-pank with the world, it's not that you have to, it's that you ... what? ... you want to.

All right, so He says -- Father, You took them out of the world and, watch this one, verse 6: "Thine they were and Thou gavest them to Me." Now we've seen this many times, haven't we? John just kind of relishes in this, all the way through this gospel, so many of these thoughts are repeated. But here He reminds us and reminds the Father that every believer is a love gift from the Father to the Son. Remember that thought? That is a fabulous thought. Every Christian is a love gift from the Father given to the Son. Father, You gave them to Me. Why, Jesus Himself said -- "No man cometh unto Me except the Father do ... what? ... draws him."

In John chapter 6 verse 37, verse 39, verse 44, in those three verses Jesus talks about every believer being a love gift from the Father. He says, "All that the Father gives Me shall ... what? ... come to Me. Him that cometh to Me, I'll in no wise cast out." And He says -- I'll lose none of them, but I'll raise them all at the last day. When the Father gives you as a love gift to the Son, it's an eternal gift. He takes no gifts back. And so, we see then that Jesus is praying for those who have been given to Him by the Father and so they have a right to the Father's care, after all, the Father chose them before the foundation of the world, chose to pour His grace on them, gave them to the Son as a love gift, certainly the Father's responsible to care for them. So, He's merely reminding the Father of His own predetermined plan to bestow His grace upon a certain group and He's saying -- This is that group.

True believers, then, are chosen out of the world to belong to the Father. And oh, we do belong. In John 10 Jesus is talking about His sheep and He says, verse 27: "My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me," listen to this, "and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Why? "My Father who gave them to Me is greater than all, and no man's able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." Once you become a believer, the Father gives you as a love gift to Jesus, nobody but nobody will ever take you out of His hand. It can't happen. And so, the Father, then, gives love gifts to the Son.

And the first credential, then, that gives them a right to divine welfare is that they are already by decree ... watch it ... by decree before the world began, they are already determined to be the objects of the Father's care. And so Jesus is just saying -- Do it, Father.

All right, there's a second thing, and this is the other side of salvation, the balance, very, very important. The second credential that puts them in a position to be recipients of divine welfare is in verse 6 at the very end, and then 7 and 8. Verse 6, the very bottom: "... and they have ... what? ... kept Thy word." Now don't you see that's the human side? On one hand He says -- They're elect by God, chosen, the ones You decided to bless. On the other hand, they have kept Thy word. Salvation involves the choice of God and the obedience of man, doesn't it? Sure it does. You see, this is the human side. It says in verse 6, "They have kept Thy word." What is that? That's just a way of expressing saving faith, that's all. They have kept means obeyed; they have obeyed Thy rhma utterances. They have obeyed what You said through Me. And you know, that's what separated the men from the boys in terms of discipleship. Jesus went into Galilee, for example, and He started healing people and He started feeding the multitudes and they loved it. Oh, boy, you know, free food, see. Get healing over there, that Jesus is something. Let's get Him a crown and make Him king.

Great popularity. All of a sudden, He said -- Now I want to talk to you about sin. And whew, they were gone ... like a vacuum, you know? They were gone. And He started talking about judgment. He started talking about other things and one by one, whew, whew, whew, they left. It says in John chapter 6 they turned around and didn't follow Him anymore.

You see, they could take His person up to a point, but just couldn't take what He said, see. When He started talking about sin, repentance and saying He was God and all of that, they couldn't hack that. And so, Jesus says -- This is the real stuff, Father, because they have kept the things that I said which are Thy words, see. That's the proof of the pudding, friends, not what you think of Jesus, what you think of what Jesus said.

A lot of people think -- Oh Jesus, hmmp ... wonderful, see. Nice person, wonderful teacher, good thing. Naaa, no. No. It's obedience to the things that He said. That's the issue. That's the issue. And He amplifies this so graphically in verse 7 by saying what they believed. "Now they have known that all things whatever Thou hast given Me are of Thee." You see that? The first thing they knew was

everything He did; He did by the power and the will of God. That everything He had, all the things, that is truths, principles, spiritual principles, doctrines, whatever He gave them was from God. You see, they believed indeed that God was in Christ. You see that? That's the only way to be saved. First John 4 says: "If a spirit comes along and doesn't confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, he is not of God." Ah, you have so much of this liberal garbage today about people talking about Jesus as a good teacher and Jesus as a revolutionary and Jesus as a highly elevated man and Jesus as an intellectual. If you come along with anything less than that Jesus Christ is God in a human body, God in human flesh, it's a lie right out of the pit ... plain and simple ... not of God. But these were true disciples.

How do we know their faith was real? How do we know? Verse 7, "Because they agreed that everything Jesus said came from God," they saw Him as God in human flesh. Look at verse 8: "For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me." And what did they do with them? "They have ... what? ... received them." Oh listen, my friends, it's not enough to be enamored with the person of Jesus, it's not enough to think religious thoughts, the only way a man ever comes to God, the only way a man ever knows God, the only way a man is ever put on divine welfare, the only way a man will ever be blessed by God, the only way a man will ever inherit eternal life, the only way he'll ever spend eternity in a glorious heaven in a place prepared by the Father in the Father's own house, is when he agrees that Jesus is God in human flesh and everything He said, He said right out of the mind of God. It has to be that way. And my friends, Peter said it right, "Neither is there salvation in any other." And so, we see that Jesus Christ accredits this little motley group of Galilean hicks and a few other more elevated individuals who belonged to that little band, He gives them the right to all of the care of the universe God by saying these are the ones who believe that I have come from You.

And then in verse 8 it says this: "... and have known surely ... "oh, I believe as Jesus said this, His heart must have been ... it just ... He must have been happy here because He had struggled with these guys so long, way back He'd say -- I am doing what the Father says, I only do what the Father says, I come from God. And they were sort of going -- Ohhhh. And they did that for a long, long time. And it just didn't get through. Finally, in chapter 16 and verse 30, Wow!, what a tremendous ... and personally I believe this is where full saving faith came to the Apostles, that's just personal, I don't have any real good exegetical reasons for believing it, I just believe it. But I'm entitled to that once in a while.

Verse 30 says this: "Now," and I think the word "now" may be chronological, "Now are we sure that Thou knowest all things," this is the disciples talking to Jesus, "and needest not that any manshould ask Thee: Oh by this we believe that Thou camest forth ... where ... from God." Now, we got it, Lord, we got it, see. And so, now it's in chapter 17 that Jesus prays and says -- Father, they got it ... see. All this time, see, and it's there. Father, in verse 8 He says, they have known surely, finally, they thought so but they were really kind of foggy, but now we know and are sure, you know, see. They have known surely that I came out from Thee. That's origin. And that th ... and they have believed that

Thou did send Me ... that's commission. His origin -- from God. His commission -- sent by God. You see? Make that distinction in that verse between those two phrases. Father, they know at last, they're sure about it, they're sure. Oh, I just think His heart was full of joy ... even though He knew in a little while they were going to scatter, He knew that at that moment they believed and that faith would stand them true even though it would wane, it would be secured in the resurrection. They had believed in Jesus from the start. They had loved Him from the first time they had been with Him. But just now they began to be sure that He was God manifest. And Jesus was thrilled in His heart. And so He says -- Father, these are the guys I'm going to pray for and they deserve Your care because after all, You predetermined to love this group, Your ... Your own choice secured them. You gave them to Me as Your love gift. And not only that, Father, they've come across, they're for real ... I mean, we've been through it, we've been through it. Had they been through it? Oh, it started out so rosy, but it didn't stay rosy. Persecution, hatred, the mockery, being ostracized from their society, thrown out of the synagogue, but they stuck it out. Jesus said -- I'm going to go to Jerusalem and Thomas said -- Well, okay, You're going to go, let's all go and die with You. See. I mean, they were going all the way ... all the way. And they stuck it out and it hurt ... but they stuck it out ... they were for real; you see ... they were for real.

And so, Jesus says -- These are the ones I'm praying for. They're the ones who are for real. You want to know something? Let me just add this footnote. And I've said it before but I'm going to say it again. The real proof of discipleship, now watch this one, is continued obedience. There seems to be a problem with so many people. People say -- Well, I know so-and-so, and they came to church and they talked about the Lord and they were supposedly Christians and this, and all of a sudden -- whist -- they were gone, you know. And that happens, it does, frequently. In college, I played football, and the guy who played the opposite running back to me for three seasons ... well, yeah ... three seasons, two seasons, I'm sorry. Always claimed to be a Christian. In fact, he worked in a church in a staff capacity, some of the time in college. Well, he was a teacher at Long Beach State, abouta year ago; some of you may have read in the papers, he decided to have a nude display in his class. Put on a big nude display and had a whole bunch of nude people standing up in front and was carrying on in a ... in really a horrible kind of a fashion for a professor. And it wasn't long after that until he ... he'd already been involved in dope but he blew the whole scene. That was a swan song, and now he's a complete addict, completely wiped out, a disaster. He has PhD. from Edinborough and as I say, I knew him for years and years growing up and played ball with him for two seasons, always claimed to be a Christian. People say to me -- What happened? I say simply this -- Jesus said, -- Father, these are real because they have kept ... what? ... Thy word. True disciples, friends, are there when it starts and they're still there when it's over.

First John 2:19, circle it, underline it, memorize it, "They went out from us that it might be manifest that they ... what? ... they were not of us. If they had been of us they would have continued with us." John 14:15: "If you love Me, you will keep My ... what? ... commandments." Jesus says -- Father, these are the for-reals'. They've stuck it out. They've kept Your word.

And so, Jesus Christ prays for this group. And the two things that give them credential to be blessed by God: God's own choice and their own faith.

You know, have you ever thought about what a wonderful thing that is? Have you ever just thought how Jesus prays for you like this? Can't you? I can just see that God there and Christ saying to Him -- You know, MacArthur down there in Panorama City, Father, he's got a lot of problems. But you know, Father, You chose him...

And I've often thought about that ... wondered if God didn't say Yeah, I know. See...

Now, Father, You chose him before the foundation of the world. And You chose him to be blessed. Besides that, Father, his faith is genuine and he really loves You.

And you see, it's on those two bases that Jesus Christ pleads on my behalf. Boy, is that humbling? Well, every time I think about that I just get ... oh, you know, but I don'tdeserve it ... and my sins get bigger and bigger, you know. And I just say -- Hallelujah for grace, you know ... 'cause I am what I am by ... what? ... by the grace of God.

All right, so then we see that Jesus gives credentials before He prays. Oh, I like that. Well, let's look, just briefly, at the reason for His prayer. I wanted to share this with you this morning and then we'll close, just brief. The reason for His prayer. And this ties together exactly with what we just ended up with and this is wonderful, two verses, 9 and 10.

Verse 9: "I pray for them, I pray not for the world but for them whom Thou hast given Me." That's a very shocking statement. I pray not for the world, I pray for them. Did you ever think about that? Jesus says -- Father, I'm not praying for the world. I am not praying for the system or the people in it. I ... I'm just praying for this special little group ... the elect and the obedient, not the hating world.

And I began to think about that and I began to wonder -- Well, now wait a minute ... does Jesus pray for the unsaved? The Bible doesn't say. Well, is there ever an illustration anywhere of Jesus praying for someone who ... who didn't love Him? Yes. One, and that's all. And it's recorded for us; you don't need to look it up, Luke 23:34 and it says this, are you ready for this? He's hanging on the cross, He looks out and He says -- Father ... what? ... forgive them, for they know not what they do. That's the only time really that you ever see Jesus pray for an unbeliever. Oh, other times He redeemed them out of unbelief. But praying for them as unbelievers -- that's the only time. And as much as anything, that becomes an illustration to us of what Jesus said in Matthew 5 when He said pray for your enemies for those that hate you and despitefully use you.Ah ... see, I Timothy, I think it's 2:1 where Paul says pray for all men. Now this chapter, friends, and know this, is not to say that Jesus doesn't care about the unsaved ... don't say that. Why, if He didn't care about the unsaved, He wouldn't have

cared about us. We were unsaved. Why Peter says -- God is not willing that any should perish but all should come to repentance. It's not that Jesus Christ doesn't care; it's that the only prayer that Jesus can ever pray, if indeed He does pray, for an unbeliever is that an unbeliever stop being an unbeliever. But He cannot pray in any kind of an intercessory way for the Father to bless an unbeliever, you see, here is intercession. He ever lives to make intercession for us, not unbelievers. If you don't know Jesus Christ as your Savior, God is not concerned with blessing you. You're not the object of His blessing. Christ does not intercede on your behalf. He intercedes for those that are His. You see, that's why He says -- I don't intercede for the world ... I don't do it. They are not objects of the Father's blessing. Jesus carries on no intercessory work.

Now, of course, the rain falls on the just and the unjust and God, in a sense, secondarily and non-directly blesses all men, but in terms of that special ministry that Jesus carries on where He asks the Father to abundantly bless and enrich, that is only in the behalf of those that love Christ ... and belong to God. And so, when Jesus says -- I pray not for the world - He doesn't mean that He's not concerned that unsaved people know Him, not at all. He is concerned. And indirectly, watch this, oh, this is good ... you'll like this ... indirectly when Jesus prays for us the indirect result is that the world is going to get saved. Did you get that? Look at verse 21 and I'll show it to you. Look at verse 21. "Father, I'm praying that they all may be one." Oh, I want all Christians to be one. "As Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." Why? "That the world may believe." Do you hear it? Do you hear it? Even though in His intercessory work He doesn't pray directly for the world, in His heart and indirectly His desire is that the world may believe. And though His intercessory work is not carried on in the behalf of unbelievers, it's carried on in the behalf of believers who in turn, by their unity, radiate the person of Christ and the glory of God to the world and the world then believes. And I've said many times, you want to know why the world doesn't believe? Check Christian unity again. And we'll get to that in future sermons.

And so, the emphasis here is not a complete exclusion but simply a strong emphasis that on intercession, it's for the saints. And then He gives the two reasons why He intercedes for us, two reasons. Number one, we are His personal possession ... verse 9: "I pray for them, I pray not for the world but for them that Thou hast given Me," why? ... For they are Thine," watch verse 10, "And all Mine are Thine and Thine are Mine." Stop right there.

He says -- I'm praying for them because they're our's, Father ... they're our's to care for. Do you know why Jesus intercedes for you? Because you belong to Him. Is that exciting? We are God's personal possession. I belong to the trinity and so do you. Oh, that's exciting. And you know, the world looks at that motley little group of disciples and all those few little Christians and they thought they were the least of all things, they saw nothing about them to mark them, they saw nothing to make them appear eminent in any way, but they were wrong, like they're always wrong. That little motley group just so happened to be the personal treasure of the eternal God ... see. Praise the Lord. When I sing as we did earlier, "I am His and He is mine," when I sing, "Now I belong to Jesus," when I sing, "I belong to

the King," when I sing, "Jesus, lover of my soul," when I sing any of that stuff I am right on. I do. And you know, it's so ridiculous for Christians to worry and to fret. Look whose caring for You. Look whose the Shepherd and caretaker of your soul. All who are Christ's belong to God, as personal possessions. You want to know the reason, then, that He prays for us? We're His ... we belong to Him.

The Bible says -- What? Know ye not that your body's a temple of the Holy Spirit which you have of God and ye are not ... what? ... your own. For you're bought with a price.

What was the price that bought you? The cross and the blood of Christ. Peter says -- We were redeemed, not with corruptible things like silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. We've been purchased who belong to God.

And so, Jesus prays -- Father, bless them because they're our's. They're our charge, our responsibility. Second thing and last thing, second reason He prays for them, this is great ... verse 10, the end of the verse: 11 ... and I am glorified in them." Verse 11, "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world and I come to Thee..." stop right there. Oh, did you get the point of that? Father, bless them ... bless them...because I'm leaving and coming to You and if I am to be glorified anymore, I will be glorified ... what? ... in them. And so did Paul say -- Christ in you ... what? ... the hope of glory.

So, you see, Jesus says the second reason, Father, You've got to take care of them is because I'm going to pack up and come to be with You and if I am to be glorified, it will be in them.

Listen, my friend, my beloved Christian friend, God wants to care for you because He wants the Son glorified in and through you. Jesus says, in effect, -- I'm leaving, the glory display that I have given in this human body is over, but these remain, Father, to display My glory. If the world is to see the glory of God, they're going to see it in us, aren't they? And thus does the Bible say, the words "Whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, of the Apostle Paul, most simple, mundane ritualistic thing, do it all ... what? ... to the glory of God, that Christ may be glorified in your body whether by life or by death." The glory of God was revealed in a body -- Jesus Christ -- and is now revealed in what we call "body-two" the believers.

So, Jesus says -- Father, there are some reasons, there are some reasons to bless them ... they're our's, plus they're the vehicle for glory and the world must see it. So we see, as we begun this morning, the intercessory work of Christ as He prays for His beloved. My friends, let me close with this. God cares about you, if you're a Christian, do you know ... just believe that. We say -- Oh, I believe it. And then we get a problem and we fall apart. Believe it, God cares. Christ cares. There's nothing too difficult for Him to care for. There's no problem that You can't have total victory in His strength. He is a loving Father who not only loves, but has the power forany problem.

Did you read last week in the paper about that most tragic thing, the fire in the house and the father, four children? And he saw the fire and it was moving fast and he thought the only thing he could do would be get out of the house and get a hose, hook it up and get water and put it on the fire. And so, he ran out and by the time he'd connected the hose, turned it on, got back to the front door, the heat and the flames were there and he couldn't get in. And his children were all trapped in their rooms. And so, he began to work his way around the house in only the terror and the fear and the horror that a father would feel, and I can feel this, so can you if you're fathers and mothers, too. And in every case, he would smash the windows with his bare arms to try to reach the children, but the heat would throw him back and the fire. And he went from room to room and he was unable to get in and when it was all over with, he was completely shredded to the bone on both of his arms. And he stood on his front lawn and, in effect, watched his children burn to death. And I read two days later, in Portland Oregon that a father had the same thing happen, this time with seven children.

Now you know, this ... we see in that, even in that, I'm sure, those little children entering into the presence of God, you know, whereas maybe when they grew up they wouldn't know Him and God's saving grace for a child. But beyond that, I see in that a picture of love but I see a picture of love without power. Do you see? Frustrated love that can love but can't help. And then I see God and I see God who will time and time again has unbared His arm and, first of all, reached into the very flames of hell and snatched us as brands from the burning and who is a God not only of love but a God of power who can reach into any flame, into any fire and extricate His beloved. Now that's the God who cares for us. And that's the God to whom Jesus prays for you and for me in a continuous intercessory ministry ... even as He did for these beloved then. Let's pray.

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