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

Jesus Prays for Us, Part 2
Scripture: John 17:20-26
Code: 1569

John 17, verse 20 to 26. Beginning in verse 20, Jesus praying to the Father says: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on Me through their word, that they all may be one as Thou Father art in Me and I in Thee; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me, and the glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them that they may be one even as we are one. I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me. Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me, for Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world. 0 righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee and these have known that Thou hast sent Me. And I have declared unto them Thy name and will declare it; that the love with which Thou hast loved Me may be in them and I in them."

May God bless this to our hearts.

Turn in your Bibles to the seventeenth chapter of John. We're going to conclude, this morning, the seventeenth chapter and also conclude our message on the last section, verses 20 to 26, entitled "Jesus Prays for Us." And continuing in our series in John, we have found ourselves now at the end of the seventeenth chapter and beginning next week, we will pursue the events of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But this is the conclusion of His talks with the disciples and His prayer to the Father in preparation for the cross which section really began with chapter 13.

During his last illness, John Knox, the great preacher, desired to listen every day to the reading of three chapters: one from Ephesians, one -- the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and John 17. On the last day of his life, Monday, November 24, 1572, he called his wife to his bedside and at his request she read to him the last words that great man of God ever heard before he entered the presence of his Lord and it was the seventeenth chapter of John. A chapter of tremendous hope, promise, comfort and love. And we have been seeing so many blessings and so many riches in this chapter that it's hard to even begin to ... to tap them, let alone to think you've gotten them all.

We find in the seventeenth chapter, the overwhelming love of Jesus Christ for His own. And we have been basking in that love now for several weeks. Now in this high priestly prayer in which Jesus prays to God the Father just prior to His crucifixion, He prays in three distinct areas. And I want you to watch as I say this because it links the prayer together. Many say that the prayer is disconnected. It is

not disconnected. I read some commentators that said that there are parts that have no relation to other Darts. That is not true at all. It is a beautiful flow, vitally connected in every part. And in the first five verses, Jesus prays for Himself because what He does is necessary for the salvation of His own. Then in verses 6 to 19 He prays for His own, the living disciples at that time, because what they do is necessary for the salvation of all believers who will to come ... who will born in years to come. Then in verses 20 to 26 He prays for all future Christians for what they do will be necessary for the salvation of the unbelievers in the world. And so it is a great chain, beginning with Himself and ending with the salvation of lost men ... a chain which winds through Him, through the early disciples and through us to those who don't know Jesus Christ. And Jesus says -- "I do not pray for the world," in verse 9 and yet indirectly by praying for the believers He is praying that the believers' testimony will radiate to the world to the end that souls will be won to Him.

And so, Jesus prays in chapter 17 to the Father for His own directly and for the world only in an indirect sense. And we learn that the real concern of the loving heart of Jesus Christ is the believers of all ages. It is for us that He prays here; for our comfort, for our care, for our blessing, for our benefit and then indirectly for what will result from that, that men and women in the world will come to Christ.

Now, we began our message last time, and I want to review for a minute and then we're going to get into some fantastically exciting truths as we pick up where we left off last time. Now in the closing section, verses 20 to 26, there are three features which Jesus presents in His prayer.

Number one -- the subjects of His prayer ... Number two -- the requests that He makes in His prayer ... Number three -- the confidence in His prayer. The subjects of His prayer, first of all, are indicated in verse 20. For whom is He praying? Verse 20 says: "Neither pray I for these alone." That is for the living disciples and the eleven Apostles particularly who are right there with Him. I'm not only praying for them, but -- verse 20 -- for them also who shall believe on Me through their word. He is not only praying for those who were believing then, but for all those who would through the ages believe in Christ through the word that those Apostles and early disciples would both speak and write in the New Testament. Now we went into all of this in detail last time.

But notice that all through the chapter Jesus prays for those who believe. The whole of Christianity is based on faith. Christianity is not a ritual or a routine or some kind of a cycle that you go through, it is not a lot of liturgy, a lot of this and a lot of that, it is a faith relationship ... believing in God, believing in Jesus Christ is what Christianity is all about. Going to church doesn't make you a Christian, being religious doesn't make you a Christian, owning a Bible doesn't make you a Christian, living in America a block from a church doesn't make you a Christian, your mother and father being a Christian doesn't make you a Christian ... the whole thing is a matter of an individual believing in Christ. And when it says in verse 20: "Who shall believe on Me," in that word "Me" is everything that Jesus claimed to be and everything that He said ... believing in the total content of Christ. The only way a man ever enters into a right relationship with God is by believing in Christ. I don't care if he goes to church or does this

or does that or has religious feelings, it's only through believing in Christ, accepting His person, His work and everything He said as fact revelation direct from God. Good works, church membership and anything else have absolutely nothing to do with it.

Now pardon for sin, for example, comes by believing. The Bible says that man is a sinner and consequently will pay the penalty, but Christ comes along and pardons His sin by dying on the cross and bearing the penalty Himself. How do you gain this pardon? You gain this pardon by doing something? No. Acts 10:43 says: "Through His name whosoever believeth on Him shall receive remission of sin." Pardon comesby believing.

The Bible also talks about the fact that a man can be made just before God. You're dragged into the court of God, God says you're a sinner, you're a sinner, you're a sinner every way you look at it you're a sinner, every way you slice it, it comes out sin, from the beginning to the end of your life you're a sinner. How in the world are you ever going to enter into His presence? Well, God has the right to declare you righteous by virtue of what Jesus did for you. But in order to receive that righteousness and be declared just, Acts 13:39 says: "By Him all that believe are righteous." It is by doing what that we receive righteousness? By believing. You don't earn it.

The Bible talks about the fact that God wants to make men His children, that He wants to make us sons of God, adopting us into His family. How do you ever get to be adopted into God's family? How do you become a child of God? John 1:12: "To as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to be called the sons of God, even to them that do what? ... believe on His name."

The Bible talks about spiritual light that is available. How do you get spiritual light to understand spiritual truth? Jesus said: "Whosoever believeth in Me shall not walk in ... what? ... darkness." Believing.

The Bible says that God has made available to men peace and joy. How do you get it? Romans 15:13: "Now the God of hope fill you with all peace and joy in believing." It's there all the way through the New Testament. Salvation is a matter of believing.

And so, Jesus is praying for those who will believe. He is not just praying for the organized church because within the organized church there are a whole lot of those who aren't believing. And by believing we mean committing themselves to that belief. In fact, in John 30 ... 20:31, the key to the whole Bible for example, particularly the gospel of John, but the key to the whole thing is this: "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing you might have life through His name." The whole of the Bible is to show you that the route to God is not a route of good deeds, good works but faith, believing. And just that for a kind of a refresher on the importance of faith.

Now, you'll notice at the end of verse 20 that those who believe will believe through their word, through Apostolic testimony we came to Christ. Because the apostolic testimony is recorded in the New Testament. And all throughout the centuries since that time, those who have come to Christ have come to Christ because they have listened to and obeyed the gospel as recorded in the New Testament by the Holy Spirit through those early disciples and Apostles. So, when you and I believe, when all of us sheep yet unborn at the time Jesus prays were to come into the fold, it was because we believed the word spoken and written by those early disciples.

There's also a tremendous footnote to add here. If it is true that all who believe will believe through the apostolic word, then that proves the indestructibility of Scripture by the very words of Jesus. If Jesus is to say that all who believe will come through apostolic testimony, then He's also saying nothing will ever eliminate the Word of God. And all throughout history people have tried to destroy the Scripture, but it couldn't be done. It is totally indestructible, it has to be, because it is the everlasting, at least in terms of time, agent of salvation.

So, the subjects then for whom He prays are true believers ... who shall believe through the testimony of the gospel recorded in the New Testament by the Apostles and early disciples.

Secondly, we see the requests and we're still reviewing a little bit. For what does Jesus pray in regard to these who shall believe? Well, He only makes two requests: one of them has to do with the world here and one of them has to do with the world up there. So, in terms of our life here He only prays for one thing, we went into this in great detail last time, I'll just remind you what it is. He prays for oneness. The only request that really refers to our life on earth, verse 21: "That they all may be one as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." He prays for oneness. He prays that there may be a spiritual, holy, loving oneness, a visible oneness that the world can see in order that they may believe. Real evangelism begins with oneness. I'm to speak tomorrow night to a large association of churches in a particular area. They've asked me to speak on the methods of evangelism. Well, they don't know it but they're going to get a message on the oneness of the body ... 'cause that is evangelism ... in its purest form; unity, the testimony of oneness. And so, Jesus prays that they may be one that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.

You see, my friends, the world has no really valid way of evaluating Christianity unless it's through our experiential testimony. Very simply I mean this, the world cannot evaluate Christianity on the basis of doctrine because they don't understand doctrine, right? The natural man understandeth not the things of God; they don't even make sense to him. He can't figure them out because they're taught by the Spirit of God. He's ... He's a total idiot in terms of discerning spiritual doctrine. So, consequently the natural man looking at Christianity cannot evaluate us on the basis of our doctrine. He has no capacity. He ... in fact, most people have given up the possibility of truth even existing, and they fall

into a kind of gray do-what-you want, do-your-own-thing, nothing-matters-anyway attitude.

Now, if the natural man cannot evaluate our accuracy in Christianity and evaluate the power of Christianity and cannot really discern the person of Jesus Christ and all that He can do in a life through our doctrine, there's only one other way they can do it and that's through the testimony of our oneness. Now we'll say more about that in a minute. Now in order to make sure we could be one, verse 22 tells us that Jesus Christ said: "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them that they may be one even as we are one."

Now, when we talk about the glory of God, we mean the life and the essence and the nature andthe attributes of God are planted within US. That doesn't make us God, that just means God in a sense resides within us, doesn't He? As Christ was God manifest in the flesh, so are we Christ manifest to the world. His glory is in us. Now, the reason, watch this, the reason God placed His glory in all of us was to give us a common nature, right? Christians all possess the indwelling Spirit, we all possess the glory, consequently we are all one in that positional sense, right? That then becomes the basis of our life pattern. If all of the essence of our life, if we are partakers of the divine nature and our life basic is the same then our patterns should be somewhat similar, shouldn't they? In other words, experiential or practical oneness is possible because of common glory, because of the common life of God that we have. If we did not have that common life, if every Christian was a different little deal all on his own, we would never get together ... even worse than we don't get together now. But Christ planted within us all common glory so that the same Spirit baptizes us into the same body and we have the same indwelling Spirit. We are one positionally. That common glory made us one, verse 22 says. Christ gave it to us to make us one. Now, we ought to start acting like it so that the commonness is visible to the world. If we are all like God then we should be like each other. The Dower and the potential for oneness is there, it's all there, you see, for a wholly, loving oneness, it's all present. There is no basic reason in terms of our nature as Christians for division within the body, there is none. Consequently, all division that comes is contrary to the Christian's new nature. All division that comes is then classified in I Corinthians 3 as the mark not of spirituality but of ... what? ... carnality because if we all have commonness at the point of existence in the new nature, in the indwelling Spirit, common glory then the only excuse for division would be sinfulness violating the principle of the new nature. And that's why Paul hammers on it so hard and calls it carnality. Division is always carnality. Whenever there is division, strife, envy, it is not of the Spirit; it cannot be because that is not what God designed us to be. He designed us to be one.

Now, the point here is there's a reason for this and the reason came up, we studied it last week, just reviewing a minute, at the end of verse 21: "... that the world may believe." At the end of verse 23, same thing, "...that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me and hast loved Me ... loved them as Thou has loved Die." The world will never know God, Christ, God's redemptive act and God's love in the fullest sense unless they see it in our oneness, right? In order that the world may know, He says -- I've made you one, now be one in order that the world may know and believe all these things. Oh,

oneness is powerful. Heine, the German philosopher said to the Christians: "You show me your redeemed lives and I'll be inclined to believe in your Redeemer." He was right.

Now, I want to show you a startling truth. This is a very, very shocking position that you and I as Christians are in because our division, if there be division, is of real curse on our evangelism. For example, let's say that you and I are not one. If we are not one in a holy, loving oneness, and I don't mean an ecclesiastical oneness or a denominational oneness or any kind of a superficial organizational structure at all, I mean oneness of heart in a holiness and a love that is divine. If we are not one, if we do not exist as one, then the world has been given the right by God to determine two things. And here they are: if you and I don't live together as one, number one, the world can look at you and say -- You are not a Christian. Right? Sure. They're not about to evaluate us on our doctrine, they don't understand doctrine. But if they hear that Jesus preaches love and they watch you and you don't live it then they're going to say -- You are not a follower of Jesus. And God gave them the right to say that because it says right here in our text that we are to be one that the world may believe that we really belong to Him.

Why in John 13, Jesus said: "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples if you have ... what? ... love one for another." And if you don't, since Jesus is always associated with love, they're going to knock right ... knock your door right down and say -- Hey friend, don't claim to be a follower of Jesus, you're not. Visible oneness is our testimony. And number one, the world has the right to say You're not a Christian if you don't manifest it.

Number two, the world may say you are a Christian, but they'll follow it up by this -- Christianity is meaningless. You see, the world can judge two things if you're not one and I'm not one, if we're not one in the body, the world can judge two things -- number one, we're not followers of Jesus at all**;** number two, being a follower of Jesus is meaningless. Right? Meaningless.

Jesus said you must be one or the world will either say you're not a Christian or being a Christian -- and this is even worse -- is meaningless ... and proves nothing about God at all. The church ... in the church, now we judge men on the basis of doctrine, don't we? Within the church, within Grace Community Church or any other church, you have Christians who don't get together, they don't agree on everything. Now if we have a particular issue in a church we may go to a guy and say -- You know, you're an unloving person and you've got a real problem. You're manifesting carnality, or whatever it is, and you say to the person -- Now you need to get your life straightened out. And you might even doubt in your mind whether they are saved, right? So you may say to the individual -- Do you really know Christ? And the guy will say -- I know Christ and received Him on November 18, 1952, I was saved at a meeting, went forth and I believe in Jesus Christ and I know I'm a Christian, I know I'm born again, I'm going to heaven when I die. Okay, you don't have a doctrinal problem, fella, but you certainly have a manifestation problem.

Now, in the church we can evaluate the man on the basis of his doctrine, can't we? When somebody comes and wants to be a part of our fellowship, we are more concerned with what his content is, that means he's either in or out, he's really there, he knows the Word of God, he understands the gospel and he believes it -- content. We're not going to judge every Christian on his pure love and pure holiness. I mean, we're ... we couldn't kick Christians out constantly because of this. We couldn't say -- Ah, you're not saved, get out, you know. They may be saved. They may be in the body. We judge on the basis of doctrine. But, as I said earlier, the world can't do that. They cannot do that.

Francis Schaeffer says: "We cannot expect the world to judge that way because the world cares nothing about doctrine." And he's right. They don't know any doctrine. So, the world will evaluate us, not on the basis of our doctrine but on the basis of our life pattern, do you see? This is our testimony. And while men don't believe in truth so well, they believe in love a lot and love has a tremendous testimony. And when the world sees our loving, holy kind of oneness, they will ask about our doctrine. And so, the Christian has a clear-cut task and it's a tremendous responsibility, it's a frightful responsibility. God has given the world the right to determine whether Christianity is valid or invalid on the basis of your oneness with other believers ... a shocking fact but it's true. And so, Jesus prays that we be one.

And understand, dear friends, the tremendous consequences of not being one. The world determines either you're not a Christian or worse yet, their ... the Christianity is meaningless.

All right, so that's terms of this life, and we went into that, we won't go any further. The second thing for which Jesus prays and this is fabulous, I mean, this just blows your mind, you can hardly handle this thought. He prays; watch this one, for our eternal fellowship. That's number two under this point on requests ... for our eternal fellowship. You say -- you mean that Jesus Christ wants to spend eternity with me? And it is hard to understand, isn't it? You mean He wants me around forever? I mean, that's love. And look at it in verse 24, one of the most thrilling statements that a Christian will ever read: "Father, I will," and the word "will" there is not a thin word, it's a deep rich word, it means "I have total pleasure in, I delight in my high desire is that they also whom Thou hast given me," that is all believers, watch this one, "be with Me where I am." Is that a fantastic prayer? You ... you know, that's my prayer, I'd like to be where He is. But do you know that's His prayer? He wants to be where I am. I want to be with Him, but He also wants to be with me. Oh, that ... that shakes me up. I don't understand. . .

You say -- Why would You want to be with me? It shames me, you know? There are times when I wish He wasn't around, frankly. I just ... sometimes I just am sorry because of my life. And so, Christ in His humiliation prays this fantastic prayer. To be with Christ eternally is my prayer, but for Him to be with me eternally is also His prayer. Oh, it's a humbling truth ... and yet what a promise it is.

Now, I want to show you how this works. Look at this verse again. "... that the world may kn ..." no, backing up, let's see, verse 24, yeah: "That they may be with Me where I am that they may behold My glory." Now, Jesus' desire is that we be with Him where He is to see His glory. Now wherever it is that He is, it's going to be where He displays His glory, right? So it's not just a prayer for this group of disciples to walk with Him down to the garden, you know. That's not it. Wherever it is it's going to be where His glory is on full display. So, it's going to have to be after His earthly life is over because when He came to earth; His glory was veiled, wasn't it? It was veiled. And Philippians 2 tells us that He humbled Himself, that He emptied Himself. That is, He set aside the free use of all of His attributes and restricted Himself to obedience to the Father's design and He came into earth with His ... with His glory veiled. Only one time did He unveil a little bit of His glory an the mount of transfiguration, remember, He pulled His flesh aside and they saw

His glory as transparent light. And the disciples had that privilege of seeing it, but the rest of the time on earth, His full glory never ever was displayed. Now the only time that a man, or the only way that a man could ever see His full glory is to see the post-resurrection exalted Christ at the right hand of the Father, that's where His glory is fully revealed.

And so, Jesus is saying I want them where I am to see My glory. That means, the believer must be in the presence of Christ when He is in full glory. That's Jesus prayer. Now I want to take this thing apart and show you some fantastic things.

First of all, just thefact that He says that they may be with Me where I am is fulfilled in a spiritual sense even in this life. Is Christ with you all the time? Why sure. Didn't He say: "I will never leave you or forsake you?" Didn't He say: "Lo, I am with you ... what? ... always?" Always. Is there anytime in the life of a Christian on earth when the ... when Christ is away from him? No. We always use that phrase, -- we got away from the Lord. No you didn't. You never got away from the Lord one inch. You lost the consciousness of His presence but you didn't get away from Him. You are hidden in His hand. You are hidden with Christ in God. You couldn't get away from Him. We say -- Oh, we drift from the Lord. No you don't. Your consciousness drifts from thoughts about Christ, you don't leave Him and He doesn't leave you. Jesus prayed that they may be with Me where I am, now that means right here on the world in a secondary sense, kind of a ... a pushing of the application a little bit, that Christ is even with us here, we never ha ... we never lose the presence of Christ ... ever, we lose the consciousness of it.

But here He's not talking about in this life, I mean that's fantastic enough. From the moment you're saved you have presence of Jesus Christ forever. What a fantastic promise. You say -- How could He stand to be in my company for so long? Well, you know, that's hard to understand and you grieve Him so much, but He never leaves ... never leaves.

All right, so Christ is here but what He's talking about here is being with Christ in glory. That is when Christ is in full glory after He's exalt ... been exalted at the right hand of the Father. Now, there are four aspects to this and I want to show you these and they're really wonderful. Our presence with Him encompasses four kinds of things or four areas.

First of all -- death. You don't ever really get to be with Jesus and see His full glory until you have the wonderful privilege of dying. And then when you get to die, you enter into His presence. And then for the first time you see His full glory. Let me show you what I mean. In Luke 23:43, I think it is, Jesus said to the thief on the cross: "This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." The key to that's not paradise, the key to that is "... with ... what? ... Me," see. That thief, from the moment that he received Jesus Christ, was to be with Jesus Christ. Now if it was in paradise, he was with Him in paradise. When a believer leaves this world he doesn't go into never-never land, doesn't go into nirvana. He doesn't go into soul sleep or any other deal. He goes from this conscious Presence of Jesus Christ to full conscious presence of Jesus Christ. There's never any gapor anything in the middle. Second Corinthians 5:7 and 8 lays it right down simply and clearly, it says this, verse 8: "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." And there's nothing in the middle. There's not a little time of nothingness there. Some have taught that when a Christian dies, he just dies and sleeps until the rapture. Don't you believe that? That is not true. In Philippian ... if it is, then poor Paul was really messed up ... Philippians 1:23, he liked the Philippians and he said it would be nice to come and see you guys but I've got another desire. Verse 23: "I am in a straight between two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better." Having a desire to depart and ... what? ... be with Christ. That's what happens when a believer dies ... instantly into the presence of the glorified Christ and beholds His full glory.

When Jesus prayed that it ... that we may be with Him where He is He was referring to dying and entering into the full presence of Jesus Christ. Tribulation saints -- those dear ones who are going to die during the tribulation, going to get slaughtered by the ... the beast for their faith in Christ -- what happens to them when they die? Do they hang around for a little while, till the end of the tribulation? No, not at all. Chapter 7 of Revelation verse 9 says: "And after this I beheld lo, a great multitude which no man could number of all nations, kindred's, peoples and tongues, stood before the throne and the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands." Now these are the tribulation saints. Verse 14 says they're the ones who come out of the great tribulation. And what are they singing? "They're crying with a loud voice saying, Salvation to our God who sits upon the throne and unto the Lamb." Yeah, but watch this, they enter immediately into the Lord's presence. You see, the tribulation begins in chapter 6 of Revelation. In chapter 7 you've already got these saints with Him. They go right away ... when they die.

Verse 16: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto

living fountains of waters and God shall wipe away all tears from their byes." Don't you see? Immediately when they died they went right straight into the presence of the Lamb who began to feed them, lead them, dry their tears ... personally ministering to them. They were with Christ. There is no reason to believe anywhere in Scripture that when some Christian dies he does not go immediately, instantaneously, without the loss of a second, into the presence of Jesus Christ.

But not only does death bring us into His presence, so will the rapture. Some of us won't die. I personally would prefer the rapture method. Right? But I'm not going to die ... if that's the Lord's design, if I happen to be in the rapture group. Those people won't die, they'll just leave, just bodily be transformed on the way up. But when they leave they will also go immediately into the presence of Jesus Christ.

You say -- Well, He must have other things to do. Well, and you know, leave our ... No, in some sense we'll be with with Him. You know, you start looking at heaven and all you ever see is Jesus Christ, everything centers around Him, He's the point of reference for all eternity. And any believer who is raptured will go into the presence of Christ. That's so clear. John 12:26, we saw it right in that verse: "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me and where I am there shall My servant be." We're going to be with Him. No question about it. John 14:3, remember that verse? "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself that where I am there ye may be also." That's the rapture. I'm going to come and get you, you're going to be with Me.

First Thessalonians 4, the Lord, the trumpet, the Lord descends, the dead in Christ rise first, we which are alive and remain gathered up to meet them in the clouds and so shall we ever be ... what? ... with the Lord. Conscious presence of Christ is never eliminated at any point in the Christian's experience for all eternity.

In II Thessalonians 2:1, I love this kind of little obscure verse, listen to this: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," listen to this, "and by our gathering together unto Him." Can't you see all the Christians -- whoosh -- just like that? Gathering to Christ.

First John 3:2 says, "When He shall appear, we shall be like Him for we shall ... what? ... see Him as He is when He shall appear." Whether you're talking about death or the rapture, the Christian goes immediately into the conscious presence of Jesus Christ. There's never any time lost.

Now, there's a third area, even in the kingdom. You say -- There's some who had the view that we go to heaven and then when Christ comes back to the kingdom we stay up there for a while. Not so. If Christ is coming back here, we're coming with Him because we're going to be with Him where He is, wherever it is. He didn't say in the prayer I want them to be with Me in heaven -- cause that wouldn't do. He's going to be back on the earth and He's also going to create a new heaven and a new earth. He just says - Father, I want them where I am -- and so we just go where He goes, see. And if it's the

kingdom, we'll be there.

In Matthew 26 verse 26 tells us: "And as they were eating Jesus took bread and blessed it and broke it and gave it to the disciples and said -- Take eat, this is My body. And He took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them saying -- Drink ye all of it for this is My blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." Till I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom. Jesus always promised presence whether in heaven, whether in the kingdom, whatever it was.

In Luke 22 verse 28: "Said to the disciples, Ye are they who have continued with Me in My trials and I appoint unto you a kingdom as My Father hath appointed unto Me that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom ..." See how personal? He didn't say -- I'm going to give you a table in the kingdom. You will eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom. Did you like that? Always personal presence. Jesus Christ is always the point of reference for the believer, all throughout the eons of the ages of eternity ... never changes.

In Colossians ... kind of lays the cap-stone on the deal ... in chapter 3 verse 4 it says this: "When Christ who is our life shall appear," when He comes for His kingdom, "then shall ye also appear," watch it, "with Him in glory." There's never any other designation for the Christian than with Him -- with Him -- with Him -- always, always, always. We reign with Him, Paul said to Timothy, II Timothy 2:12. So, whether you're talking about death, the rapture or the kingdom, with Him always, at His table in His kingdom, in His heaven, in His presence.

And then the eternal state is the fourth one. What about eternity, the new heavens and the new earth, are we still going to be with Him? That's right. Oh, there's all kinds of verses that talk about this, but one that I'll give you just quick is Revelation 21:3: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men." And certainly if you compare that with John 1 you find out who it was the tabernacle with men, it was Jesus Christ. "And He will dwell with them and they shall be His people and God Himself shall be with them and be their God." It goes on to talk about what God will do. The presence of God, God with us, Emmanuel. Who is Emmanuel? Jesus Christ. In the eternal state pictured in the new heaven and the new earth, we will be with Christ. And I've said before, you know, we had this idea about ... we have a lot of weird ideas about heaven that it's a whole lot of big streets and things and houses everywhere, mansions ... whoever got that word in there and messed up everybody's concept of heaven. I do not want a mansion ... you know ... I don't want 4 big mansion down the street and over ... I like the hilly section, you know, with a view thing, I don't want that kind of a mansion. That's no what the Bible says. The Bible says: "In My Father's house are many dwelling places." And they all are in the Father's house. You have a room in the Father's house. The focus is on Christ and you're with Him. Not eight blocks down and four blocks to the right ... you're with Him. That's the point. And it bothers me that people are constantly teaching

today that this idea of soul sleep because it's absolutely not taught in Scripture anywhere. Poor Stephen lying there beneath the rocks, you know, he didn't say -- Oh Lord, I'm glad this will be over cause I can go to sleep for a few thousand years. He said this, listen: "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God," Stephen calling upon God, "and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." He wasn't misguided. He knew where he was going ... immediately into the presence of Jesus Christ.

And so, Jesus prays that we'll be with Him where He is. And my friends, indeed we will be. I tell you, it's exciting to realize that you will be the constant companionof the glorified Jesus for all the eternal ages...fantastic. And remember, it only belongs to those who believe in all that He is, did and said. And if you refuse it, you will be removed from His presence forever. Now I don't know about you but I'll take the presence of Christ. Psalm 16:11, the Psalmist said: "In Thy presence is fullness of joy at Thy right hand are ... what? ... pleasures forevermore." That's for me. The security of the believer is also in view here ... no question about it ... as He prays for all that the Father has given Me, that they be with Me where I am. If you were a love gift given to the Son by the Father, you will be where He is forever.

When you start to think about heaven, it's just beyond your comprehension. I can't ... I don't know ... I know John tried very hard to present it, but it's just too much to understand. Some ... the Bible tells us we'll fellowship with Christ, we'll know Christ, we'll serve Christ, we'll worship Christ. But beyond that it's tough to define. The best thing to say is what the song writer said, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine, oh what a foretaste of glory divine." It will be the conscious presence of the full glory of Jesus Christ. That's why He wants us there. Did you see it in verse 24? He wants us there in order that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me for Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world. Jesus wants us to see the full expression of glory that He has had from before the world began. You see, when He came to the world He was veiled. His glory was veiled. And all the time He was in the world nobody ever saw it, but He wants us to see it. I mean, it would be like, for example, if ... if you fell in love with somebody, you know, through mail. You ever ... you know, pen pal deal, and all of a sudden you start feeling a little more than a pen pal ... you ... had this ... and you start loving the person you're writing to. And then you send a picture and you're afraid at first to send a picture cause you know you're homely, you know, andyou're afraid that this guy is, you know, Adonis ... or this girl is Queen, you know, and you're afraid you're going to blow the deal, but then you give her ... shoot that little picture and um-hum it goes, see. And you start corresponding and the picture -- wow -- and it's great, it helps the love even grow more, but down in your heart you're saying I wish ... I wish he could see me, you know, in the whole shot ... right? There's a desire to be fully manifest in all that there is of you to the person that you love. That's a normal desire. You go away from the person that you love and you write and it's incomplete, isn't it? And you send a picture, and it's still incomplete. And you want more than anything else to be in a physical presence. That's what Jesus wants ... that's all He wants. He says -- I just want them up here, Father, where they can see Me in full glory and get the whole shot. That was His desire.

Now, up until the time a person dies, he never knows that. Even the people who were on earth when Christ was here never saw His full glory ... never. You've got to die to have that privilege.

In I Timothy 6, right at the end of the book, verse 13, listen to this: "I command thee in the sight of God," Paul says, "and make ... who maketh all things alive and before Christ Jesus who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Lord's going to appear. "Which in His time He shall show who is the blessed and only potentate the King of kings and Lord of lords." That's Christ, now watch this. "Who only hath immortality dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto." He's got so much glory you can't get near it. In Exodus it says if anybody did he'd just be dead. Now listen to this: "Whom no man hath seen nor can see." You can't see His light and His glory, can't be done. But someday Paul tells Timothy -- you're going to see it. Nobody up until the time of death has ever seen the glory of Jesus in full display but someday we will see the whole thing. I'll tell you; won't that be a tremendous thing to see? The full blazing glory of Jesus Christ? We'll have to have recreated eyes just to behold it. In fact, the Apostle Paul in Philippians 3:21 makes a beautiful statement, he says: "Look ... we look to heaven for the coming of the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our lowly body that it may be fashioned like His glorious body." We're not only going to see Him, we're going to ... what? ... going to be like Him. First John 3:2: "We shall see Him as He is, we shall be like Him." We shall be like Him. Oh. What a fantastic thing. When Christ who is our life shall appear, Colossians 3:4 as we read earlier, then shall ye also appear with Him in ... what? ... glory. We're going to manifest. We're going to be like perfect prisms, reflecting His glory. This is Jesus' prayer ... not only that we see it but that we reflect it, to be like Him in all that glory.

A Danish missionary was in India and was working on a translation of a particular dialect of I John. And the native who also spoke English was reading in the English in I John chapter 3 and came to verse 2 and he read out loud, "We shall be like Him." And he stopped and he was shocked ... like Him? "Oh no," he said. "We could never put that in. We will say -- When He shall appear we will kiss His feet." But the missionary insisted that God's own amazing statement be recorded. "We shall be like Him," somehow to reflect all of His glory.

I'll tell you, that's what heaven is, beloved. Heaven is just to be with Jesus and to be like Him, that's what it is. And the display of glory is beyond belief. All of Christ's glory manifested and then flashed through us like flawless prisms. Like a little Swedish girl was looking up into the sky and she saw the starry heavens like diamonds studding the black night. She looked to her daddy and she said, "Daddy, if heaven's so beautiful on the wrong side, what must it look like on the right side?"

I suppose John was trying to tell us in John 21 and 22, he had a little trouble doing it. There was a little blind girl that I read about the other day. She knew of the beauties of the world only from her mother's lips. A noted surgeon performed a series of operations on those always sightless eyes and

the operation was successful and she was to see for the first time. On the last day, the last bandages were dropped away, the little girl ran first of all into her mother's arms, then she ran to the window and she ran to the door and she turnedaround and ran back into her mother's arms and she said this, "Oh Mother, why didn't you tell me you were so beautiful and the world was so wonderful?" And her mother replied, "I tried."

And you know, in a sense that will be what it will be like when you get to heaven. Running into the person of Jesus Christ and saying, "Why didn't You tell me Your glory was so fantastic and that heaven was like this?"

The Bible says, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of a man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." The Bible says, "Now we see in a glass ... what? ... darkly, someday face to face." Oh, I'm telling you, can we accept the eternal glory? Can we accept that part of the prayer of Christ and not the first request? Can we say -- Oh wow, Lord, I'll take all of that, but in terms of oneness I'm not going to mess with that? I'm going to do what I want. Can we be such ingrates as to accept eternal glory in the presence of Jesus Christ and not strive to fulfill the answer to His prayer in our own lives with love and holiness?

So, the subjects of His prayer and the requests. Lastly, just briefly, the confidence in His prayer. Jesus closes this whole prayer with a note of confidence. He believes God will answer. Verses 25 and 26 are just a long "Amen" that's what they are. They're just a long "so let it be, Lord." The requests are ended and the last two verses just breathe the confidence that Christ knows the Father will hear and answer. Verse 25: "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee and these have known that Thou hast sent Me." Do you see that? He says -- Father, I haven't been asking for the world, they don't know You. They have no right to Your care. But Father, I known You and these know that I came from You.

Why does He say that? He's simply saying to God -- This is all in the behalf of those who have a right to Your care. See? I know You -- that's the basis for His asking. They know You -- that's the basis for His blessing. Father, it's just I praying for them and we are those who know You andYour redemptive act. It's just us, Father, so let it happen as I've asked.

You see, He is pleading His right to pray and our right to God's blessing. Verse 25. I wanted to pick that "0 righteous Father" from verse 25 for a minute, "0 righteous Father," is a statement that calls on the righteousness of God as the basis of blessing. God can bless Christ and us because we are righteous. His righteousness can bless us. For a sinner to call on God would be pure mercy, for us to call in the name of Christ is righteousness.

All right, then verse 26. "And I have declared unto them Thine name and will declare it at the love which with ... with which Thou hast loved Me may be in them and I in them." Now what is that saying?

Just this, beautiful close to the prayer, He has asked the Father things for 25 verses and now He says -- Father, let it happen, we're Your's, and then, Father, I close with this -- I know You're going to hear and answer and I'm going to continue to do My part as well. Do you see it there? I have declared Thy name unto them and will declare it, will continue to declare it. Father, I'm going to keep on doing my part. This is Christ's promise to continue the work of salvation. It's a pledge to God that Christ will redeem those that the Father gives Him. He asks the Father to respond to His requests and then He says I'll be faithful to My part.

You know, this is a beautiful look at what prayer should really be. It's praying and asking the Father to do what He's promised to do and then saying and I'll continue to do what I know You want me to do. It's not really very fair to pray to God and ask God for this, that and the other thing when you're not willing to do what you know God wants you to do. It's not really fair to spend all your time praying for your unsaved friends when you're not willing to walk over to them and share Jesus Christ with them. Jesus says -- I'm not just asking for You to do it, I'm going to do My part to redeem them.

You see, back in John 14:3, Jesus had said -- "If I go away, I will come again and receive you unto Myself that where I am there you may be also." He said -- that's My promise. Then He said, "Father, make it happened ... happen. And then He said, "Father, and I'll continue to do my part." That's real prayer. You take the promise of God, you tell God to make it happen and then you say -- and I'll do my part. But don't make your prayer life so selfish that you ask God to do everything and are willing to do nothing. And thus does Jesus close His prayerfor us. And what is salvation? It is that He would proclaim love, the love with which God loved Him, can be planted in the hearts of men and Christ can be planted in the hearts of men. That the love may be in them and I in them. That's what salvation is. It's to possess Christ and the love of God. And Jesus says -- I'll do My part to make that happen. And so, this whole section closes. It began in chapter 13 with love, fittingly it ends with love ... and everything in the middle speaks of the wonderful love of Jesus Christ for His own.

And from us He asks just one thing -- oneness.

Our Father, we thank You for another wonderful look at the person of Jesus Christ, this morning. We really have not covered all of the things that are there and yet we know the Spirit of God will apply what is right and what is needed in our hearts. And Father, as we conclude our service this morning, we would pray that each of us would carefully look at our own lives to determine our relationship to You. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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