

John 17: 24; “To Be Where Christ Is”, A Communion Sermon
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on November 6th, 2011,
in the Morning Worship Service.

The culmination of all the prayers offered in this High-priestly prayer of Jesus to His Father, was that you and I who believe in Him might be “with Him where He is”. Prayer is the offering up of our desires unto God for things agreeable to His will. And here is found Christ’s greatest desire. It was in every way agreeable to God the Father’s will. When Jesus says, “Father I desire”; in the original Greek the word is *thelo*, and in the King James Version it reads this way: “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.” The word *thelo* means that this was Christ’s will of desire that this come about. It was His personal determination as the Son of God; the God-man. Christ was and is fully God and fully man. He can, and He did, and He will, fully accomplish everything related to the salvation of God’s Elect people. But in everything that He did do, while engaging in His earthly ministry, He submitted His own will to the Father’s will in every particular. He did the Father’s will in His every thought, word, and action. So then; as He was praying, He knew that that He had every right to pray in this way; to ask for, and to then to go on to do what the Father had purposed that He do; “bring many persons to glory”. The way that Christ would bring this about would be to go to the cross and suffer and die; and then on the third day rise again. Then shortly after, He would ascend to heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father. Jesus, then, knowing what He would do, makes request that the Father would hear Him in making three requests which deeply affect us here today who will be taking the Lord’s Supper in a few minutes. My 1st and only point to you this morning will be this – Christ prayed for us, desiring that we might be with Him where He is. Certainly this will be a fitting thing to consider as we draw near to remember our Lord’s death today, for this is one of the very greatest things that He died for.

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(Verse 24)

“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me.” It is not everyone who will be able to be where Christ is for all eternity. It is only those who have been given to Him by the Father. This is the doctrine of Election; that God before the world began chose a definite and fixed number of persons out of the mass of sinners who would live in this fallen world; He would set His love upon them, and for Jesus sake, He would save them. The Father gave you, dear believer, to the Son in eternity past in the transaction of the Covenant of Redemption; His eternal purpose. And you have been on His heart ever since. Turn with me in your Bible back to the book of Proverbs where we will look at Chapter 8, verse 22. “The Lord possessed me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old.” “I have been

established from everlasting, from the beginning, before there was ever an earth.” “When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water.” Why was He brought forth my Christian friend? He was brought forth to become Your Savior. “Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, I was brought forth; while as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, Or the primal dust of the world.” “When He prepared the heavens, I was there, when He drew a circle on the face of the deep, when He established the clouds above, when He strengthened the fountains of the deep, when He assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters would not transgress His command, when He marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside Him as a master craftsman; And I was daily His delight, Rejoicing always before Him, rejoicing in His inhabited world, and my delight was with the sons of men.” Who is this One who stood beside God as a master craftsman; Who was daily His delight? It was the same One through whom He created the worlds; the One through whom He made all things for His good pleasure. It was this same Lord Jesus Christ, who in His pre-incarnate state as God the Son, “daily was the Father’s delight. But He was even at that very time; at the foundation of the world, “rejoicing in His inhabited world, and His delight was with the sons of men. Now, it is very certain that He was not rejoicing in the sinful world of fallen sinful race of mankind which He could see would come to pass and develop as a group of men and women living in hostility to God. No, He was not rejoicing in that. But He was rather rejoicing that He could look down the corridors of time and see all of the Elect of God who He would suffer for, and die for, in order to purchase them back from their guilt and their bondage in sin which they would find themselves in, by virtue of Adam’s sin. His delight was in, and with, the sons of men who had been given to Him by the Father; that they would become the inheritors of eternal and everlasting life. It was for the joy that was set before Him of saving them that He endured the cross and despised the shame and has sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. He saw; from this His exalted position in the bosom of the Father before time began, all that He would do for them, and what they would mean to Him. And this delight of His, was even then, with the sons of men. God the Father loved the Lord Jesus Christ His only Begotten Son before the foundation of the world. And because He loved Him, He also loved you dear believer; even then. Jeremiah Chapter 31, verse 3 – “The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: ‘Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.’”

Are you not thankful, my beloved brethren, that the Father has drawn you to Christ? “No man can come to Me, Jesus says, unless the Father who sent Me draws him.” There was a time when you thought little or nothing about the great things of Christ and salvation. You did not care at all about sanctification and becoming holy. But all that has changed now. Someone preached to you the gospel and the gift of God’s grace came to you, and you received Him as your

Savior and Lord. He gave you the power to become a child of God. He gave you the right to become a child of God. You had no natural right to be God's child, save that Jesus interposed His precious blood. Oh yes, you are a child in the sense of His having created you. But you were a child of wrath because of Adam's sin, and your having confirmed it. Your father was the devil because the deeds of your father which you wanted to do. There was pride and selfish ambition and a total disregard for the glory of God. Your own glory you pursued. Your own pleasures you sought. But then Christ came and gave you the new heart. You beheld His glory; glory as of the only-begotten of the Father; full of grace and truth. Then He drew nearer still and came to your heart and took away your reproach in the sight of the Holy God; so much so, that you now call Him Father, and He has adopted you into His family. Now, because of Jesus' blood and righteousness you have been given the right, not only to become a child of God, but also to enter into heaven itself; into the very presence of God. You now have the right, and you now have the clarity of conscience, to come into the place where the Father dwells in majesty and glory, and Christ sits upon the throne of grace, displaying His glory. Now that you know God, Christ desires you to come and be with Him forever. He is your friend and the lover of your soul.

Why should you not desire to go and be where He is now? It is the culmination of all that He has desired in His going to the cross on your behalf, and it all that you have hoped for since you understood what the purpose was of the Father's sending Him into the world. It is that you would forever be with Him where He is. That which makes heaven most glorious is that the Lord Jesus is there. Sometimes we are troubled about our dying and what it will mean. But if you have come to know Christ, listen to these familiar words of His to you. John 14: 1 – "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me." "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you." "I go to prepare a place for you." "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." Jesus could say these wonderful things because He knew that He was going to the cross to purchase the right to give them, and to bestow them upon you, dear believer.

What should your response be, to the Lord Jesus for all the benefits of this great salvation which He has died to give to you? You will take the cup of salvation when you come to the table of the Lord in just a few minutes, and you will call upon the name of the Lord and give Him thanks and worship Him in the presence of all His people. You will remember, and you will confess that only in Christ your Savior-Redeemer are righteousness and strength. You will further remember what it says there in Psalm 116, verse 16 – "O Lord, truly I am your servant; I am Your servant, the son of Your maidservant; You have loosed my bonds." "I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call upon the name of the Lord." And what will you be asking for? You will be asking for grace to be Christ's servant as you remember it says in John 12: 26 – "If anyone serves Me," Jesus says, "let him

follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also.” “If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.” You follow Christ by learning to lose your worldly life and selfish and sinful desires, in order that you might come to know something much better; infinitely better. John 12: 25 – “He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” With this holy mindset in view, then the believer can confess with David in Psalm 116: 15 – “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” It is precious to the Lord Jesus because you will be coming to be with Him forever. Is this the way that you look at things? If you are a believer, it should be. And if you are not a believer; haven’t you wanted to know eternal peace and joy and how to find it? Let me assure you, that it is only found in receiving Christ; in believing in Him and upon His finished work which He wrought out in His righteous life and in His sacrificial death on behalf of all of God’s Elect. Are you one of them? You will never know until you believe in the Lord Jesus. But in believing in Him He comes to you by the power and presence of His Holy Spirit. He convinces you that you belong to Him by forgiving all of your sins and giving you His Holy Spirit to live in your heart and to help you to change to be pleasing to God. O, there is nothing to fear in death when you have been converted to Christ. Your conscience is cleansed by the blood of Christ and you now are able to die and go to heaven. The thief on the cross did not have time to develop his life with Christ, and for Christ, long. Just a few hours. But he rested on the promise of Christ Himself to him. “Today, you shall be with Me in Paradise.” O, what a glorious prospect; to be with Christ forever.