

**“What it Means to be Reformed”; Session #75, Solus Christus - “The Intercession of Christ – “Christ’s Prayers For God’s Keeping Believers”, prepared by Pastor Paul Rendall for the Adult Sunday School Class on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016.**

John chapter 17, verses 6-21 – “I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world.” “They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.” “Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You.” “For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.” “I pray for them.” “I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.” “And all Mine are Yours and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them.” “Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You.” “Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.” “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name.” “Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.” “But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.” “I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.” “I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.” “They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.” “Sanctify them by Your truth.” “Your word is truth.” “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.” “And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.” “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.”

The last time that I spoke to you on the subject of Christ’s Intercession it was in relation to His interceding on behalf of sinners, and more specifically, for His elect people, in His humbling himself to the point of death, even the death of the cross. I read to you from Romans chapter 8 concerning God’s not sparing His own Son, but delivering Him up for us all; and how, since the Father did this great thing of giving His Son up for us all, we know that He will most certainly and definitely and freely give us all things. The words – “us all”, which are mentioned there, are no doubt referring to all the elect of God, because God does not freely give all things related to salvation to all men in general. If He did, all men would be saved. But Jesus does pray specifically here, for all of the elect that they might be kept in God’s name, kept in such a way that they would have Christ’s joy fulfilled in themselves, it says in verse 13. Christ’s joy, the joy that was set before Him, it says in Hebrews 12: 2, was that He would become the Author and Perfecter of our faith. He would not only die for our sins and purchase our salvation for us, but He and the Father would apply this great salvation to the keeping of our souls. All believers would be kept in such a way, that they would have a real spiritual unity which He would establish for them by means of His death. And this definite unity would be secured by Christ; so that the world might believe that the Father had sent Him. (Verse 21)

Now, what we want to take notice of here this morning is this; that just as Christ interceded in prayer to the Father that He would be able to die for all of God’s elect people at the cross, so that they might be saved; even so, He also interceded (He prayed) at that same point in time before the cross, that all of God’s elect people would be kept in their faith and brought safely to heaven at last. His prayers for success in His work of redemption would all be answered by the Father,

and His interceding for us by means of His sufferings as our great High Priest would to His glorification; to the Father's raising Him from the dead, and His ascending on high to sit at the Father's right hand, where He would there ever live to make intercession for us. That is an overview of Christ's intercession. This morning want to think about Christ's intercessory prayer for all believers before He went to the cross.

**1<sup>st</sup> – Christ's Intercessory Prayer to the Father was that all the elect would be kept.**

a. Christ's intercession for all believers began before He went to the cross. Here in His High-Priestly prayer, Christ interceded so His own disciples would not permanently fall away from the faith, when they saw Him crucified, dead, and buried. Our Lord prayed; He interceded on their behalf, so that they would be kept from departing from the faith and from permanently falling away during these hours and days of temptation which were coming; times when they were sinfully weak, times when they were being tempted by the devil, and in that critical time where there was a great need to display the unity of the faith; when they were tempted to act selfishly and to walk away from being a part of the Church which Christ died to save and bring them into.

b. Christ was praying not only for the apostles but also for those who would believe in Him through the apostle's word. (verse 20) He was praying that each one of us who would become true believers through God's effectual call and regeneration and faith in the gospel of Christ, that we would be kept persevering in faith, and that we would have true unity; that we would be kept from turning away from the truth, that that we would be kept in the unity which He died to establish; loving one another, and holding fast the truth together in our local church. Christ has interceded and He is interceding for all those who believe in Him. He intercedes in order that they might be kept by the Father.

c. Christ manifested the Father's name to the men whom He gave to Him out of the world. Who is He speaking of? He is speaking of His apostles and disciples. Christ says: "They were Yours". "You gave them to Me." What does He mean? He means that they were chosen by God before the foundation of the world, in eternity past, to be His elect people, and they were given to Christ then. They were chosen "in Christ". They believed in the Old Testament Scriptures; the promises and the precepts. They believed in the words which the Father gave to Christ to speak to them; those words which would form the New Testament Scriptures. They believed that Christ had come forth from the Father and that the Father had sent Him to them. And so, He prays for them in particular.

**On Verse 11 of John 17, John Gill says:** "His request is, that His Father would keep them from the evil of the world; from sinking under temptations and afflictions; faithful to him and to his Gospel, and in unity among themselves; and that "through" or "in" his own name; in it, in the doctrine of the Gospel, and in the worship of God, and profession of him; "through" it, through Himself, as a wall of fire about them, and by His power through faith unto salvation..."

**2<sup>nd</sup> - Christ's intercession is a praying for believers in particular, that they would be kept in the salvation which He would purchase for them and the Father would apply the benefits of it, sovereignly to them.**

At this crucial time, just before He went to His trial and to the cross to die, He did not pray for all men everywhere, but He prayed for those whom the Father had given to Him. And what does He pray? Verse 11 – "Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are." This phrase "keep through Your name", what does it mean?

Well, God's name represents all that He is, all that He says, and all that He does. Jehovah-Jireh – I am the God who keeps covenant with you. I am the One who will provide for you, who will give you all things necessary for your salvation; for life and for godliness, as you trust in My promises concerning all that Christ has done, and all that He will do for you; all that I (the Father) will do for you, through Him. In Genesis 22: 14 it says: "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-Jireh (the Lord will provide): as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen (or provided) ." In Abraham's day, God provided the sacrifice of the ram caught in the thicket, so that Abraham would not have to offer up his only-begotten son. This was a type of Christ. It was the Angel of the Lord (the pre-incarnate Christ) who called to Abraham from heaven and said, "Abraham!" "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." This was the Old Testament intercession of Christ.

God's faithfulness to His word concerning what He will do, in relation to these prayers of Christ His Son, insures that each and every true believer in Christ will persevere in their faith to the end of their life, and because of His faithfulness they will receive the eternal inheritance.

And 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1: 1-5 – "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who kept by the power of God through faith for salvation read to be revealed in the last time."

Look also at Psalm 138: 1-3 – "I will praise You with my whole heart; before the gods I will sing praises to You." "I will worship toward Your holy temple, and praise Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; for You have magnified Your word above all Your name." "In the day when I cried out, You answered me, and made me bold with strength in my soul."

What is it that believers praise God for, with their whole heart? For His lovingkindness and His truth. And why those? Because God has magnified His word above all His name, as it says in verse 2. In other words, the promises of God concerning the grace and power in Christ to save, are true. And the principles of truth which are found in the word of God, concerning the grace by which we triumph over the world, our flesh, and the Devil, show us that it is all based upon Christ's now having appeared in heaven for us; how He has triumphed by His sufferings and death, and purchased all the blessings of salvation for us; these are made sufficient and sure to every believer, so that when they cry out in prayer for grace and help and wisdom and strength to continue in faith and obedience to God's word, that God answers them, and He makes them bold with strength in their soul, because of His grace.

So – Verse 4 – "All the kings of the earth shall praise You, O Lord, when they hear the words of Your mouth." "Yes, they shall sing of the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord." "Though the Lord is on high, yet He regards the lowly; but the proud He knows from afar." "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me; you will stretch out Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and Your right hand will save me." "The Lord will perfect that which concerns me; Your mercy, O Lord, endures forever; do not forsake the works of Your hands."

Christ's prayer to the Father that we would be kept through His name has been answered. Christ has triumphed over sin, and death, and has appeared in heaven for us. He will perfect that which concerns us, for His mercy in Christ endures forever, and yet He still would have us to pray that He would not forsake the works of His hands.