

Gospel of John Chapter 17B

(Robert Murray McCheyne) "If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no difference. He is praying for me."

- Do you know this morning that Jesus prays for you? Personally, consistently.

Hebrews 7:25, "he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them."

- He is able to "save to the uttermost" Jesus does not begin a work that he is unable to finish. The very one who justifies, He also sanctifies and glorifies.
- Jesus is not alone in his intercession for his beloved saints, the Holy Spirit ALSO intercedes for those who believe.

Ro 8:26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

- Have you ever wished you could listen in on Christ's prayer? Right here in John 17 we have the privilege of doing just that.
- This is not a prayer that Jesus prays in isolation, no he speaks to the Father audibly in front of his beloved disciples so that they could hear and record his magnificent words for the benefit of the saints of all generations.

I would love to take each verse of Jesus prayer individually and discover the glorious riches of every word. BUT we must eventually finish the book and continue on through the Bible. So today we will consider two simple questions:

1. WHO are the OBJECTS of Jesus prayer?
2. What are the OBJECTIVES of his prayer?

Jesus clearly points out the objects of his divine intercession.

VS 6 – 19, Jesus prays for his disciples

VS 20 – 26, Jesus prays for those who would believe in Him through the Word of God which is passed on to future generations of believers by his disciples.

Many Scholars call this prayer, Jesus' High Priestly prayer.

When you consider the ancient office of High Priest: The Levitical Priest wore a breastplate on which were fastened 12 stones representing the 12 tribes of Israel.

- The High Priest would enter the presence of God with God's chosen people literally fixed upon his heart. Jesus our great High Priest comes before the Father with the true Israel of God, His chosen people on his heart.

The objects of Christ's intercession (Disciples & Believers) are described in this way:

- Those who were given by the Father to the Son
- Those who have received and kept the Father's Word.

John 17:6 "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

- Jesus Manifested – disclosed, clearly revealed character and nature of God

John 1:18 **No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.**

- The objects of Jesus Prayer are those who were given to him by the Father.

What does he mean when he says, **“the people you gave me out of the world”** ?

Remember from our study of John 10 (The Good Shepherd) believers were compared to a flock of sheep which belonged to the Father and which he gave to the Son.

John 10: 28 **I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.**

- The Father chose for himself a flock of sheep, (Eph 1 Before the foundation of the world) He GAVE those sheep to the Son,
- The Son came into the world to CALL those sheep to himself, He called them personally, individually by name and they followed him.

John 17:6B **Yours (Father) they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.**

John 17: 9 **I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. 10 All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.**

- Jesus is NOT praying for the World but uniquely for those the Father has given him.
- We know (John 3:16) **that God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son...**
- God loves the world BUT out of all the nations God UNIQUELY set his love on a people of his own choosing. (O.T. Picture in his choosing Israel)
- A man might have a sincere love for humanity.. BUT out from among that mass of humanity that same man chooses ONE woman, his Bride upon HER he lavishes his love.

Consider the beautiful image of a Bride being given by the Father to her bridegroom.

In Middle Eastern culture marriages were arranged in such a way that the Father of the bridegroom was the one who actually chose the Bride for his son.

- In the book of Genesis Abraham sent his servant back to Mesopotamia to find a Bride for his son Isaac. The servant trusted the Lord to point her out. (she will be the one who offers water for my camels)
- There are MANY women in the world BUT the one who will enter into the covenant of marriage is the one who the Father has chosen.
- There are billions of people in the world but God the Father has a people of his own choosing who will become the Bride of his one and only Son.

Those who the Father gives are those who have received and kept the Father's Word.

IN addition to recognizing that they were a gift from His Father, the Lord describes the disciples as those who have kept the Father's Word.

John 17:6b **Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.**

7 **Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you.**

8 For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.

- Keeping the Father's Word describes the element of faith and obedience that is essential to salvation.
- God reveals himself to man through His Word, Christ the Living Word and the Bible His written word.

In this context, The disciples had come to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior, sent from the Father and they put their faith in him.

- Through the new birth, God imparts the gift of faith which enables man to respond in obedience to the Word of God.
- Faith or belief and obedience are used synonymously in John 3

John 3:36 **Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.**

• As it was with the FIRST Disciples, so it is with all those who would come after them:

John 17:20 **"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, (That is YOU and ME)**

- God continues to open the blind eyes of men and women through the proclamation of the Gospel.

OK we know the objects of Jesus Prayer; What are the OBJECTIVES of his prayer?

A careful reading of John 17 uncovers 3 main petitions in Jesus' prayer for his disciples:

1. Protection (That they would be "KEPT")
2. Sanctification (Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth)
3. Unity (that they may all be one)

Protection:

John 17:11, **And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. 12 While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.**

To Keep – Guard, preserve, sustain.

- Jesus preserved his disciples from the raging seas on the Galilee. (Peace be still)
- He provided 12 extra baskets of food at the feeding of the 5000 (Tax – fish)
- Remember when Peter began to sink into the sea after walking on the water. Kept Him
- How has he preserved YOU? Some of you graduate college and still CLING to the truth of God's unchanging Word. You face persecution on the job and God sustains you. You endure divorce and Jesus doesn't leave you or forsake you.
- When I meditate upon his keeping power I receive courage and comfort.

The same 2 Greek words, translated "Kept" are used by the Apostle Peter in his Epistle:

1 Peter 1:3 **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven**

for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

- Our eternal inheritance, that which was secured by the Lord Jesus is being "KEPT" preserved, held in custody for us.
- AND WE also are being "KEPT" guarded, preserved from spiritual harm by the power of God for the completion of our salvation that will be revealed in the last time.

This "Keeping" or preserving grace of God is what motivates Jude in his doxology.

Jude 1:24 Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, 25 to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

- YOUR motivation for worship?? From the mass of humanity, God has chosen you and set his love upon you as a Bride. He has adorned you with the pure white robe of His own perfect righteousness. In his divine plan he set a time when you will be united with Him in glory. Right now he is actively guarding and keeping you for himself and NOTHING shall separate you from his love, (trial, hardship, famine, peril or sword)

The next objective of Christ's prayer is our Sanctification:

Mac – "Having prayed for their spiritual protection from the world, Jesus continued by asking the Father to sanctify and purify the disciples as they prepared to preach the truth to the world. It was not enough that they be safeguarded from outside evils. They must also be internally conformed more and more to the Son."

WHAT IS sanctification

The Westminster Shorter Catechism (Question 35) answers that sanctification is the work of God's free grace whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

- As I have shared with you before: This great salvation through which God has made us his own children begins with an EVENT (Justification) That event is followed by a PROCESS (sanctification) and that process is followed by an EVENT (glorification in death or rapture this mortality takes on immortality)

John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

- The instrument of sanctification is the Word of God, the Holy Scripture contained in the Old and New Testaments.

Psalms 119: 9 <BETH> How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. 10 With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! 11 I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. 12 Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes!
37 Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways.

UNITY

John 17:20 “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

- This unity for which Jesus prays is for US. those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one.
- The revelation of Jesus Christ that God has provided through His inerrant, infallible Word is the basis and foundation of true Christian unity.
 - Our unity is not based upon a common culture or economic status, it is not founded on intellect or spiritual experience.

We are MADE one, in Christ because we have ALL been born of that same imperishable seed.

1Pe 1:23 since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;

- The foundation of our unity is the imperishable see of God’s living word. It was through that seed of God’s Word that we were given new life.

Family members are ONE by virtue of the biological seed that has given them life.

- Father begets son, son begets grandson... The biological seed begets new life...
 - This biological UNITY is part of our essential being. It is in our genes and chromosomes.
- In the Body of Christ the unity is not biological but spiritual, nevertheless it is part of our essential being.

1 Corinthians 12: 12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body —Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

In the very beginning of the church UNITY was easily observed by the watching world.

- I believe that the purest expression of this unity is seen in the Book of Acts.

Acts 2:42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common.45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Because we are all “In process” not yet perfect, we carry the treasure of Christ in vessels of clay. OUR FLESH hinders the perfect expression of Christian unity.

- Corinth has factions, (I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Christ)
- The wealthy saints at Corinth indulged in rich fare at the “Love Feasts” without waiting for their less fortunate brothers. (Favoritism)
- The Galatians strayed from the Apostles Doctrine.
- At Philippi there were sisters in Christ who were at odds with one another.
- We must cooperate with the Spirit and eagerly maintain our unity.

Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

HOW can we maintain this unity? What is our part?

- FIRST we need to HEAR Christ’s prayer and align our desires with His. Make it a priority! So that the world would see and believe.
- We need to meditate on God’s Word (this is the seed of our unity.)

Put to death the deeds of the Flesh, Consider others better than ourselves, KNOW that the greatest in the kingdom of God is the servant of all.

Philippians 2: 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

- Forgive those who have offended you and labor to keep short accounts with God.
- Refrain from passing on gossip, instead be quick to pray.