

Series: Four Requests
Title: Christ's Third Request
Text: John 17: 20-23
Date: January 18, 2015
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We began looking at four requests made by Christ in his high priestly prayer. The intercession Christ made in our text is the intercession Christ everlives to make for his people.

First, Christ prayed for God the Father to glorify him, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." (Jn 17: 1) God must receive all glory in the salvation of his people.

Secondly, Christ prayed for his believing people, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." (Jn 17: 11) The Lord intercedes for believers who he has already quickened and called by his grace.

Today our subject is "Christ's Third Request." Our great High Priest also intercedes for his people who shall believe. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." (Jn 17: 20)

It is a great comfort to see that Christ intercedes for believers that he has already quickened and called to faith in Christ. But it is also a very great comfort to know that Christ intercedes for his people who shall be quickened, called and converted.

What love Christ has for his people! Their names are always on his lips. We are sinners in ourselves. And those yet to be called may be very great transgressors. Yet Christ stands before his Father's throne, "ever-living to make intercession for us." It is by Christ's intercession for us that we are brought to believe on him.

Christ intercedes not only for the believer he has already called but for his people who shall believe.

LOVE BEFORE LOVE

First, our text shows us that Christ knows and loves his people before we believe and love him, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." (Jn 17: 20)

We saw last time that Christ only prays for those that God the Father gave him out of the world, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me." (Jn 17: 9) Why does Christ pray for those God gave him but not for the world? It is because the eternal, everlasting love of God for his people is "in Christ Jesus" in the holiness and righteousness of Christ our Surety. (Rom 8:9) "The LORD loveth the righteous." (Ps 146: 4) He does not merely love their righteousness; the LORD loves the righteous. "But the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth." (Ps 11: 5) The LORD does not merely hate their sin; the LORD hates them. Those God chose in Christ in eternity have stood in Christ their Surety as holy and without blame before God from eternity. This is why Christ says, "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me." It is because the love of God is in Christ Jesus in whom his people are righteous and holy. The apostle Paul said that nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom 8: 39)

The carnal mind hates that God's love is everlasting and his call effectual because it gives God all the glory for choosing and calling his people. But if we read the scriptures, and God makes us honest, there is no way we can believe that God begins loving his people when we begin to love him. "The LORD hath appeared of

old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” (Jer 31: 3)

God is eternal. Those God loves today, he has always loved and shall always love. There is no beginning or end to his love; there is no hatred yesterday then love today. Christ knows and loves his people before as yet his people even know we are his. “The mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children.” (Ps 103: 17) Were it not for his everlasting mercy we would never be brought to fear him and be found righteous in his Son through faith.

EQUAL LOVE

Notice, how the Lord Jesus loves those he has already called and those he has yet to call with the same affection. He prayed for those few who he called out in his lifetime, who believed on him. But he also says, “My Father, neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;”

All those the Father gave to Christ are equally loved. Our names are all written in the same book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. His people are all purchased with the same precious blood. We were all justified with the same righteousness, all sanctified by the same Spirit and all shall receive the same inheritance the same Way. God loved us, while as yet we were sinners, the same he loves those he has already called to faith, because God everlastingly loves us in Christ for Christ’s sake.

Romans 5:8...God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Titus 3: 3: For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. 4: But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6: Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

CERTAINTY THEY SHALL BELIEVE

Also, notice the certainty that they shall be given faith to believe on Christ. He does not speak with possibility but in certainty, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.” (Jn 17: 20)

Christ suffered for each and every one of his people. He took the sin of each and every one of his people. Our Substitute suffered the divine wrath of each and every one of his people. He died and arose for each and every one of his people. For each person for whom he died “our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed.” (Rom 6: 6)

When Christ was quickened, we were quickened together with him; when Christ was raised, we were raised up together with him; when Christ sat down, we sat down together with him. God did it that in time he might give us life and faith and show us the exceeding riches of his grace and kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. That is why each one for whom Christ died **MUST** be given life and faith in Christ.

Ephesians 2: 4: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6: And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus: 7: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8: For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: 9: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

That is why Christ said “them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.” (Jn 10: 16) That is why not one shall be lost, “this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.” (Jn 6: 39) That is why Christ “is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them”, praying, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word” (Heb 7: 25; Jn 17: 20) “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” (Ja 5: 16) But the effectual fervent prayer of THE RIGHTEOUS MAN always availeth!

Think about the reason why we plant a garden. You sow the seed because you know there will be a harvest. This is why we preach and send forth the gospel. He has a people who shall believe through him.

THROUGH THE GOSPEL

Lastly, notice each one shall be saved through the gospel, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.” (Jn 17: 20) God ordained that his people will be called out through the public preaching of his works and his glory in Christ and him crucified.

2 Thessalonians 2: 13: But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 14: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice, “he called you by our gospel.” Our risen Advocate and Head shall have each one for whom he died to hear what he has done for them. So he calls and sends his preacher. But it is Christ who does the calling by our gospel. When he calls us it is “to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Back in John 17)

Be sure to get this. In the day of his power, we are quickened to life and given faith to believe by Christ giving us “the glory God the Father gave to him.” Notice in John 17: 20-23, “[I pray] for them also which 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 [his people scattered throughout the world] may believe that thou hast sent me. [Next he declares how that is brought about.] And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; [When Christ himself is formed in his child, Christ puts in us the glorious image of God the Father which is the image the Father put in Christ in his humanity by God dwelling in Christ] that they may be one, even as we are one: [here is the glory he puts in his people] I in them, and thou in me.”

As the gospel is preached, “we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Cor 3: 18) Within us “a new man is created “after the image of him that created him:” (Col 3: 10) Christ creates the new man and the new man is created after Christ’s image. Christ is the express image of God because God dwells in Christ. This is “the glory” Christ gives us. It is his image, the image of God which God gave Christ by God dwelling in him—“I in them, and thou in me.” He said, “At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” (Jn 14: 20) In his prayer, Christ says that is the sure and certain result, “that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world [his people] may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” (Jn 17: 23)

Brethren, this is the wisdom of God in saving us through the preaching of Christ and him crucified! (1 Cor 1: 21)

Ephesians 1: 8: Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9: Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in

himself: 10: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

John 10: 16:...they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd.

Do you hear his voice? He says, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Is 1: 18) Dear sinner, if can come, it is because God has loved you in Christ from eternity, Christ has redeemed you and interceded for you to be called at the appointed hour! If it be his will, may Christ call you now!

Amen!