

Series: Four Requests
Title: Christ's Fourth Request
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In John 17, our great Intercessor and Advocate with the Father made four requests:

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

Secondly, Christ prayed for those he had given faith, to be kept while they remained in this world—"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. 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.

Thirdly, Christ prayed 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) The reason any sinner believes on the Lord Jesus is because Christ has reconciled us to God by his blood and intercedes for us to hear the gospel and to be called to faith in him.

Our subject is "**Christ's Fourth Request.**"

John 17: 24: 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 lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

THE POWER OF CHRIST'S INTERCESSION

First, to whom and with what power does Christ pray? He says, "Father, I will..."

First, the Lord Jesus prays with the power of the Son. He is God the Father's only begotten Son. You fathers, suppose a stranger asks you to do such and such a thing and suppose your son asks the same thing. Which are you more pleased to answer? God the Father said of Christ, "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Mt 3: 17) Christ has power with God as a Son to say, "Father, I will."

Also, Christ prays in the power of the firstborn Son fulfilling the will of the Father for his whole house. Before the world was made, God the Father purposed to manifest to his sons and daughters, his righteousness in glorifying his Son—so that his Son might have all preeminence in the whole family of God, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Rom 8: 29) God the Father chose his people and gave his children to his Son to redeem us from the curse of the law, to justify us, to purge our sins, to make us the righteousness of God, to gather all the children together in Christ, that we might praise and glorify God our Father and his Son in all these things. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." (1 Cor 15: 24)

Brethren, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." (Is 53: 6) We are all prodigal sons. We sinned away our substance in Adam. We would have remained separated if left to ourselves. But by the successful work of Christ on our behalf, by his work within us, by his intercession for us, we shall at last be brought home to our heavenly Father. So Christ prays as the Firstborn among many brethren, fulfilling the will of God his Father toward his whole family.

In addition, Christ prays in the power of the one whose will is one with the Father. Knowing this is the Father's eternal purpose, knowing this is the Father's sovereign, unchanging will, Christ prays, "Father, I will." It is never our place, as children of God, to pray, "Father, I will." Our prayer is to be, "Not my will, but thine be done." But when Christ has made our will to be one with his will then we delight in God; then we desire for his will to be done. When our will is for God's will to be done—when we can truly pray, "Not my will, but thine be done", then we receive what we ask for. God says, "Delight thyself also in the LORD." We delight ourselves in the LORD by delighting for his will to be done. God says, "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." (Ps 37: 4) That is what we see here: the will of God the Father and the will of God the Son are one. When Christ prays, "I will" he is praying the Father's will.

Also, Christ is praying in the power of the successful Mediator. Remember, while Christ walked this earth, he never prayed for his will to be done, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (Jn 6:38) But now, Christ is praying as that faithful servant who has finished the work God gave him to do. (Jn 17: 4) He is the faithful GodMan, Mediator, who purchased his people with his own blood. Christ has the authority and right to state his will to the Father.

FOR WHOM DOES CHRIST PRAY?

Secondly, notice that Christ prays for God's elect, "they also whom thou hast given me." (Jn 17: 24)

It is not wrong to labor this point because in this prayer, repeatedly, Christ distinguishes who it is he prays for: verse 2, "that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him;" verse 6, "the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me;" verse 9, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine;" verse 11, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are;" verse 12, "I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled."

Scripture declares that before the foundation of the world, God the Father gave to his Son the particular people who God shall save. They are called those God "ordained to eternal life" (Acts 13: 48), the "elect" (Mt 24: 24, 31; Rom 8: 33, 1 Pet 1: 2); the "beloved of God" (Rom 1: 7), "the Israel of God," (Gal 6: 16), the "holy nation", his "royal priesthood", his "chosen generation" (1 Pet 2: 9), "a number no man could number" (Rev 7: 9), the "travail of Christ's soul" (Is 53: 11), his "purchased possession" (Eph 1: 14), his inheritance (Deut 32: 9), they all shall come to Christ, all shall be raised up, none shall be lost. (Jn 6: 37-39) The reason is because Christ intercedes for them. By his grace alone, without respect of persons, God the Father loved them, chose them and gave them to Christ for Christ to redeem them, sanctify them, perfect them, to be glorified everlastingly in them and by them. Christ says here that these and these alone are the object of our Savior's prayer.

To those who object scripture warns us not to object to God's good pleasure. "O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" (Ro 9: 20) Who would dare say God is their Father and object to him doing what he will with whom he will? Who could object, especially when it means our Father and Savior receives all the glory and not one of his children shall be lost!

Instead, the scripture teaches us to seek to know if we are one of God's elect. (2 Pet 1: 10) Has the Holy Spirit made you bow to God's will? Has the Lord made you to know your need of this sure Savior? Do you delight that Christ shall not fail but shall save his people from our sins? If we know our own sinfulness there will be no objections; we will beg God's mercy; and delight to be one God chose and saved freely by his grace. Believers rejoice that the promises of God are ordered and sure in all things in Christ for this is all our salvation!

CHRIST'S PETITION

Next, see what it is that the high priest prays for. He wills that each one the Father gave him, “be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” (Jn 17: 24)

Christ prays for his people to receive what we long for, our great eternal inheritance, our reward, the very joy of heaven, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.” He does not say, “I will, they be where I am;” but, “I will, they be with me where I am.” What is heaven? It is “to be with Christ where he is!” That is the definition of heaven. What is our inheritance? It is “to be with Christ where he is!”

Where is Christ? He is seated at God's right hand. We are seated there now in Christ. Sometimes, he makes us behold it in our hearts. But it is soon interrupted. Not then! Soon we will be with Christ where he is and there will never again be any interruptions.

Also Christ prays, “that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.” It is the Father's glory given to the Son. Yet, the Lord Jesus calls it “my glory,” because it is truly his own. Each saint shall behold his glory.

Believer, imagine seeing the glory of God in his face. For now, believers see his glory in the glass of the gospel. We see by faith; we know and are assured Christ is glorified in heaven. But the moment we die, in our own persons, with our own eyes, the first thing we shall see is Christ as he is—“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” (1Jo 3:2)

Believer, imagine beholding the glory of his person. When he arose he told his disciple “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.” (Lu 24: 39) In the day we are raised to glory we shall behold Christ's hands and feet. We will handle him. We will behold the glory of his person.

Believer, imagine beholding the glory of his throne. John said, “he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.” (Rev 4: 3) Kings of this earth sit in great glory with all their pomp. But imagine the glory of Christ's throne in glory.

Believer, imagine beholding the glory of his praise. John said, “every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” (Rev 5: 13) What a day it will be when we hear every creature praising our Savior with one voice.

Believer, imagine beholding the glory of his love and care, “For the Lamb which 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 eyes.” (Rev 7: 17) He will constantly reveal more of himself, more of his love, more of his grace and mercy to us. This is the new wine we will drink with him in his kingdom; this is how we will eat and drink at his table.

Believer, imagine the glory of his endless life within us.

When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun

We've no less days to sing his praise
Than when we first begun

I wish I could say more about it but right now, I'm just a toddler dipping my finger in the ocean. I have never beheld his glory as we shall in that day.

Sinner if you do not have this sure hope, Seek Christ while he may be found: in his word, in his gospel, in prayer. Call ye on him while he is near.

THE CERTAINTY

Lastly, here is the certainty that Christ shall have his petition, “for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” (Jn 17: 24)

This speaks of his glory but it also tells us why Christ shall have what he prays for. God the Father loved and looked to Christ before the foundation of the world when he gave Christ the glory of being the perfect and righteous Mediator for his people. God has loved and viewed his people in Christ since before the foundation of the world—perfect and righteous in our Head. Christ said God “hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” (Jn 17: 23)

Christ prays as one who has pleased the Father. He said, “for I do always those things that please him;”(Jn 8: 29) Before the foundation of the world, when the Son agreed to be Surety for his people, to redeem his people, to glorify God, it pleased God. In time on the cross, Christ highly glorified God his Father when he accomplished the will of the Father, manifest God's righteousness, declared God just and the Justifier of true every believer. When God the Father raised Christ and gave him glory, the Father said, “[I have] set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. (Ps 2: 6) Christ said, “I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” (Ps 2: 6-8) So it is the Father's good pleasure to give Christ his will as Christ everlives to make intercession for his people.

The reason the Father shall give Christ his petition is because the Father looks to our Advocate at his right hand and sees what he saw from before the foundation of the world our propitiation, atonement accomplished, satisfaction in full, sin blotted out, his elect redeemed, his covenant ratified in his own blood.

Augustus Toplady wrote:

“With cries and tears he offer'd up
His humble suit below;
But with authority he asks,
Enthroned in glory now.
For all that come to God by him,
Salvation he demands
Points to their names upon his breast
And spreads his wounded hands.
“His covenant and sacrifice
Give sanction to his claim;
Father, I will that all my saints
Be with me where I am.”

Believer, look on this prayer as a promise which shall be fulfilled. What Christ asks for in this text, he asks at God's right hand now, and shall receive. No doubt about it! The will of God is the supreme law, “He doeth

according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Dan 4: 35) Christ prays for us right now at God's right hand, "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 lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

Amen!

Amen.