



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 17:6-10

"Jesus Praying for the Apostles: Part I"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Now, today we are looking at the second section of Lord's great high priestly prayer. And for our Scripture reading we're reading a short portion beginning at the 6th verse and concluding with the 10th verse. John chapter 17 verse 6 through verse 10. The Lord in his prayer to the Father says,

"I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were and Thou gavest them me, and they have kept Thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given me are of Thee for I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest me, and they have received them have known surely that I came out from Thee. And they have believed that Thou didst send me. I pray for them. I pray not for the world but for them which Thou hast given me for they are Thine. And all mine are Thine and Thine are mine, and I am glorified in them."

May the Lord bless this reading of his word. Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are so thankful that we are able to gather in a meeting such as this and consider this magnificent high priestly intercession that the Lord Jesus Christ uttered so many

hundreds of years ago. What a great privilege it is and how marvelous it is to be among the company of people to whom this privilege is given. When we think of so many over the face of this globe who have not the slightest inkling of what may be contained in the Scriptures we are amazed, and astonished and we are grateful. And we pray, Lord, that we may by Thy grace respond appropriately to the privilege and opportunity that we do have.

We are grateful for our Lord Jesus Christ. We are grateful for this magnificent example of his intercession. And we are grateful for the content of it, the reality of it, the truth of it. And that we are among the given among the given ones is almost more than we can express to Thee in gratitude and Thanksgiving. But we give Thee thanks and we pray that Thou wilt continue to enlighten us and enlarge our understanding of the status that we do have before Thee. We are truly blessed and we give Thee thanks.

And Father, we would also bring before Thee the whole body of the given, the Church of Jesus Christ, and we pray Thy blessing upon each member of that body. For those who are well and who are busy and useful, O God continue to bless them. For those who are troubled, and perplexed and disturbed, we commit them to Thee. For those who have difficult decisions to make, give them wisdom. For those who are sick and ill, or who have loved ones who are sick and ill such as those listed in our calendar of concern, minister to them Lord. And minister to their friends and family and supply the needs that exist. Give healing if it should please Thee.

And we pray for our country. We thank Thee for the privilege of being a citizen of the United States of America and living in this great land. We thank Thee for the freedom that we have for so many over the face of this globe have no freedoms to do what we do, to gather publicly, open the Scriptures, preach and teach and listen to the exposition of the word of God. We are grateful and thankful, and we have great responsibility as a result of it. And Lord, individually and as a body of believers may we fulfill our responsibilities in a way that will please Thee.

And Lord in our daily Christian life give us guidance and direction. Give us the peace that the Lord Jesus has left for the church. And may we live in the light of it trusting Thee, leaning upon

him who loved us and gave himself for us. We thank Thee for the blood of the cross, for the fact of the resurrection, for the living Savior that we have. And may our thoughts and desires, may the occupation of our life be with him. And Father in this meeting, in the singing of the hymn that follows, in the preaching of the word, may the Lord Jesus be exalted. We pray in his name. Amen.

[Message] This morning our topic is "Jesus Praying for his Apostles." And as you will notice from the church bulletin we are hoping, or I am hoping, to cover just a portion of our Lord's Prayer; the section that has to do with his apostles. Now, I'm not sure that you are as I am so often—I do have occasion to draw circles. And at times the most useful way to draw them in a hurry is to take a coin out of your pocket and put them on the paper and to trace around the coin. Well, if you were to take a dime out and draw a little circle, and then take a nickel and put the nickel over that circle that you made with the dime and draw another circle, and then put a quarter on top of that so that you would have three concentric circles. Then you would have something that might illustrate the way in which our Lord's Prayer develops, for the high priestly Lord's Prayer of John 17 is a like a circle with three rings.

The smallest, the dime, represents the prayer that Jesus made for himself, which we considered last week in verses 1 through 5. And then the larger circle, the nickel circle, might represent the prayer that our Lord makes for the apostles. In verse 6 through verse 19 he prays with reference to them primarily. And finally, in the 20th verse through the 26th verse we have the largest of the circles. And this, of course, has to do with the whole family of God. In verse 20 he prays, "Neither pray I for these alone but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." So we have then a prayer that touches our Lord himself, a prayer that then moves out to consider the apostles, and finally a prayer that touches the whole family of God.

The theme of the opening prayer that Jesus prayed was glory. He prayed in the first verse of the chapter, "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Thy Son that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." And we mentioned last week that the fact that he said, "Thy Son" suggests the office that he holds as the

messianic Son. Remember the purpose of John in writing his book is that men might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that in believing they might have life through his name. So to glorify the Son is to glorify the mediatorial messianic Son in order that the Son may glorify God in his mediatorial work.

But then in the 5th verse he says, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was. And we read in the Bible in a number of places, particularly in Philippians 2, that when the Lord Jesus came in his incarnation he laid aside his glory -- to speak broadly and figuratively. He laid aside, or he relinquished, the voluntary use of his divine attributes. He was just as much Son of God after he became Son of man as he was before. But he did turn over the direction of his life to the Father. And as the mediator he has been following perfectly the directions given him by the Father in heaven, and still does. While he was on the earth as the mediatorial Son he could say he did not know the time of his second coming. As the eternal Son, the second person of the trinity, he knows the end from the beginning and all about it for he with the Father and the spirit planned and determined those things. But as the Son he does not now. And so at the present moment he is the mediatorial Son at the right hand of the Father and is to come to complete that work and finally turn over the kingdom to Father that God may be all in all.

Now, the prayer in the 5th verse is a reference to that. It is a prayer concerning the essential glory of the second person of the trinity and the resumption of the position that he had with the Father and the spirit before the purpose of the ages began. "Now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." That prayer awaits its fulfillment and consummation in the future.

The theme of glory passes to the theme of safety and sanctity because he's thinking about the apostles. He prays for their safety. Keep them Father. He prays for their sanctity. Sanctify them by thy word. And we will talk about these things, the Lord willing, next week. There's some great eternal thoughts that predominate in this prayer as one might think or one might suspect. The

unity of the Father and the Son in the Father's affection of the Son and for the gift of the people of God to the Son, the Son's dependent occupation with the Father -- what a magnificent thing it is to see how the persons of the trinity are so harmonious in their relationship one with other; the Father's affection for the Son and the gift of a people to him, and the Son's obedient total occupation with the Father and with the words that the Father gives him. But standing out, of course, from your standpoint is the eternal distinguishing effectual love and care of both the Father and the Son for the given ones for us if we are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. The preciousness of the souls of the saved to the persons of the trinity certainly shines out most prominently in this section. The given ones of the Father to the Son and the Son asking the Father to keep the given ones, sanctify them, preserve them. It's a magnificent thing.

"I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were and Thou gavest them me, and they have kept Thy word." One might ask, of course, this question if he were not studying this Gospel and did not know the answer already. Who are these given ones? And so before the Son intercedes, with reference to their sanctification and their safety, he clarifies their identity. And that's the purpose of the verses that we are looking at in our study this morning. And the first thing that our Lord prays in this section has to do with the Father's unconditional gift of the saved to him. In verse 6 he says, "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were and Thou gavest them me, and they have kept Thy word."

Someone might think at this point that there is a conflict with something that Jesus has said previously just a few moments before this really. For in the Upper Room discourse in chapter 15 and verse 16 the Lord Jesus had said to the apostles, "Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you. Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you." Now, when one reads verse 6 here one thinks on first reading that what he is saying is that the Father is the one who has chosen us for he is the one who gave us to the Son. Is there conflict?

Well, students of the Bible all the way back to Augustine in the 4th and 5th Centuries puzzled over this and wrote about it. Yesterday I read the 16th tractate in Augustine's exposition of the Gospel of John. He discusses it. He says this, "The Son says that the men were given him by the Father out of the world, to whom he says elsewhere, 'I have chosen you out of the world.' Those whom God the Son chose along with the Father out of the world, the very same Son as man received them out of the world from the Father for the Father had not given them to the Son had he not chosen them. And in this way as the Son did not thereby set the Father aside when he said, 'I have chosen you out of the world,' seeing that they were simultaneously chosen by the Father also, 'as little did he thereby exclude himself when he says, 'Thine they were,' for they were equally also the property of the Son. But now the same Son as man received those who belonged not to himself because he also as God received a servant form which was not originally his own."

Well, I know in a meeting like this it's difficult to immediately grasp all that Augustine is saying. But essentially he's saying this: we must remember that the Lord Jesus is one of the members of the eternal trinity. And so as a member of the eternal trinity he with the Father chose the people of God. But then there came a time when he was the mediatorial Son when he subjected himself to the will of the Father. And so as man, as the mediatorial Son, he received the gift from the father, the gift which he as the eternal Son participated in as giver. So he is both giver and receiver of the people of God.

Now, you will notice from this statement that is made in the 6th verse that the Lord Jesus speaks of the original state of the people of God. He says, "They were men who were at one time in the world. I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world." So the first things we may say about the Father's unconditional gift is that it is the gift of those who were at one time not only in the world but of the world. That is, they were characterized by all of the things that characterize the world: the lusts, the desires, the sins, the failings, the concerns, the cares. They were of the world. Now, we all know what that means for we have all lived not only in the

world but we have also been of the world. As a result of the saving work of Christ we are taken out of the world, put in him, even though we still are in the world.

Now, he says also that he has given men to him. I don't want to label this as if he is saying men as over against women and raise feminist issues on Sunday morning in this service. But he is speaking primarily here of the apostles. Now the term is a term that can be used of both men and women, but it's clear that he is talking about the apostles at this point. In a moment in verse 20 he will go on to speak of others, inclusive not simply of the apostles but all who make up the body of Christ, both male and female.

So he says, "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world." Now, notice their new status. They are individuals who are given to the Son and out of the world. They are still in the world but they are no longer of the world. He will make that point later on. Now, the thing I would like for you to notice is again what is intended by this word "gave". That apparently is very important for our Lord because over and over again one reads through this section about the gift of individuals from the Father to the Son. "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world."

What is meant by the giving of certain individuals by the Father to the Son? Well, to give includes everything meant by the special love of God. It includes the election of the individuals because they are elect before they are given. The very fact that they are given by the Father is an indication of the fact that he has determined that certain people should be the object of his giving. And so his divine electing grace precedes the giving. But included also in the giving, in order for it to be effectual, is the resulting faith. So to give implies not simply election, it implies also the efficacious grace by which the given truly become our Lord's. So it's the Lord's special love to us, his electing grace, the giving in efficacious grace and also the resultant issue of that grace; the personal faith that you and I are brought to in the Lord Jesus Christ. So the Father elects and gives, and there is the corresponding response in the believers produced by him -- faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now this is not, of course, the only place that the Lord has spoken about this. Back in chapter 6, remember, the passage we referred to last week in verse 37? The Lord Jesus had said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." And incidentally in the preceding two verses, verse 35, he said, "I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger. He that believeth on me shall never thirst." It is evident from those two parallel clauses that to come to him and to believe in him are the same thing. So in verse 37 when he says, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me," he means simply all that the Father elects and to whom he gives efficacious grace shall believe. And now lest anyone should say, "Well, there may be some who come who are not given." Well, one only has to look at the 65th verse of the 6th chapter where the Lord also said, "Therefore said I unto you that no man can come unto me except it were given unto him of my Father." So certain ones are given and that giving is the giving that is efficacious and leads to faith in Christ, and only the given can come. That is what theologians call unconditional election. And we should not think of that as simply something intellectual. This is when you really ought to want to spike the ball. For what a tremendous thing it is to realize that we have been given by the Father to the Son and how important it is to the Son to have that gift, and how important it is to the Father to give it to the Son. One cannot help but see coming through these verses the preciousness of the saints of God to the eternal trinity. It is magnificent to see the way in which the trinity speaks of us in their private language.

Now then, the Lord Jesus goes on in this magnificent prayer of the Lord Jesus to discuss the illumination that came to the apostles. He says in verse 6, "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me." This introduces a discussion of the details of how the gift was made. And two clauses express it preeminently: that first one in verse 6, "I have manifested Thy name." What is meant by that? "I have manifested Thy name to the men which Thou hast given me?" Now, you know from your reading of the Bible that the term name is a Hebraic expression which refers to all that the person is. And with reference to the name of God it refers to all that he is both in his

being, in his attributes, and also in his actions. So to manifest the name is to declare the nature and being of God and also the actions of God, his works.

So Jesus said, "I have manifested Thy name to these given men. Now, he has spoken of this through the Gospel of John more than once. Even in the prologue the apostle said, "No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son who is the in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him." He has revealed to him, revealed him as Father. And then remember in the passage in chapter 14 when Philip asked his question Jesus replied, "Philip, have I been so long time with you and yet has thou not known me? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. And how sayest thou then, 'Show us the Father.'" So the Lord Jesus is the complete revelation of the Father and he has manifested the name of the Father to the eleven. So they have come to understand the nature and being of the Father. We don't understand much more than that, but that's a great deal upon which to build. And he says, "I have manifested Thy name." The revelation of the Father's nature and being has been accomplished.

Well, you know at one time or another we often wonder, "How Lord you define God?" To say he has manifested the name of God would, it seems to me, call forth some kind of definition of God. How would you define God? Well, that's not an easy question to answer. In fact, some contended it's never been answered properly because God is an infinite being and it cannot be answered properly. When I studied the shorter Catechism, because in Sunday school in the Presbyterian church many years ago we were forced to study the shorter Catechism, the forth question had to do with the nature of God. And in the answer to the fourth question there is a definition of God. I couldn't repeat it perfectly now, but I have it before me. "God is a spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." There was a time when I could say that and be sure that I was absolutely correct.

Charles Hodge said that that is the best definition of God ever penned by man. But then of course he was a Presbyterian and one might expect him to say that. But it is a magnificent expression of the nature of God. But our Lord is speaking of even more than that. For he says, "I have

manifested Thy name and Thy name (not only the nature and being of God, but also his acts). Now, you can see from this that the Lord Jesus did not come simply to give the apostle a high moral example. He did not come to give them simply teaching about the ethics of which the Lord God might approve. He came to give the words that God had given him. And the best explanation of what our Lord intended to do is to be found in what he actually did. So he not only gave words but he accomplished works. He was the great prophet of God and men said of him, "Never did a man speak like this." He was the great priest of God. And finally on the cross at Calvary he died under the judgment of God for the sins of sinners crying out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" And then, "It is finished," completing the offering, the sacrifice which the priestly individual administers. And he is the priest who offered the offering and the priest who administers its benefits. And he, of course, is also the king who shall come. In the 14th chapter he says that he's preparing a place for us and he will come again and receive us to himself. So when he said, "I have manifested Thy name unto the men whom Thou hast given to me," he speaks of the way in which he has magnificently revealed the Father.

Now to put it in our language, the New Testament pictures our Lord Jesus in many wonderful ways. For example, it pictures Jesus as God with a sob at the grave of Lazarus as he wept humanly over Lazarus and then raised him from the dead. God with a scourge in his hands as he drove the moneychangers out of the temple. God sweating as it were great drops of blood in Gethsemane, troubled by the prospect of his cross. God with such awesome power in his eyes that when the soldiers came into the garden and asked, "Is this Jesus of Nazareth?" and he answered, "I am he by the very force of the awesome power of his person." Those soldiers went back and fell on the ground. So from the beginning from Mount Herman all the way down to the Mount of Olives with its tears to Mount Calvary, with its agonizing cry of desolation, the Lord Jesus Christ's life is a manifestation of the name of the Father.

Now, the second thing that expresses what Christ has done is described in the 8th verse, "For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest to me." So not only has he in his life

manifested the virtues, the attributes, the nature, the being, the actions of God, but he has also explained what he has done. So in mediatorial propositional truth, truth expressed in statements explanatory of his acts. He has given the words of God to the given ones. Now, you'll notice that only the elect are enlightened. He says, "I have given unto them the words that which Thou gavest me and they have received them." So only the elect are enlightened. Everybody was evangelized. The word went out to vast numbers of people, even in that small land. But only the enlightened respond. Some were enlightened. The vast majority were not. When the Lord Jesus died there were, relatively speaking, a handful of men -- five hundred at the resurrection out of the thousands that were there, only the given prophet from the teaching ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Well, no answer is given except that there were individuals who were given by the Father and to them was given the grace to respond. So one can easily infer from this that while the message went out to all, all would not have responded were it not for the fact that the Father drew some -- the given to the Son. "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him."

So Jesus says, "I have given the words that Thou gavest me to them." One might think, "Well, surely this is a scanty harvest. Eleven weak men." Now, think of them at this time. In a few hours the cross will take place every one of them will flee. Only a few women will stay around the cross. And finally, John evidently scout back to the cross after fleeing too. So that the apostles, the great spiritual leaders -- they were crushed and went into hiding like wounded animals over what was happening. These were the ones to whom the Lord Jesus says he has given his words, just a few, eleven Galilean or Judean peasants after all of these labors. But after all, if the power of God stands behind them it's enough.

I know that some of you think I never do anything but look at the Bible but that's not all together true. I do read some other things in addition to some inconsequential things. Every now and then -- one of my favorite little subjects is the Russian revolution. And for a long time I've been interested in this. It's just an amazing thing to me that the Bolsheviks ever came to power; a minority in the social democratic party and constantly divisions and scraps among themselves. It's an amazing

thing that these men have come to power. And then not only have come to power in the great country of Russia -- and it is a great country and a large country. They not only have come to power in the midst of a nation that was under the feet of Germany but now have become perhaps the dominant power in this world. And there is one man who stands behind it and his name is Vladimir Iletes Bulyamoff. We know him as Lenin.

It's a very interesting thing to read Lenin's life and to see what that one man was able to accomplish being just a hardheaded decisive kind of character who had one aim in purpose in life. And how at the propitious moment he was ready and the minority -- the Bolsheviks -- took over that party and ultimately that country. I think of Lenin in Zurich walking down day after day in self-imposed exile then from Spiegel, Gassa where he lived walking down by the Muenster, the great church where Zwingli preached. And in the midst of the Reformation entering the Cantonal Library everyday, studying diligently, writing volume after volume, pamphlet after pamphlet in which he tried to keep his organization in the various countries of Europe interested in what he was doing. And then finally that one individual by the force of his own personality was able to accomplish the seemingly impossible.

Listen to what one of the biographers of Lenin says, "Lenin was the original organization man. Men wedded to a purpose he held could alter circumstances, change mass consciousness and make history. Lenin never sought numbers. He wanted a disciplined human battering ram. He said once, 'Give us an organization of revolutionists and we shall overturn all of Russia.'" And rather interesting -- by the way, that reminds me of the statement made of the Apostle Paul when he came to Thessalonica with his little company, "They that have turned the world upside down have come here too." But then another thing that was said about Lenin, he cultivated his body. His was a short little fellow, stocky, bald-headed, a bullet head. And he walked over the city of Zurich with a great big overcoat that had patches all over it, although he was from a noble background and a self-made lawyer who decided after he'd been thrown out of the university a couple times that he wanted to be a lawyer himself. He passed the exam by himself since schools wouldn't take him any longer because

of his activities in revolution there. He became a lawyer but he wandered all over the city of Zurich like that. But he believed in cultivating his body for the sake of the revolution. He said, "A revolutionary knew when his physical powers would be tested in prison or in escaping from prison." Well, this one man humanly speaking is the mind behind the Russia of today. And today you will find Russians frequently making statements like, "Lenin is with us still."

Now, isn't it magnificent to know that it is really the Lord Jesus Christ who is with the given ones? "Lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age." But it is a demonstration of the fact that God can do great things with anyone he wishes of course. But often he does great things with a few in order to manifest his power and glory. These eleven weak individuals did turn the world upside down.

Now we're stressing, of course, what God has done. And I don't want to pass this by without stressing for a moment what the apostles have done. And notice the sixth verse again and the latter part of that verse. After Jesus has said he's manifested the name of the Father to them he says, "Thine they were and Thou gavest them me, and they have kept Thy word." Now, that is a testimony to the fact that the apostles have kept his word. Notice, he does not say "words" but he says "word", for the singular refers to the essential fact of his mission. That is, as the incarnate Son who would come and accomplish the atoning work that he would be the divine second person of the Trinity incarnate and God would visit men in Christ. And so, "They have kept Thy word." They had come to understand the divine origin of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not much else, but this was something they would never lose. And even in the midst of their failures, in the midst of their weakness, they still sensed that he was of divine origin. They said, "We know that you have come from God." And Peter, as the disciples are drifting away, when asked by the Lord, "Will you go too?" replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." And even later when Peter denies the Lord Jesus Christ as evidence of the fact that that essential knowledge was still with him, he went out and wept bitterly. So, "They have kept my word." "What loving optimism," someone has said, "Jesus uses in describing the apostles."

Much lay on the surface with them. There were many things that were said to them that they were totally inattentive to like so many things that pass over the minds and by the ears of us in Believers Chapel as we have been taught over and over again. They were the same. They listened to the word of God and it didn't sink in. And later they wrote their Gospels and they said, "Ah, now we see what he meant when he talked about resurrection. We know now the meaning of things that happened then which we did not grasp." So much fell on immature ears. Much lay on the surface of immature minds, but their faith was a real faith. As far as justification by faith, probably not a one of the eleven could have expressed that in a way that would be satisfactory to me, or the doctrine of reconciliation or vast numbers of other doctrines of the Christian faith which many of us can express accurately. They wouldn't have been able to do that. We would have had to say, "Later they will know. Later they will be able to do it. Later they will write about it. Later we will study their writings." But not then. They have, however, kept his word.

And the Lord goes on to say in verse 7 and 8 that they have known. "Now, they have known that all thing whatsoever Thou hast given me are of Thee for I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest, and they have received them and have known surely that I came out from they. And they have believed that Thou did send me." So they have known, they have received and they have believed. We must not bury human responsibility when we talk about divine sovereignty. It is the Father who gave the flock to the Son, but when he gave them to the Son he gave them with the determination that these would come to faith in him. He does not believe for us. We believe. We are not robots. We are not puppets with no wheels or choices. He elects but we believe. So often people, when they hear of someone say, "We are divinely elected," and they will run out and say, "He doesn't believe in a will at all." How foolish. How foolish.

On Thursday night this week a nice young couple came to visit Martha and me and we discussed some of these things because he's been in a church that is of a different persuasion. And many things have been coming to his mind as he's listened to some of our tapes and heard some of our broadcasts. And he's concerned over these truths and wanted to discuss them with me, and we

discussed them for some period of time. And then he pulled out his little notebook and he said, "I have some questions to ask and the first one is," and I could tell of course that he's had numbers of discussions with individuals who are of the opposite persuasion because he had a list of questions. And the first question was, "Well, if we believe in the sovereign grace of God then we do not have any will or choice." And of course, it was my pleasure [Laughter] to say, "Look, those who believe in the sovereign grace of God believe that the will must make a choice. We have a will. We always have a will. We always must make choices. That's not the issue. The issue is from whence do the choices that please God ultimately come."

Now, before we come to know Jesus Christ we have a will and we have choices. But our nature is evil so that our choices that we freely make are negative with respect to God. They that are in the flesh cannot please God. "We cannot know God," Paul says. But after we have been regenerated and given a nature from God then of course there are possibilities that were not present before. The apostle still addresses us, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." You must continue to make your choices. Then he says, "For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." So the choices that we continually have to make, if they are pleasing to God they are choices that he in his power and divine ability enables us to make. That's a stunning example as someone has said, Philippians 2:12 and 13, of the conjunction of divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

We must remember that when [we] talk about human inability we do not mean human impossibility. When we say that man is unable to believe we do not mean that man cannot believe. We mean that man is unable to believe of himself, but man is able to believe with divine ability. Just like the lame man or the man with the withered hand and Jesus addresses them and says, "Get up." They cannot get up but they can get up with divinely given ability. That is what the Scriptures mean when it talks about human inability and divine ability. Let us read the Bible. Let us pay attention clearly to what it says and let us rejoice in the fact that God does give a group of individuals to the Son.

Now, finally the Son intercedes in verse 9 and verse 10. It's as if he were saying, "Now, before I come to the prayer for these individuals I'm trying to clarify the ones about whom I'm speaking. These are the men whose case I desire to plead, those who have been given me by the Father." In the 9th verse he says, "I pray for them. I pray for them." Now, in a moment he will say what he praying for them. He will tell the Father, "Keep them. Sanctify them." But he's praying for them. He's like Aaron the high priest. Remember Aaron the high priest? Did he pray for the world? Did he carry on his priestly ministry for the world? Answer me. No. I'll give you the answer. [Laughter] He didn't.

Aaron had two stones on his shoulders. On those stones were engraved the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. He had an ephod and on the ephod in his breast were engraved or were the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. He carried on his ministry for the people of God, for Israel. All that he did he did for the people of God. Of course, the people of God ultimately were to be the instrumentality for the conversion of the world but his work was essentially for the people of God. High priestly work is for the people of God. Our Lord Jesus prays for the people of God. "I pray for them." So like the greater Aaron with the names of the children of Israel on his shoulders, the place of strength, and the names of the children of Israel on his breast, the place of affection, the Lord Jesus prays for his own. He loves them. He has affection for them. They are the Father's gift to him. They are precious to him and he is concerned with them. He doesn't pray for the world, he says, "but for them which Thou hast given me."

Now, we must not think that Jesus has no concern for the world. As we shall see in a few moments, he will say he prays for these that they may be of a certain influence in the world and that others who are in the world may come into the family of God. We need to remember that all of these things are set out in the word of God. And let us remember that these are the things of the word of God and it is important that we bow to them.

Yesterday I got through the mail a little folder from a pastor in Florida, who by the way will be happy that we're going to be on a station in Florida because he'll be able to hear it. But he is a

preacher and he sends me his bulletins every three or four weeks. And on one of his bulletins which I read yesterday there was a quotation from another contemporary preacher which says, "I've often reminded people of what a ridiculous thing it would have been if Noah had put one of our bumper stickers on the outside of the ark which stated, "Smile, God loves you." [Laughter] You see, there are two sides to the eternal God: a loving gracious merciful God, but he is also a God of justice and holiness. As that definition of God in the Westminster Shorter Catechism makes very plain these are two aspects of the divine being and we shall not understand our place in society, our place in the world, our place before God until we understand those two things. Let us who are believers rejoice in the electing grace of God. Let us not be afraid to proclaim it. Let us not mously refer to it and pass quickly by it. It is of great benefit to the people of God to know these great truths. One of the greatest of the interpreters said, "If we are individuals who want to say there is no such thing as the special love of God in electing grace then we do grievous injury to the Church of Jesus Christ. We do grievous injury to the Church of Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ is concerned for his elect and we deprive them of the support of Jesus Christ when we affirm that there is no such thing as the special love of God for the people of God."

In the 10th verse he concludes, and I do too, by simply saying in effect, "Lord, I'm just commending to you those who are yours. All mine are Thine and Thine are mine." Anybody can say that first clause. But who could say that second except Jesus? "And Thine are mine." But in this case he's talking about the elect, the given ones. And he says, "Mine are Thine and Thine are mine. And further, I'm glorified in them." I think the Father will answer this pray prayed by the Son.

Well, let me sum it up in a just a sentence. We notice again some of the steps in the divine work of salvation: election, giving, faith by which the sheep are brought into the fold. We're pressed again with the deep and abiding love of the Father and the Son for the given ones. How marvelous. That's enough to last us for days and days isn't, to realize how precious we are in the sight of Christ and of God.

“Jesus Praying for the Apostles, part I” by S. Lewis Johnson
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If you're here this morning and you've never believed in him, oh what you are missing. We invite you to come to Jesus Christ. The sacrifice has been offered. The high priest has offered the sacrifice that is sufficient for the sins of sinners. Come to Christ. Receive the benefits of the saving work and come to be assuredly part of that great company of the given ones. Come to Christ.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for these magnificent words of the Lord Jesus Christ. After all of these years of pondering them we still find them inexhaustible in their riches. The divine character of the words of God and of Christ still impress themselves upon us. And Lord, if there should be some in this audience who have not yet come may at this very moment...

[RECORDING ENDED ABRUPTLY]