



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 17:20-26

“Jesus Praying for the Family”

TRANSCRIPT

[Audio begins] We are continuing the study of John chapter 17 and this morning we’re turning to the last verses of the 17th chapter, in which our Lord’s prayer reaches out beyond himself and beyond the apostles to the whole family of God. John chapter 17 verse 20 through verse 26 is the Scripture reading for today,

“Neither pray I for these alone, but 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 may believe that Thou hast sent me. And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me. 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.”

There are two little points about verse 24 that I’d like to mention during the Scripture reading rather than in the message. You notice the way the verse begins, “Father, I will that they

also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am;” This word “I will” or the word translated “I will,” is a word that often in the New Testament means simply to wish. And there are many instances where it means essentially that. In this context almost all of the students of the Gospel of John agree that it means something far more than that here, as it often does in other places as well. And here it expresses, in a very strong way, the will of our Lord, “Father, I will” in the sense of this is the intent of my petition. Not simply a wish, but expressive of the will of the Savior.

The other thing that I’d like for you to notice in this text, “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” is this. You notice that the glory that our Lord speaks about here is the glory that was given him. And so it’s unlikely that he’s speaking about the glory of the eternal second person of the Trinity, but rather is speaking about the Messianic glory, the glory that is his because of the successful completion of his Messianic task. And so it’s the glory of the Messianic God man. That is the glory that is given by the Father to the Son as the mediator. And so that is what he is speaking about here when he says, “that they may behold my glory.” That is, behold him as the one who has successfully completed the atoning work. He’s speaking of course from the standpoint of the cross.

And then in verse 25, “O righteous Father,” it’s striking isn’t it, that the Lord Jesus should address the Father as “O righteous Father,” for so many think that God’s righteousness is not really a basic aspect of his character. But our Lord not only says, “holy Father,” but “righteous Father.” Not simply loving Father, but “righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

This is a magnificent petition. I don’t know how many times I have read through the Gospel of John. I don’t know how many times I’ve taught through the Gospel of John. I do not remember how many times I’ve talked students through the Greek text of the Gospel of John. But I must confess that studying again, a little more intensively again these past few weeks, I’ve been tremendously impressed with this petition of our Lord, and it has done me a great deal of spiritual

good. I need a great deal of spiritual development and growth anyway, but the study of this petition has been of significant meaning to me. And I would commend it to you for your own study. You’ve had a little introduction to it through these expositions of the chapter, but we’ve only had time to touch the highlights. I wish it were possible to give a clause by clause, phrase by phrase, exposition of this, not simply for my own study but for the benefit of all of us. It has caused me to pray more fervently, and more frequently too. I hope that that is the result of our study of it. Let’s bow together in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for this magnificent prayer, preserved by the Apostle John through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And we thank Thee that we are able to read so many hundreds of years later, that which our Lord Jesus prayed on that significant occasion. And we are overwhelmed by the depth of the thought that is found within it, and particularly overjoyed because of the way in which our Lord’s thoughts were centered upon us, the ones given to him by Thee. And Lord we are grateful for this, and we thank Thee and praise Thee, and we know we could never measure up to what has been done for us in any way. Thou hast been so gracious to us. But Lord, we do desire that our lives and our testimony may reflect the glory of our great savior that the love with which Thou hast loved him may be in us, and also that he may be in us in a more significant way than ever before.

We thank Thee and praise Thee for the assurance that we have as we read this petition, that we are safe forever more in him. And O Lord, help us to be useful, and fruitful, and may our lives glorify his name.

We pray for our country in these very critical days. We ask Lord for wisdom and guidance to be given to our leaders. We recognize the severity of the international situation, and we pray O God that Thy purposes may be accomplished and that wisdom and guidance may be given to the nations of the earth. Especially Lord, do we pray for the church of Jesus Christ. And we ask Lord that Thou wilt bless the church, bind the church together in a deeper relationship to their head, the

Lord Jesus Christ. Use us in these days. Awaken many throughout the world to their need and to the sufficiency of the saving work of Christ for their sins, and O God, by the Spirit, draw them to him.

We pray for the sick, the ill, the troubled, those who are struggling with life itself, minister to them, build them up in the faith, and help them to remember, as our Lord has prayed, that Thou art a righteous Father, not a cruel Father, and that the experiences of life are experiences that flow through Thy hands to us for our edification, and growth, and development, and encouragement. We pray that this meeting may honor and glorify the triune God. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Our subject for today in the conclusion of our study of the High Priestly Prayer of our Lord is Jesus praying for the whole family. The final words of our Lord's prayer touch upon abidingly significant truths, just as the previous verses of this petition have as well. For example, the nature of heaven itself is a point that the Lord Jesus expatiates upon when he says in the 24th verse, “Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am.” We've often wanted to know what heaven was like. One of the things about the study of the Scriptures that is rather significant is that we do not have nearly so much information about the future and life in heaven as we would like, and no doubt the fundamental reason for this is that we are not prepared in our present state to understand even if it had been unfolded for us. But still there are some indications of some of the things that will characterize heaven.

There is another point that is raised by these last few verses, although it has been mentioned previously in the 11th verse, it is the nature of church unity. In what sense is the church of Jesus Christ united, and in what sense should the church of Jesus Christ be united, while we are here upon the earth? One notices, of course, that the Lord Jesus three times, in verse 21, verse 22, verse 23, in fact, four times in the Authorized Version, but in the original text three times, prays that we might be one. In what sense are we to take this petition that “they all may be one.” Is our Lord praying for organizational unity? Is he praying for spiritual unity alone? Or is he perhaps praying for spiritual

unity as well as organizational unity? These are some of the things that come before us here, and particularly they are significant in the light of the ecumenical age in which we live, for characteristic of the great mass of professing Christians is the movement to unite.

Just recently two of the denominations have united, the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, which itself was a union of the United Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America some twenty years ago or so, has now united with the Presbyterian Church in the United States and of course in the meantime two other Presbyterian denominations have broken off of these two churches, which have united, but still we have now a much larger Presbyterian Church in the United States as a result of this union, and there're other thoughts of union that are being expressed constantly.

Just this past week I received a magazine that I take, and in it there is an article by a young theologian referring to the possible union of the Presbyterian Church in America, which recently united with the Reformed Presbyterian Church evangelical synod, and now possibly union with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and this young Presbyterian theologian argues very eloquently for the fact that we not only may merge, not only should merge, but must merge because, for one reason Jesus prayed in John 17 that we might be one. It was striking to me that this young man whose ministry I've appreciated very much, in the first part of the article, a number of times stated that he felt that denominationalism was wrong, and in fact sinful. But then, the thrust of the article was that they should unite in another denomination. It was rather striking to me, but nevertheless that at least gives you the mood of the day among, not only the more liberal professing Christians, but also the evangelical Christians, they're all talking about union. What does our Lord mean when he says, “that they might be one?”

There's another thing that appears here and that is the nature of the evangelistic mission. The Lord Jesus says, “Neither pray I for these alone but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.” We often hear discussions of what is true evangelism, what kind of evangelistic outreach should we have in our day? The popular notion is that the first obligation of the church is

to evangelize. Well we would all, I'm sure, agree that that is one of the major tasks of the church, constantly to evangelize, to give out the gospel of Jesus Christ. A. W. Tozer, who wrote most eloquently of evangelical concerns, as a Christian and a Missionary Alliance man, the denomination which has more churches in the foreign field than it has in this home country, testifying to its evangelistic zeal, that the first obligation of the church was not to evangelize but to be spiritually worthy to evangelize.

Now of course in one sense we're never spiritually worthy, and Mr. Tozer knew that, but what he was speaking about was that we should be sure that we have attained to some maturity before we seek to transport Christianity to the heathen. He said to spread an effete, degenerate brand of Christianity to pagan lands is not to fulfill the commandment of Christ or discharge our obligation to the heathen. He said that he was haunted by some words of Matthew chapter 23 and verse 15 where the Lord Jesus said, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.” He said we are inclined to think that a church which does not have much of the truth of God, if any, but yet professes a Christian position that that church will not evangelize, but the facts are otherwise. And we know of course, as Christians who have been Christians for some time, that some of the strongest evangelistic arms of religious groups are those who are most opposed to the fundamentals of the Christian faith.

Witness the Mormon church, evangelistic in its outreach but not a Christian church at all. Even the weakest of evangelicals would acknowledge that the Mormons are not Christians. And many of the Mormons of course, will also privately acknowledge that they are not either, in the sense of what a biblical Christian is. Or the Jehovah's Witnesses, who are also extremely evangelistic, but the kind of testimony that they transport to the heathen is not the testimony and Christianity of the word of God.

Mr. Tozer went on to say one of the problems that we have is that the church has become a very worldly church. He said, “In fact it's an accepted part of our way of life. He said our religious

mood is social instead of spiritual. We’ve lost the art of worship. We’re not producing saints. Our models are successful businessmen, celebrated athletes, and theological personalities. Our homes have been turned into theatres, our literature is shallow, our hymnody borders on sacrilege, and scarcely anyone appears to care. He concludes this brief editorial by saying, “Increased numbers of demi-Christians is not enough. We need a reformation.” Our Lord’s words touch on that, for he touches upon the spread of the testimony of the apostles, and he give us a very important clue with reference to that which Mr. Tozer is speaking about, how the evangelistic mission is to be carried out.

Well I’ve said, as we have been going along, that we can liken this prayer of our Lord to three concentric circles. The first, the smallest circle within the other two circles, is the part of the petition that has to do with our Lord. He said, “glorify Thy Son, glorify me.” And then we said the larger concentric circle, but still smaller than the largest, begins in the 6th verse and goes through the 19th verse and represents our Lord’s prayer for the apostles. And he prays preeminently for them, although I do think that may be, by reasonable application in this day, include others as well, “that they be kept, and that they be sanctified.” And now, in the largest circle of all, in the 20th verse, our Lord goes on to pray for all who believe through their word. So this is the largest of our circles. It’s the widest breath of our Lord’s prayer. It still is not for the world. He does not pray for the world, but he does pray for more than himself, more than the apostles, he prays for the whole body of the saints who are given to him by the Father.

Now the first stress of the petition is on unity. And three times, in verse 21, verse 22, verse 23, the Lord Jesus prays “that they might be one.” I’d like for you to notice first of all an important statement that he makes in verse 20, because it bears on this question of evangelism, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe (or are believing) on me through their word.” Now notice those last expressions, “believing on me through their word.” I’d like for you to notice two things about this expression.

In the first place, there is, so far as I can see from our Lord’s statement, there is no belief apart from the apostle’s word. In other words, men believe through their word. In fact, it is probably true to say that there is scarcely anyone who could be said in the present age to have come to faith in Jesus Christ apart from the word of the apostles. Oh there might be some argument that one might make that he opened up the Scriptures and read a passage from the Book of Isaiah perhaps, and through that, not knowing anything about the New Testament, might come to some faith in a Messiah who is to come, but it’s very difficult to find anyone who would have such an experience, and he could really have no real assurance until he read the New Testament and heard the apostle’s testimony to the fact that the one of whom Isaiah speaks was the Lord Jesus Christ. So it’s fairly accurate to say, as one of the ancient puritans said, “There are no Christians in any age whatever who do not owe their faith to the word of the apostles.” Now what he meant by that was the things that the apostle’s said are things that are at the heart of the faith of all of us.

But let’s just leave it this way; in the present age, there is no belief apart from the apostle’s word. The apostle’s words are now in the New Testament; this is the tradition that they have committed to us. We’re grateful that those men sat down and wrote those letters, and wrote the history book like Luke did, the Book of Acts, and wrote the Book of Revelation as John the apostle did, the apocalypse and the Christian church, guided by the Holy Spirit in the collection of the inspired volumes, guided by the providence of God, ultimately came to the twenty-seven books of the New Testament as that upon which they rested their faith, the word of the apostles. In other words, it’s through the word of the apostles that we come to faith, and I would, I feel almost certain that everyone in this audience who has come to a true faith in the Lord Jesus would say, “I have come to faith through the things that the apostles have written.”

Now there is one other thing I think that should be said about this and that is that faith comes from the Word. Aside from the apostle’s word, faith comes from the Word. We know the text of the New Testament, which Paul wrote, “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Jesus says the same thing, “I pray not for the world, I pray not simply for the apostles, I pray

for those also who believe on me through their word.” In other words, when a man comes to faith in Christ he comes through the operation of the Holy Spirit who uses the word of God. There may not be some specific text. We may not be able to say, “I came to faith in Christ through Romans chapter 4 and verse 5,” or “through John 3:16” but the essence of the teaching of the apostles is bound up in the way by which we came to the assurance of the forgiveness of sins through the Lord Jesus, through the word of God. Not through the Christ of our imaginations, but through the Christ set forth in the word of God. Not through the Christ of the philosophies, but through the Lord Jesus Christ as set out in the Scriptures. Not through religious books, which sometimes may be helpful and sometimes may be very unhelpful, but through the Christ of the Bible we have come to faith.

So the Lord Jesus expresses the concern of the petition first of all, and that is for the church, apart from the apostles, those who have come and will come to faith in him. Isn't it a magnificent thing to think that the Lord Jesus prayed for us before we were ever born? He prayed for those who are believing and furthermore, he also acknowledged that we had been given, and actually he committed us to the Father for the Father's keeping before we'd ever been born. What a magnificent thing that is, and what a sense of security it gives us to know that.

Now the content of the prayer is “that they all might be one.” What does that mean? I'd like to suggest some things it probably does not mean, and then a thing that it probably does mean. We might think of one in different ways. We could think of one in the sense of unanimity, absolute agreement of thought. That's what you almost have in Soviet Russia today. I don't know whether you've listened to any of the interviews with the Russians on the streets of Moscow when some of the western reporters have asked them what do they think about what happened to that Korean jet. Well there's absolute unanimity of thought. They could not find any Russian who did not say exactly what had come down from on high, on the mount. They have almost absolute unanimity, outwardly. One man did say, “If it is as you say, I would be embarrassed to be a Russian” but I would imagine that he would be very careful about saying that publicly, almost unanimity, why unanimity in

Christian things leads to something like a pope or a vicar on earth. Our Lord, while of course ultimately we shall have views that are precisely the same in the time to come, it's doubtful that our Lord prays for that now, otherwise he would be very frustrated, and we know that he is never frustrated in his petitions. So probably he does not mean unanimity.

Well, perhaps we could think of uniformity. That is agreement in practice, agreement in ritual, that all of us every Sunday should observe the Lord's supper, like the apostles did, and like the early church did, as we know from the things that the early church has written, and furthermore, that our practices in our meetings should be all of the same kind. Every meeting, for example, should begin with the singing of the Doxology, and should include the singing of the Gloria and the recitation of the Apostle's Creed, and the singing of the choir, and the reading of Scripture, and a closing hymn, and so on. Well, it's doubtful that the Lord had uniformity in mind. Why uniformity, just as unanimity, outwardly may exist without unity at all. We have churches in which there is outward uniformity, but inward difference of opinion on the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

Anyway, if we did have uniformity, would that mean that the world would believe in Jesus Christ? If we all came into the meetings, if our meetings were altogether alike, would that create such an atmosphere that people coming in would say, “They all believe the same thing, they all do the same thing, they even follow the same order of service. I think I shall believe too.” I don't think that that's what our Lord was talking about. That would not mean anything. We might be suspicious of such a thing.

Is it perhaps that he is speaking about union then, not unanimity, not uniformity, but union, organizational union? That is, they should all have the same affiliation. We should all be Presbyterian, or we should all be Baptists, or we should all be Methodists, or we should all be Roman Catholics. Well of course we know that you can have that kind of union without unity at all. We have something like that in the ecumenical movement in the World Council of Churches, in which representatives of many different churches gather together and they have an organizational affiliation, but there're differences of opinion in that organization. There are some evangelicals within it and

there are some rank liberals, and there are some that really shouldn't be called Christians at all.

Remember Lloyd Jones' famous little statement, “Throwing all of the ecclesiastical corpses into the same grave will not produce a resurrection.” So if we all join the same organization that will not mean necessarily that we shall have true unity.

Our Lord obviously is referring to unity, “that they may be one.” That is, oneness of inner heart, oneness of purpose that arises from oneness of doctrine. What he's talking about is the thing that Paul, the member of the first Believers Chapel, and Augustine the Romanist, Wycliffe the proto-protestant reformer, Luther the Lutheran, Calvin the Presbyterian, Wesley the Methodist, Moody and others, the one thing that they all had, the one thing they all had was that fundamental doctrine of Jesus Christ. That was the thing that binds these men together, diverse in many ways, into a true union in Christ. All believers in the Lord Jesus have been baptized by the one Holy Spirit into the one body of Christ. There are many ways in which we may differ, but there is a fundamental way in which all Christians are one. That is in their doctrine of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we do not have that fundamental oneness, that inward oneness of trust in him as the God-man who has offered the atoning sacrifice, we're not really part of this one body of the Lord Jesus Christ. To my mind, the Lord is praying about spiritual unity, fundamentally, and that prayer of his is answered through the ministry of the Holy Spirit who has bound us all together in the one body. I don't deny that it might be desirable for us to have more organizational unity among those who truly believe. I would not deny that, but it appears to me that our Lord is speaking fundamentally about the spiritual unity that exists among true believers.

Now, it's easy to understand then why he should say, in verse 21, “that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me” and then in verse 23, “that the world may know that Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved me.” For when we have individuals who are of diverse backgrounds, and even diverse organizational associations, who all of them beautifully, harmoniously, proclaim the supremacy of our Lord Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation, and the

satisfier of the needs of human hearts, that is a tremendous testimony to the truthfulness of the word of God. It appears to me that our Lord prays for that kind of unity.

Now I'd like for you to notice verse 24, in which our Lord speaks about heaven, “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.” In other words, he prays for a purpose of glory. What is the glory? Well the glory is of the glorified Son of man. He would like for the believers to be with him where he is, and he would like for them to be with him where he is in order that they may behold him as the glorified Son of man.

Well, I would only say this to my Lord, if I were able to say this to him, and I do say it in prayer, “When I come into your presence, I do not want to look at anybody else but you, and I do want to behold the glory of my redeeming Messianic God-man.” And our Lord's petition, it seems to me, is that he wants us to be with him and he wants us to be with him in order that we may behold his Messianic glory. Well I would think that any Christian who has come to understand the Lord Jesus Christ's saving work, would not have any difficulty with that whatsoever. And isn't it interesting that he says, “I will” “Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am.”

If one were to take a concordance and look up the use of the Greek term *thelo* which is used here, you would find that sometimes that word means something like “I wish” but sometimes it also means something like “I will.” For example, our Lord said to the leper who said, “Lord, if you would, you can heal me” and he said, “I will, be thou clean.” He didn't mean “I wish.” He meant “I will.” In other words, this word is a word that expresses often the determination of our Lord, the will of our Lord as over against a wish, that's the force of it here. In fact, in one sense it's his last will and testament, “Father, I will that they be with me where I am.” Someone has said it's the autocracy of eternal love. And he wants us to see his glory as the Messiah who has finished his work for us.

Now, I'd like to illustrate what our Lord really means by this, and I must say it's a magnificent thought, and I just hope that I'm able to get it over to you. And I'm going to use Mr.

Prier as part of the illustration, and I hope you won't mind Howard. You know I've loved you for many years, and I still love you after what I'm going to say about you, [Laughter] but still I want to use you as an illustration. I'd like for you to really think about this idea, “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.” Now you can see of course, very simply, that what our Lord is praying about is that we should be with him, and furthermore, since he's talking about eternal things, that we should be with him forever. Now that's the simplest idea of heaven.

Remember when our Lord, or when Paul through the Holy Spirit gives the revelation concerning the rapture of the church. He says that the Lord is going to come from heaven, he's going to bring the spirits of those who are with the Lord, the bodies of them shall be resurrected, and we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them, and we shall meet the Lord in the air, and then Paul adds, “and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” And in Philippians chapter 1 the apostle speaks about the fact that he has this great tension. He really wants to be with the Lord, “For me to live is Christ, to die is gain.” But nevertheless it seems more needful for the present for him to stay on earth. In 2 Corinthians chapter 5 he says, “To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.” Not with the Lord as a stone lying on the ground in front of a person, but with the Lord in the sense of personal communion, as that preposition “with” indicates in that context in 2 Corinthians 5. So the simplest idea of heaven is to be with the Lord. Remember the famous statement of Mr. Moody who said that, “When I get to heaven I'm going to sit at the feet of Jesus for one thousand years, and then I'm going to say, ‘Where's Paul?’” Well he was trying to express the idea that the fundamental fact of getting to heaven is to be with our Lord.

Now, I want to ask you something. I'm sure that many of you in this audience have some acquaintances; people that you know, you've met, you've had conversations with, perhaps you've been in their home, they've been in your home, but you don't really know them real well. Sometimes you say, “I'd like to know him or her better.” But let me ask you a question. Would you like to

spend every moment with them, forever? Well, no, that would be oppressive. In fact, that might be punishment. [Laughter] Even though they may be just marvelous people, marvelous believing people, entertaining people, but to be with them forever, morning, noon, night, no.

But now what about some good friends? What about some of your close Christian friends? This is where you come in Howard. [Laughter] Now Mr. Prier, as you well know, I admire very much. He’s the best elder I’ve ever known. And there’re many other things. We go back a long ways. We go all the way back to days in theological seminary. I love him. I look forward to every night that we’re together. But now if you were to ask me, “Would you like to have such fellowship with Howard Prier that you should be able to spend morning, noon, and night, and even the sleeping moments with Howard?” I’m sorry Howard, [Laughter] I, in your present condition, and in my present condition, I’m sorry, no, I would not.

As a matter of fact, even members of my family, can you understand that? You love the members of your family, you really love them, but to be with them morning, noon, and night, all the moments of the day, no. I spent twenty-one years with some members of my family. They were great years, I loved them, but there were a lot of moments that I was away. I longed to come home from school and to go out and see my friends. To be there constantly, no actually there is only one person, for many of us, a husband, a wife, there is only one person that you can honestly say, “I wouldn’t mind being with them every moment of the day.” In fact, let me put it another way. You would not be happy if you were not able to do that, with the one person.

Now here is the Lord Jesus, and he has been praying, “glorify the Son” and he’s prayed in the 5th verse, “now O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.” He longs to be back in the presence of the Father, and have the relationship that he had with the first person of the Trinity that he, the second person of the Trinity, had throughout all of the ages of eternity past, and Jesus is not happy unless he also has you and me with him as well. All the time, all the time, morning, noon, and night, twenty-four hours of whatever days may be throughout eternity, “I will that they be with me where I am.”

That’s what we call down on earth “love.” A husband loves his wife, and wishes to be with his wife. He’s happy with his wife all the time, a wife with her husband. But our Lord expresses this from the standpoint of eternity. What a magnificent conception, and what a magnificent Lord. And what a tremendous blessing it is to be the object of the love of a Savior like this, “I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am” restored to the glory of the second person of the Trinity, now the Messianic God-man, and we with him. The consequence is that we may behold his glory. His glory is bound up with all that he has done for us, all that he is, all of the magnificent works that he did before the work of redemption, all of the magnificent results of redemption, all of the magnificent works that shall be done down through the ages to come, we are to be with him constantly to observe them, to enjoy them, and to be the recipient of the love of our great Savior God. Why anyone would not rush to our Lord to become a Christian is difficult to understand in the light of this.

Well the last petition I’ll have to pass over for time’s sake. It’s really a promise of continued revelation. That’s what we would expect down through the ages of eternity, he shall continue to unfold the riches of his person, and of his work. O righteous Father. You know often in the experiences of life Christians, by reason of the trials, and disturbances, and difficulties that they have, and the tragedies that often come to us, sometimes they’re even shaken in their faith. Some individuals will say in the midst of some of the deep trials of life, “I wonder really if there is a God. He seems to be utterly silent to me.” Isn’t it striking that Jesus should pray, “O righteous Father.” In all of the experiences of life he is utterly just. Everything that happens to us is thoroughly in accord with his righteousness.

The gift of salvation through the blood that was shed gives me a righteousness of God that is acceptable to him, but in all of the experiences of life he is just too. And when tragedies occur, and when we’re ill, and when they are, we’re in the deepest of trials, and we pray to heaven, and the heavens do not seem to answer, it is well for us to remember that God has already spoken in his Son. He has spoken and we shall see that our Lord’s words, “O righteous Father” find fulfillment in our

life. He says, “The world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent me, and I have declared unto them Thy name, and I will declare it.” In other words, there is continued unfolding of the significance of the name of God, and further, this is done “that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them.”

You know you’ve often heard me say that theology is tremendously important. It is the foundation of or Christian experience. A little theology is necessary to be saved. A lot of theology is very helpful for Christian health. And still more theology is useful for all of the fruitfulness that a Christian should expect as he ministers as a servant of God, for we’re all servants of God. But of course, knowledge is as a means to an end. All knowledge of God is subservient to the divine love. Now we’re not talking about human sentimentality. We’re not talking about patting each other on the back, being nice to them on Sunday or during the week. We’re talking about divine love. The kind of love that finds expression in devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ, and devotion to his will, as our Lord was devoted to the will of the Father. It is true that if we think of Christianity as, “It makes us theists” we’ve missed the point. Or if we think of Christianity as, “It has brought us to the conviction that God is a Trinitarian God.”

All of these are important things, but there is much more in the Christian faith than that. Theology’s one of the great words, but theology does not really soar to the heart of God until it finds its expression in the love of God in Christ. And that is what our Lord is praying about. He prays, “that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them.” And that’s the only way it is in us incidentally. So our Lord talking about the depths of devotion to the will of God, aroused by the love that he has shown to us that others too might come to understand the divine love and live out the divine love to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, blessings indescribably, unity in life, glory with the Son of God, ever increasing revelation leading to a deeper experience of the love of God, what a future we do have.

May I close with just this. The basis of it all is expressed very simply when Jesus says, “I pray not only for them, but for those who are believing through their word.” Are you a believer?

Have you come to rest your time in eternity on the Lord Jesus Christ? We trust that through the ministry of the Lord Jesus, who offered the atoning sacrifice, you may recognize as a sinner that you're free to come and free to receive as a free gift, eternal life, and join the company of the body of Christ, united in the oneness of faith in him.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful for these magnificent words. Who could ever expound them in their depth and fullness and beauty? We look forward to the day when we shall be with him where he is. But we thank Thee that through the Spirit, he is with us and we are with him today, in anticipation of that fuller experience of the future. O Lord, if there should be someone in this audience who has not yet come to trust in Christ, may they at this very moment, moved by the Holy Spirit...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]