

Christ's Twofold Estate

Lesson 3: A Prayer of Commendation, Jn 17.11

Orientation

- I. The sum of Christ's petitions is that His Father would *keep His people*. This request for keeping implies danger. –There's a double danger facing Christ's church: 1) the danger of sin, 2) the danger of ruin; and the means of preserving them from both is the same: *the mighty power of God*.
- II. Christ presses His request with arguments drawn from three points: 1) His condition (*I am no more in the world*), 2) our condition (*but they are in the world*), 3) the joint interest He and His Father have in His people (*they were yours and you gave them to me*).

Doctrine: *Christ's fatherly care and tender love was eminently manifested in the pleading prayer He poured out for His people at His departing from them.*

- I. The mercies Christ requested for us. Christ asks no trifles, no small things, but the very best that His redeeming work affords us.
 - A. Our preservation from sin and danger, vv.11, 15. *This* is why we're preserved amid a world of temptations. *This* is why we're not ruined and destroyed amid multitudes of malicious enemies who are set on fire by hell. The sin that's in us, and the malice that's in others, would quickly ruin our souls and bodies if it weren't for God's hand that keeps us every moment.
 - B. The blessing of union among us, v.11, 21. This is not only a great mercy, but a special means of accomplishing our preservation.
 - C. That His joy might be fulfilled in us, v.13. He desired to provide for our full joy even when the hour of His great sorrow was at hand.
 - D. That His people might be sanctified through the Word, v.17. He would have the Word plant gracious habits and principles deeply in our hearts for our sanctification. This holiness is a great mercy in itself, but it's also a great help toward their preservation, unity, and joy.
 - E. That we might be with Him and behold His glory, v.24. This is the best and ultimate privilege. The end of His coming down from heaven and returning there again runs into this: to bring many sons and daughters to glory, Heb 2.10
- II. The arguments Christ pleads with His Father for these things.
 - A. The common interest He and His Father have in the people for whom He prays, v.10. The Father set His eternal love on them and in that love gave them to Christ. Everyone cares for his own. These are the Father's own; therefore, He will surely save, keep, comfort, and sanctify them.
 - B. Christ's honor, v.10. The Father's heart is entirely set upon exalting and honoring His Son. Christ's glory is tied to His people. If they perish, what will become of His glory as their Redeemer?
 - C. Christ's departure, v.11. He is leaving His people physically. It will bring them great sadness and trouble. While He was with them, they had His counsels, His reproofs, His comforts. But now He is leaving. What will become of them when He is gone? He asks the Father to look after them.
 - D. Their danger, v.11. The world is a sinful and infecting place. It lies in wickedness. It's a hard thing for poor, weak, and imperfect people to escape its pollutions. And if they do, they can't escape its troubles, persecutions, and oppositions. They are like soldiers in an enemy's camp, sheep among wolves, treasure among thieves. Since Christ must leave them, He asks the Father to take special care of them.

- E. His ascension, v.11. The purpose of His coming to the Father is for them. He comes to heaven to advocate for them, to intercede for them. And now He gives them a taste of the intercession He goes to do for them. In answering this request, the Father will bring them great encouragement in the efficacy of the requests He'll make for them in heaven.
 - F. Christ's faithfulness, v.12. The Father committed to Christ a certain number of elect to be redeemed by Him. He undertook that responsibility and He has been faithful to it. He redeemed them, preserved them, and confirmed them. Not one was lost except Judas, whom the Father never gave to the Son to be redeemed. Now He commends them to the Father's care.
- III. The reasons Christ prays for these things. It was not because the Father was unwilling to grant these things. So why was it?
- A. It was because He saw a great trial before Him. He knew how the coming hour would sift His people. He knew the power of darkness closing in upon them. He knew their faith would be greatly shaken to see Him crucified. He foresaw the great difficulties they would face between a busy devil and a bad heart. Therefore He prays fervently for them.
 - B. He wanted to give them an example of His intercessory work in heaven. He wanted to show them what affections and dispositions He carried in His heart into heaven for them.
 - C. He wanted to leave this prayer as a standing monument of His fatherlike care and love for His people to the end of the world, v.13
- IV. The evidences of Christ's love and care for us are seen in two things.
- A. See what choice mercies He chose for us. He does not pray for health, honor, riches, etc. but for preservation from sin, joy in God, unity, sanctification, and eternal glory.
 - B. See how He affectionately pleads our concerns with God when a world of sorrow encompassed Him and a cup of wrath was about to be delivered into His hand. All His cares should've been about Himself, and all He can think of is us.

Inferences

- I. The perseverance of the saints is unquestionable. Can the Father deny the Son His request? Moreover, the Son's will and heart for the elect are the same as the Father's. So the answer is doubly secured. "Every word in this prayer is a chosen arrow, drawn by a strong and skillful hand. We do not need to question if it hits the mark." When dangers surround us, when fears and doubts multiply within, we should think Christ's words to Peter, "I have prayed for you."
- II. Christ has great love for His people. He would not leave this world until His house was put in order. He would not lay down His life until He laid His hands on these blessings for us. This was His dying prayer. We were first and last on His heart, Heb 10.5; Jn 17.11. *How precious you are to Him Dear Church!*