

The Lord's Greatest Prayer, Part 5

Scripture: John 17:11–19

Code: 43-97

There is literally a library of material that has been written through the centuries on John 17. The Puritans preached on John 17 more than any other section. They preached on John 17:3 more than any other verse. There are commentaries going way back into the time of the Reformation, the time of the Puritans that are hundreds and hundreds of pages long on John 17 – some of them in excess of 500 pages just on this chapter. This is, in many ways, an inexhaustible chapter. It's depth and breadth and height are unreachable. It launches us into the very nature of God, as well as the essence of His love for us and the significance of what salvation means eternally.

We are working our way through it at a pace that I hope is reasonable, although it is faster than I would like. There are some preachers, even in the modern era, who have preached a sermon on every verse. I resisted that because I don't think it breaks down quite like that, verse by verse. But it will seem like the highlight maybe of our life and ministry together to be in this chapter, and it would be a sad day, in one sense, when we leave this chapter, because we'll step right into the darkness of the arrest of our Lord and His crucifixion. So this is a very, very wonderful experience for all of us to be having in the 17th chapter of John.

Now just to set the stage for you a little bit, this is the Lord's Prayer. This is the real Lord's Prayer; He prayed it. We couldn't pray it. He couldn't pray what we call the Lord's Prayer because it has in it, "Forgive us our transgressions." He couldn't pray that. We can't pray this, because this is truly His prayer.

It is being prayed by our Lord in the darkness of Friday morning, the Friday He will be crucified. He is on His way to the garden of Gethsemane with the eleven disciples. Judas has already left to launch the betrayal. He prays this prayer at the end of a whole evening with the disciples in the upper room, celebrating the Passover, establishing the Lord's Table, and making all kind of incredible promises that are contained in chapters 13-16 of John, promises to them and to all believers, including us. This is the legacy of Jesus.

In 17, He prays to the Father that the Father will fulfill all the promises He has prayed. He asks the Father who loves Him perfectly and whom He loves perfectly, and who Both love us perfectly, to fulfill these promises on our behalf. It is a High Priestly Prayer for us. Here is where He intercedes for us. This is the much more work of Christ where He ever-lives to intercede for us, to bring us to glory.

As we come to this prayer, we meet Him as the Great High Priest. In just a few hours at the most, He will go into the garden and He will pray, and He will wrestle with temptation. He will come out of that temptation triumphant. Judas will show up with the entourage, they will arrest Him. They will take Him into the darkness to mock trials before Annas and Caiaphas, the high priests, and then before Herod, and then before Pilate; and early in the day, they will crucify the Lord; and on the following Sunday morning, He will rise from the dead. So this is right up and against the moment of His arrest, followed by His trial and His crucifixion. That is very important, because I want you to understand

how His High Priestly Prayer and His crucifixion go together, even though chronologically, the crucifixion follows the High Priestly Prayer in the gospel of John.

The truth of the matter is He couldn't qualify to be the High Priest if He didn't offer the sacrifice. In the Old Testament, the high priest would go into the Holy of Holies, which symbolized the presence of God, the inner-most place of God. He would go in there to offer prayers, prayers symbolized by the incense that He took. But he couldn't go unless he brought blood, the blood of the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement, and splattered that blood on the mercy seat atop of the ark of the covenant. The high priest couldn't go in and offer the prayers for the forgiveness of the people unless the sacrifice had been given and the blood sprinkled. That is what our Lord does here. He has a right to enter into the Holy Place to commune with God on our behalf to intercede for us, because He Himself, not only sprinkles the blood, but He Himself is the sacrifice and the blood is His own blood.

It's important for us to understand how those two go together. To help you with that, before we look at John 17, turn back to Hebrews, chapter 4. Hebrews, chapter 4, to which we have referred a couple of times in our study of this section, sets before us an important perspective.

Hebrews, chapter 4 and verse 14: "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore, let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

What you have here is a twofold invitation, a twofold command really. First, in verse 14, "Let us hold fast our confession." And then in verse 16, "Let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace." Twofold invitation. We are called to hold fast our confession. What is that confession? The confession concerning Christ; the confession concerning the gospel; the affirmation that we believe the gospel. And then with that affirmation, we are to "draw near with confidence to the throne of grace," which means to come all the way to Christ to receive salvation.

A similar plea is made in the 10th chapter of Hebrews in verses 22 and 23, "Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our heart sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful." The same exact two things: holding fast our confession and drawing near with full assurance, or full confidence. In reverse order, but the same two things. Both of those are calls to come to Christ, to come to salvation.

The end of chapter 10, there's a warning not to shrink back. "If anyone shrinks back – ' says God ' – My soul has no pleasure in him.' But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul." So the picture here is of people, like some of you, who would confess the truth of the gospel. "But you have not come forward and drawn near to Christ in full assurance of faith and full confidence. Come to the throne of grace to find the mercy and grace that you so desperately need."

This is a call to come. It's a crucial crossroad. When a person is convinced of the truth of the gospel, of the person of Christ, confesses that, and is moving in the direction of full faith, but is for some reason hesitant, holding onto sin, holding onto self-will; and the Holy Spirit is encouraging such a

soul at the crossroads not to fall back, not to abandon that confession and go the other direction. Cling to that confession; draw near. Why? Because – back to verse 14, “We have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.”

The reason to hold fast to your confession, the reason to draw near with confidence is that we have the only Savior. He is the only one. He has no equal, He has no rival, no one is comparable, and the book of Hebrews is written to show that. He is superior as the Son of God to all the prophets. He is superior to all the patriarchs. He is superior to all leaders, all priests, all angels. He has no equal. No one offers what He offers. No one offers an everlasting relationship to God. No one offers the forgiveness of sin. No one offers eternal life but Jesus the Son of God, a Great High Priest who has passed through the heavens.

The call of the writer of Hebrews then: embrace Christ, embrace the gospel. Become a Christian, a believer, a firm true Christianity, not because of its ethics, not because of its morals, not because of its virtues, but because we have the only Great High Priest who has offered the only satisfactory offering to God, and whose blood alone can provide mercy and grace. He is the only one who can intercede for us.

Many religions offer ethics. Many religions offer morality and virtue and charity. But only Christ offers salvation from sin, and death, and judgment, and hell. This person has no equal. He is the perfect High Priest who has passed through the heavens into the presence of God, with the blood of His own sacrifice to intercede for His people.

This would be very clear language to the Jewish people reading the epistle to the Hebrews. Every Jew would immediately capture the meaning. All earthly high priests passed through curtains to get into the Holy of Holies. A high priest went there once a year on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. That symbolized the presence of God.

The priest entering into that Holy of Holies had to go through a series of curtains. He started in the courtyard; he went through three areas. From the courtyard, he went into the Holy Place; and from the Holy Place, he went into the Holy of Holies, but only after a sacrifice had been offered and the blood taken in with the incense so that the sacrifice being made, the blood being sprinkled, the prayers on behalf of the people for forgiveness could be offered. And by the way, after he had sprinkled the blood and waved the incense symbolizing the prayers, he left. There was no place to sit down. In the Holy of Holies there was no bench, there was no chair, no place to take a seat.

But our Great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, also went through three curtains, if you will, three areas. He went through the first heaven, the atmospheric heaven; then He went through the second heaven, the stellar heaven; and then He went into the third heaven, the eternal abode of God, and He arrived there and presented His own blood shed on the cross to sprinkle on the heavenly mercy seat. That's what it says in Hebrews 12:24. He then did what no high priest has ever done: He sat down and ever-lives in the presence of God Himself, continually offering prayers for His people. It's not incense symbolizing prayers, it's our Great High Priest who remained inside the Holy of Holies seated there, interceding for His people. You see this repeated throughout the book of Hebrews: chapter 1, chapter 7, chapter 8, chapter 9, chapter 10, chapter 12. He is sitting down, He is sitting down, He is sitting down.

The high priest on the Day of Atonement went in and waved his incense after sprinkling the blood and immediately left. The sacrifice of Christ ended all sacrifices. Hebrews 10 and verse 14 says, "For by that one sacrifice, He perfected forever them that are sanctified." And then He sat down and He continues to intercede for His people to bring them to glory. The sacrifice is death made the way possible. His life praying for us secures our place in heaven. The countless gallons and gallons of blood that ran all over the temple altars for centuries, the sprinkled blood that every year stained the mercy seat year, after year, after year could never take away sin because it was just animal blood. But the Great High Priest as man shed His own blood on the altar of the cross, and by that one offering satisfied God, entered into heaven, and sat down to make intercession for us: redemption fully accomplished.

In the words of Hebrews 8:1, "Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle," and He's there. And what is He doing? He's interceding for us. He's doing it now, and He will do it until every believer chosen by God and redeemed enters into glory. He ever-lives in the presence of God, seated at His hand, to pray for us.

He is Jesus, that's His humanity. Son of God, that's His deity. As a man, He can pray for us. He can sympathize with our weakness because He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. He is a merciful and faithful high priest who knows what we go through. He suffered temptation, massive temptation at the beginning of His ministry in the wilderness under Satan; He suffered massive temptation just after this in the garden, as we will see; and He was triumphant in all of it; and He saw temptation run to its max level without ever giving into it, which means He's aware of temptation.

So He knows what we suffer. As man, He suffered temptation to the max. As God, He defeated it all. So He not only knows the temptation, but He knows the way of escape. He intercedes for us. He has turned the throne of judgment into a throne of grace. He has satisfied the wrath of God, and therefore, the throne of God is no longer a throne of judgment. It's not spewing out lightning and thunderbolts, it's offering grace and mercy.

So the call of Hebrews all through the book really is, "Come to Christ. Come to Christ. He has no parallel. He has no equal. He alone has made the sacrifice that satisfies God. He alone intercedes for those who put their trust in Him, and He brings all His sons to glory. Come to Him. Come to Him, Him alone."

So as we come now back to John 17, we are reminded that He has the right to be the Great High Priest and to intercede for us, because He will offer His own blood in just a few hours as the sacrifice that God accepted. Now in this prayer, we see how the Lord prays for His own, because here He's praying for those who believe in Him, the ones that are with Him, "The men –" verse 6 "– whom God gave Him." He's thinking, of course, of the disciples who are with Him, the eleven.

But He's not just praying for them, because down in verse 20 He says, "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word." Everybody who will believe the apostles' doctrine, the apostles' preaching, and what the apostles and associates write down – namely, the New Testament.

Salvation comes by hearing the Word, which means the revelation of God in the New Testament. So all believers throughout all the rest of human history will be saved because they've heard the message of Christ recorded in the New Testament. They will then believe because of what the apostles preached and wrote. So the prayer then is not just for the eleven, it's for all who will believe from their ministry in the future. He's praying for all believers, even those who believed in Him at that time beyond the apostles – and we know there were 500 in Galilee and 120 in Jerusalem. He's praying for believers. This is His intercession for those who belong to Him.

How does He identify believers? He identifies them in a most amazing way in verse 6 by saying, "They were Yours. Before they were ever redeemed, before they were ever saved, they belonged to You, Father. You chose them before the foundation of the world. You wrote their names down in the Book of Life. They were Yours; You gave them to Me. No man comes unto Me except the Father draws Him. You gave them to Me. I have kept them."

That's what He said in John 6: "All that the Father gives to Me will come to Me, and I will receive them; I will turn none away. I will keep them and I will raise them at the last day." He's praying for all who are the Father's from eternity past, who are saved in time, and who will ultimately be brought to glory. The reason that all who believe will be brought to glory is because of the intercessory prayers of our Lord.

I've said this before in the past. If I could lose my salvation, I would. If my salvation were up to me to keep, I would lose it. It's not; it's up to Christ to keep. And "it is the will of the Father that all that He gives the Son be brought to glory, and it is the will of the Son that all the Father gives Him He bring to glory, and it is the will of the Spirit to seal us to eternal glory," as Paul says in Ephesians 1. The whole Trinity has designed the plan, chosen before the foundation of the world, called and saved in time, and brought to glory in eternity future.

Now, specifically, what our Lord prays for us is very important to us, the focus of His prayers. We saw last time that He prays for our spiritual security, and that's rightly the first thing, verse 11, "I'm no longer in the world, yet they themselves are in the world. I come to You – " He says, " – I come to you. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are. While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have give Me. I guarded them, not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled."

"They were Yours, You gave them to Me. I have kept them. Father, I'm leaving them here in this world. This is a deadly, dangerous place. I am coming to You. Father, keep them, keep them. Hold onto them, protect them. I guarded them while I've been here. I protected them. None of them perished except the one who never was a son of God, but always a son of perdition, namely Judas."

He's praying for spiritual security that He will, the Father will bring all His redeemed sons to glory. We know that's what the Father will do because Peter says we have an inheritance. "We have an inheritance imperishable, undefiled, will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you who are protected by the power of God," 1 Peter 1. The Father will answer that prayer.

Then in a very brief comment at the end of verse 11, He prays not only for our spiritual security, but our spiritual unity. Look at the end of verse 11: "That they may be one even as We are." We'll see a

lot more about that at the end of the chapter. He prays for our spiritual unity, our spiritual unity.

And we talked about that last week in some pretty amazing terms, our unity in the Trinity. Verse 21 kind of opens that up, “That they may be one even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us.” Profound terms. “That the glory – ” verse 22 “ – which You’ve given Me, I’ve given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me,” and on He goes with that.

So He’s praying for our spiritual unity. Not praying that we all get along together in life, He’s praying for the unity of a common eternal life that will secure us a place within the Trinity, as it were, in the very life of the Trinity eternally. Invisible spiritual oneness, common eternal life, the very life of God. All of this, of course, as we saw last time, is motivated by love, motivated by love. God set His love on us, and Christ and God and the Holy Spirit will love us into heaven.

So spiritual security, we saw, spiritual unity. Those are the focus points of His prayer initially. The third one: we can call it spiritual felicity. That’s an old word, it means joy, spiritual felicity, verse 13, He prays for our joy. “But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves.” He prays for our joy.

Now notice, He again says, “Now I come to you.” This is on His mind. He has said that already in this chapter: “Father, the hour has come – ” verse 1, “ – glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You.” Down in verse 4, “I glorified You on the earth, I accomplished the work which You’d given to do. Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”

He’s saying, “Bring Me back. Bring Me back, the hour has come. I understand that. I am now coming to You.” And I told you now, it’s going to be a few days until the resurrection, and then it’s going to be 40 days until the ascension and He’s back in heaven, and that’s what’s on His mind: “I’m coming back to You.”

In fact, the closer He got to the cross, the more this occupied His mind. If you go back to the beginning of that evening in the upper room in chapter 13 when they gathered to have the Passover, notice what it says in verse 3: “Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God,” Jesus knowing that. What was on His mind? What was on His mind was that He was going back to the glory He had before the world was. That’s what was on His mind.

Chapter 14, again, it appears in verse 12 where he says, “Truly, truly, I say to you – ” to the disciples, “ – He who believes in Me, the works that I do will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to the Father.” And then it escalates in chapter 17 as we noted. He is fully anticipating leaving this world to go back to the Father.

This is the ascension that is recorded for us in Acts, chapter 1. He goes back. He goes through the first heavens, through the second heaven, into the third heaven. The final veil is past. He goes into the Holy of Holies, as it were, sprinkles His blood on the heavenly mercy seat symbolically, and sits down to ever-live to intercede for His people to bring them all to glory. Then He says this: “Now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in

themselves. I'm leaving, but everything I've said before I'm leaving – " which means all that He'd said that night, all the promises, incredible promises. We've been through them in chapters 13-16. All that He said to them was to give them joy.

And I want to just mention for the moment that this is a joy that is predicated on something that has not happened. You understand that. Everything that He said to them was yet to come, that they would have heaven's resources at their disposal, that they would have the Holy Spirit, that they would have the revelation of God and know the truth, that they would have strength, that they would be given words to say when they proclaimed the gospel. Also, that they would be hated by the world, persecuted by the world, thrown out of the synagogues, and executed by the world. They would be martyred – and almost all of them were. But He says, "I've told them all these things, all these things, to produce joy, to produce joy."

It's a tremendously important lesson in this. Life is hard, life is difficult, and we're not yet – at least in this culture – being persecuted. We're not being imprisoned and we're not being crucified. We're not being whipped, we're not being beaten, we're not being thrown in dungeons. That's what happened to the apostles. But He says, "Nonetheless, everything I've told them, which is future, which is hope, is to produce My joy; and not some of it, but My joy made full in them. I want them to live in the full joy of someone who really believes the promises of God."

Look, life is tough. It's a tough world, it's hard, disappointing. Disillusionment prevails. We all have struggles. The longer you live, the more you accumulate them. Our joy's not tied to that. Our joy's not tied to what's happening in the world, it's not good. What's happening here is exactly what the Bible says would happen, "In this world you'll have trouble." This world is careening to hell. This is the world we live in. It hates us, it hates us, there's no question about it. That hate takes different forms in different cultures, but the world hates us.

Back in chapter 15, verse 18, "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But because you're not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. What did I say to you: 'A slave is not grater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they'll persecute you. If they kept My word, they'll keep yours also. These things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they don't know the One who sent Me. He who hates Me – " verse 23 " – hates My Father." Literally, the world hates God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, the church, the redeemed. That hate takes different forms, as I said, at different times and in different places.

So how do we live in a world of hate, in a world that even now today in some places is killing Christians, beheading them, blowing them up? How do we have joy? And yet we are told that our Lord spoke all these things to give us joy. Back to 15:11, "These things – " He says the same thing, " – these things I've spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and your joy may be made full." It's not just about sort of a nominal joy, marginal joy, minimal joy; but a full joy, the very joy of Christ.

So how does that work? Because, remember, Jesus suffered the hatred of the world – I just read it. "They hated Me. They persecuted Me. They kill Me." He suffered. He suffered through His entire ministry and He suffered at the cross. "But He did it – " Hebrews says " – for the joy that was set before Him, for the joy that was set before Him." The joy that He didn't have in life.

We don't ever hear about Jesus laughing, but the Scriptures clearly tell us He wept. There was joy set before Him. And it's the same with us; the joy is ahead of us. There are tastes of it here, but full joy, "My joy made full," that is the joy that is equal to Christ in its fullness, that is future.

In chapter 16, you might look also at verse 20, "Truly, truly, I say to you – " Jesus said, " – you will weep and lament, you will weep and lament. The world will rejoice, they'll be happy to persecute you. You'll weep and you'll cry, but your grief will be turned into joy. Whenever a woman – it's like a woman in labor. She has pain because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she's no longer remembering the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world. Therefore, you too have grief now. But I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you." Verse 24 he adds, "Until now you've asked for nothing in My name. Ask and you'll receive, so that your joy may be made full."

The answers to prayer that the Lord gives us, the answers to prayer continue to elevate our joy. When we see the Holy Spirit – and He's referring to the Holy Spirit there – come and take up residence in our heart, and give us love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control – all the fruit of the Spirit, we have a taste of heavenly joy. But the full joy is yet in the future, it's yet in the future.

Please notice He says "My joy – " in chapter 17, " – that My joy may be made full in them." In chapter 14, verse 27, He gave us what He called "My peace." In chapter 16, He gave us "My Spirit." He says several times that "I give unto them life – " verse 3, this is eternal life, " – that you may know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."

We have His life, we have His peace, we have His Spirit, we have His joy; and I say all that to remind you of what we talked about last week. All of that is ours because we are in Him, we are in Christ, understanding the promises, understanding the protection, understanding all that He has for us in the future, and all that He does for us in the present secures our joy. And all of this is ours at the highest divine level because we are in Christ.

This is a stunningly wonderful realization. They've heard the Lord make all these promises, and now they hear the Lord praying for them to the Father to secure their eternal glory, to make them one, and to fill them with His own joy, joy based not on the present but on the promises of God in the future. We have His life, we have His love, we have His joy, we have His peace, because we are in Him and He is in us. We talked about that last time. We've literally been drawn into the life of the Trinity, and it's all motivated by love, it's all motivated by love, motivated by love. And so He intercedes for us, for our spiritual security, our unity, our felicity, or our joy.

I want to give you one more in the closing minutes. He prays for our immunity – or if you like safety better. You could even use the word "invincibility." But let's say immunity because we know what that means. That means to be impervious to some threat. The threat? A powerful threat, verses 14-16: "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they're not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." He prays that we would be immune to the deadly, damning threats of Satan. "I have given them Your word. I have spoken only divine truth to them, which the world rejected."

Chapter 1, verse 11, “He came to His own, His own received Him not.” He was in the world, the world was made by Him, the world knew Him not.” The world has rejected all the way along. We see that repeatedly in chapter 5 where our Lord says, “You are of your father, the devil; and so when I speak the truth, you reject the truth because there’s no truth in you, and you follow your father who’s a liar. But I have given them, these who are Yours and you gave to me, these who have heard and understood and believed the truth, I have given them Your word. The result is the world has hated them because they’re not of the world, even as I’m not of the world. They’re treated like Me.”

That statement, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world,” is repeated in verse 16. “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” This is amazing. Another way to say that would be, “They are as I am.”

When we talk about being in Christ, we are talking about something that just seems to have an endless amount of rich possibility. And here’s another one: “They are as I am.” What a statement. “They are as I am righteous, because they’re in Me. They are as I am at peace, because they’re in Me. They are as I am filled with joy, because they’re in Me. They are as I am, hated by the world, because they’re in Me.” That’s why Paul said his wounds, essentially, were the marks of Christ. People were trying to bruise and beat Christ. He wasn’t here, so they do it to those who are His.

Our Lord is saying, “Look, the world has hated them, they’re not of the world, I’m not of the world. I’m not asking you to take them out of the world. Can’t do that, can’t take them out of the world.” Why? Verse 18, “Because as You sent Me into the world, I’ve sent them into the world.”

You can’t take them out of the world because people can’t believe unless they hear; and they can’t hear unless there’s a preacher, and they’ve got to fulfill the Great Commission, right, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”

“So don’t take them out. But in this world that will hate them, persecute them, imprison them, execute them, Father, they will be treated the way I am treated; because as I am, so they are. Just keep them from the evil one.” There’s that same word again. “Guard them. Protect them.”

The intercessory work of Christ is a work of protection. It’s a guardianship that our Lord discharges. The world hates God with a passion, the true and living God. Christ, they hate with a passion. The gospel they hate with a passion. The Bible they hate. It takes different forms, as I said.

But behind all that hatred is the accuser, the slanderer, the devil, the archenemy of God – Satan, the evil one. His power is immense. His power crushed Adam and Eve, and sent the entire universe into a chaotic curse. That’s power, that’s power. And the entire universe has been reeling toward hell ever since, under the power of Satan. The results of the entire creation, every part of it, were devastating, and especially to humanity.

The fall dominates the life of mankind so that we are literally under the power of the prince of the air. We are children of disobedience. Satan is the ruler of this world. To be a part of that is to have Satan as your father, Jesus said. So the great threat against the children of God is Satan.

The question is, “Can Satan overpower us?” Can he do it personally? Can he do it with his demon forces? Can he do it through the system of corruption that he has managed to create in a fallen

world? Can he do it by tempting us through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, and generating things that appeal to that?

We know he can tempt; we know he does tempt. He threw everything he had at Christ at the beginning of his ministry, everything he had at the end of his ministry, and Christ triumphed, and we are in Christ. That's why Paul in 2 Corinthians 2:14 says, "We always triumph in Christ." If we were left out there on our own, we would be crushed under the fierce power of Satan and demons and the corrupt fallen world. But we are in Christ.

God wanted to prove that to Satan that Satan could not overthrow a believer, so He let him go after Job, the most righteous man in the world. Satan threw every single thing he had at Job, including the power of death; destroyed everything in his life but a nagging wife. And you remember the story. The whole point: Satan had come to God and said, "I'll show you. I'll show you. The only reason Job is faithful to you is because you bless him. Stop the flow of blessings, he'll curse you." He didn't, because he possessed the life of God. Job said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

True saving faith can't be broken, it can't be shattered, even by Satan. That's the message of the book of Job. That's the message of Luke 22. Jesus says to Peter, "Satan desires to have you that he might sift you like wheat. But you're going to be converted. You're going to come out of that and you're going to be able to strengthen the brethren."

Paul is being assaulted by a messenger of Satan who's tearing into his life and ministry, and driving a stake through his heart, 2 Corinthians 12, and he prays and prays and prays that the Lord would remove it; and the Lord won't remove it because it humbles him; and in his humility he's made strong. But Paul triumphs over all that Satan could fire at that great apostle.

Peter triumphs over all that Satan could fire at him. Job triumphs because they rest and are held by the power of God. For us, we are in Christ, we are in Christ.

Now go back to that statement in verse 16: "They're not of the world, even as I'm not of the world." And then in verse 16: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." The same thing He said in verse 14. And, again, it's back to this: "They are as I am."

This is the whole reality of life for the believer. We are in Christ: we are as He is, we have His life, we have His love, we have His joy, we have His peace, we have His power, so that Romans 16:20 says this: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." Not under His feet, under your feet. How can God crush Satan under our feet? Because we're in Christ, we're in Christ.

Can Satan do damage? You bet. If you don't know the wiles of the devil and the schemes of Satan, you can be tripped up. You can tumble into sin. You can suffer loss of your eternal reward. But you will never ever fall eternal victim to the evil one. It is the Father's will to bring you to glory. It is the Son's work to bring you to glory. It is the Spirit who comes alongside to accompany that work.

Satan does serious damage to false believers like Judas. Luke 22:3, "Satan entered Judas." Or like Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5, "Satan entered your heart, filled your heart."

False believers are easy prey for Satan. But on the other hand, believers are not. Believers are

triumphant. Listen to what Peter says in 1 Peter 5:8, “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” He wants to do damage. He wants to tear into you. “But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing – ” this is so wonderful, “ – knowing, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

Look, you’ve got to resist Satan because he can mess up your life, he can mess up your testimony. You’ve got to resist him strong, firm in the faith. You’ve got to resist him in the midst of sufferings, disappointments. “But you know this, you know this, that after you’ve suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory.”

When He called you to Christ, He didn’t call you to temporary salvation, He called you to eternal glory. He called you to eternal glory. All the way to the end, “He Himself will perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. Unto Him be all the glory.”

God called you to eternal glory; Christ intercedes to get you there. He is very familiar with Satan. The Son of God is very familiar with Satan, knew him before he fell from heaven, has known him all along, met him at many points throughout the Old Testament, and overpowered him. Met him in the New Testament and overpowered him. In fact, Hebrews 2:14 says, Christ came into the world to render powerless the devil, to render powerless the devil.” Or in 1 John 3:8, “to destroy the works of the devil.” And even to destroy the devil himself in the lake of fire.

So Christ has all power over the devil, and you are in Christ. The devil can’t defeat Christ; he can’t defeat you because you’re in Christ. This is secured for us by the intercessory work of the Lord Jesus Christ. But still it’s important for us to resist the devil, James 4. Resist the devil. It’s important for us to put on the whole armor of God that we may be able to fight against the wiles of the devil, the principalities, the powers of the air, the enemy, the spiritual enemy. We do everything we can to fight the battle knowing that the victory is already won because we are in Christ, and Christ always triumphs.

So the Lord, our Great High Priest, the one who gave the satisfactory sacrifice, has now entered into heaven. God has accepted His sacrifice, His blood sprinkled on the heavenly mercy seat. He took a chair there and He intercedes for us, praying us into glory, praying for our spiritual security, unity, felicity, and immunity. There’s one more; but that’s for next time, because it deserves attention all on its own. Let’s pray.

Lord, we sing hymns and songs week after week that express our worship, and our praise and adoration, and the wonder of the truths that we believe and love and cherish. And we’re so glad we have that, because we struggle to find words to say, to express what’s in our heart. But it isn’t necessarily the words you’re looking for, it’s the love manifest in obedience, manifest in sweet gentleness, in quiet peace, in confident joy, and in evident love; that’s what you’re looking for.

You say we’re in Christ, and we have His love and His peace and His joy, and it should be manifest; and then the world will know that we belong to You, that You sent us. And may we be marked as being in Christ, not just as a theological fact, but as a manifestation of reality. May Christ be seen in

us in all His beauty. Father, we ask now that You would do a work in every heart here to Your glory and Your honor, in Your Son's name. Amen.

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