

The Father's Love Gift

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[0 : 00] Amen. We've been looking at the High Priestly Prayer, the Intercessory Prayer of Christ. Remember that the present day ministry of Jesus is a ministry of intercession. He's in the throne room to the right hand of the Father where He ever lives to make intercession for His own.

I keep Him awful busy. But that's His present ministry. Well, He began that ministry while He was still on earth.

He was showing the disciples what He was going to be doing until He came back for the church, which is still at some point in the future.

[1 : 04] So we're looking at this High Priestly Prayer where Jesus, and we're in that portion where Jesus is praying for His disciples, the apostles that were in the room with Him listening to this.

He's already prayed for Himself, that He would receive the glory that He had for eternity before He came down to earth in the Incarnation.

Now He's praying for the disciples. He will pray for all the church through all the ages before this Intercessory Prayer ends, and that includes us.

And then He will, at the conclusion of that prayer, He will go to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray to the Father in private and be arrested.

And we know the story from there. We're looking at verses 6-10 in John 17. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world.

[2 : 17] They were Yours, and You gave them to Me. And they have kept Your Word. Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You.

For the words which You gave Me, I have given to them, and they received them, and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me.

I ask on their behalf. I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me. For they are Yours, and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I have been glorified in them. Now the disciples were men whom God the Father called out of the nation of Israel and gave them to His Son.

The Son received them. And of those that He received, He lost none except Judas Iscariot, who was never a true believer.

[3 : 38] He was never a true believer. And just as an aside here, when Jesus informed them that He would be arrested, tried, turned over to the Romans, crucified, that's when Judas said, I've had enough of this nonsense.

He can't be the Messiah in the mind of Judas because the Messiah was supposed to establish a kingdom on earth, sit on a throne, and He was going to give Judas a throne nearby.

That was His messianic concept. It is noted in our section today that the men given to Jesus by the Father are said to have kept the Word of God.

In other words, they had responded with genuine faith to the light that God had given them. And there's going to be a lot more light even after Jesus departs because He's going to send the Holy Spirit to them.

They had embraced Christ as the Messiah. We all remember Peter's great confession. They were at the Christ, the Son of the living God. Later, He would deny Him three times.

[5 : 04] And the Lord knew that that would happen. He prayed for Peter and He'd be strengthened through that. But they were all baby Christians. And they were all prone to fall.

I'm a baby too. We're all prone to fall in this. We live in a fallen world in unredeemed flesh. And these guys were prone to fall.

The strongest among them, Peter, fell the very hardest. Christ, denying that he knew Jesus. Denying that he knew Jesus.

When the Scriptures tell us that these followers kept the Word, that is a form of saying their faith was genuine. And that is the kind of faith, of course, that God desires.

We also pointed out last time that ultimately the salvation of each of these men was a result of the sovereign plan of God.

[6:07] We looked briefly last time at that mysterious doctrine of divine election which so infuriates some people and is a mystery. People want me to describe that in 25 words or less and I say I wasn't there when it happened.

The late Dr. James Montgomery Boyce who I really like, he was at 10th Preveritarian Church in Philadelphia, actually replaced the great Donald Gray Barnhouse.

And I hear him from 830 to 9 when I'm driving a church that gets me ready for Pastor Mike. Dr. Boyce prepares me to hear your message. Here's what he had to say. How does one tell who the elect are of God?

How do we judge who are Christians and who are not? There is only one answer and the answer was given by the Lord Jesus Christ speaking of those who were true disciples.

According to these verses, the only way to tell whether one is a Christian or to see whether he or she believes and continues in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible is very clear that he who continues to the end shall be saved.

[7:29] And we may talk about that in just a moment. But continuance is important. I've been doing a study at home looking down the road on justification and sanctification.

And it's pretty amazing. A lot of people would tell you they were justified, but they stopped. And there was actually a theology back in the 50s, 60s, 70s that said when you are saved, you are at a fork in the road.

Remember what Yogi Berra said about a fork in the road. Take it. When you're saved, there's a fork in the road. You can choose to be spiritual or you can choose to be carnal, but you end up in heaven.

There's not one verse of Scripture that teaches that. None. Zero. Now, there's carnality in believers. Believers lapse into sin as Adrian Rogers said.

But the Bible has a lot to say about this. I'm going to list three truths concerning salvation. There are a lot more. And first, God will save all who are predestined for salvation.

[8:52] That's another word people don't like. It's in the Bible about 40 times in the New Testament. How certain is God of this?

Well, He wrote their names down in the Lamb's Book of Life before the foundation of the universe was even created.

We had a young girl here who graduated from Oklahoma Wesleyan University, a valedictorian, and she spoke at the graduating class. She said, the only difference between Baptists and Wesleyans is you write your name in Lamb's Book of Life in pencil and we use ink.

And it brought the house down. God chiseled the names of all who would be saved in the Book of Life.

You can read about that in Revelation. And those so named will ultimately be glorified. Ultimately glorified. So, all who are predestined to salvation will be saved.

[10:01] And second, those whom God has chosen before the foundation world will respond in faith to the Gospel. They're going to respond.

The Reformed guys refer to this as irresistible grace. It can be resisted but not successfully. Not by someone who's going to be saved.

God will break through the most stubborn heart. He will, that stubborn heart will ultimately receive Christ as Lord and as Savior. You want a good Bible example of that?

The Apostle Paul. What was he before salvation? The great persecutor of the church. He was on his way to Damascus to gather up all the Christians and bring them back to Jerusalem.

You know what was going to happen to them when they got back there? Most of them are going to die. Paul's a great example of how God could get through a stubborn heart.

[11:04] I'm another one. They will ultimately come to Christ as Lord and as Savior. And a lot of people, myself included, come kicking and screaming, but they will come.

Irresistibly drawn there by the Father. Jesus preached that message, by the way, in the sixth chapter of John. Big crowd. And He told them, you can't come to Me unless the Father draws you. And you know what that crowd said to Him? The Creator of the universe? That's a hard saying. And it says, many followed Him no more.

They left. And I'm going to tell you something. People hear that message today, they still leave.

They still leave. Because humans don't want to hear that.

They don't want to hear that. But God will break through. All who are appointed to receive eternal life will ultimately do so. They will come by faith.

[12:10] It will not be a faith that they conjured up in their own minds. It will be the faith that God, by grace, has given them. Ephesians 2, 8 and 9.

For by grace, you have been saved through faith that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God. Why did He make it a gift?

Lest anyone should boast. There's no room for bragging. We don't have any bragging rights that we have faith. That's a grace gift of God.

God gave you your faith to believe and mine. Now, why can't we acting upon our own free will choice choose to follow God?

Well, first of all, we have to understand that the free portion of free will died in the Garden of Eden. It died.

[13:11] It was there that our original parents chose to be disobedient. And the freedom to choose is now quite limited. We have the freedom as unbelievers to choose what sin we're going to commit.

We can choose that. But another reason that we do not choose Christ in our lostness is that pertaining to our spiritual condition.

I mean, there was a time when everyone in this room was lost, right? What was our spiritual condition? According to Scripture, Old and New Testament, we were dead in trespasses and sins. That's a frightening thought. We were dead. Spiritually dead. That is the doctrine of inability. Not able to do anything.

A dead man can't choose God. He can't come to God in faith. He can't understand the things of God or even seek God. Why not? Because he's dead. I did this in my Sunday school class oh, maybe ten years ago.

[14:20] It's been a while. And I told them next Sunday we're on this topic. I said, next Sunday we're going to do something really special.

And we're working in conjunction with the Billy Graham Association so we're going to keep some statistics and have to... I was lying. I mean, I was making it up as I went. We're going to have to keep statistics because we're going to turn in the stats.

And everybody was kind of excited. And I said, next Sunday we're going to meet at Memorial Park Cemetery. And we're all going to go out individually and take a section and we're going to witness to every grave out there.

And I could tell from their looks I was kind of losing some of them. And finally, one person in the class said, I said to them, I said, can you give me an estimate of how many people might be saved? And one person in the class said, well, nobody's going to get saved. And I said, how come? And they said, because they're dead.

[15:39] I said, that's my topic today. That's what it is here. They're dead. We could go out there right now, guys. We've still got a little daylight.

Not going to... I mean, I've got some family out there I wish you'd witness to. Not going to help. They're dead. Third, those who are saved will persevere to the end.

Perseverance is a grace gift of God. We talk about perseverance, preservation, eternal security. Baptists like to... We used to say once saved, always saved. I've never liked that because we've had a real shallow... You know, guys, real shallow, well, I'll pray a prayer.

And then we say, well, once saved, always saved. Go out and do whatever you want to do. That's not... I was just at the VOM board retreat. Most of the guys are Wesleyan. Believe in conditional salvation.

[16:46] And they have a lot of fun with me. And one of the other guys there that's a Baptist from Australia, they asked Merv, he said, well, Merv, do you believe in once saved, always saved?

And I stopped. I didn't let him answer. I said, once truly saved, always saved. And I'll tell you what, that shook up some people.

I could see it in their faces. I mean, they couldn't argue that. And one of the most ardent guys there, and we've had some vigorous debates over it, he looked, I mean, he was going like this.

Once truly saved, the truly saved will persevere to the end. They're going to finish the race, guys. We're all going to finish the race. We may be buffeted and bruised, but we're going to finish the race. We may be like that young man that ran in the Olympics and he got a hamstring pull and his dad came out and almost carried him.

[17 : 52] And the father may have to carry us over that finish line. But a believer is going to finish the race. Now, how's the Lord going to accomplish all this?

The Lord explained that in his prayer. They will accomplish this because they had believed in him as the son and because they were given to Christ as a gift from the father.

father. And let's consider the fact that the disciples believed in Christ as the son of God. Now you have come to know that everything you have given me is from you.

Jesus talking to the father for the words which you gave me, I have given them and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from you and they believed that you sent me.

They came to realize that. The disciples had been with Jesus nearly three and a half years and they're just now beginning to recognize exactly who he was.

[19 : 03] Of course, remember some of the things that just recently happened like the raising of Lazarus? That would get your attention. And they're just now realizing that God the father had sent him to the earth and his mission was to save the elect of God from their sins.

They would not fully understand this until Christ rose from the grave and ascended into heaven, returned to the father and sent the Holy Spirit to indwell them and to lead them into all truth.

The disciples had come to learn before the cross that Jesus was on a level with the father that was unparalleled. It was unparalleled.

They had come to realize that all that Jesus accomplished during his earthly mission was due to his dependence upon the father. Now remember, Jesus is God, co-equal, co-eternal with the father, but he lowered himself a little lower than angels, came down here, pitched his tent with us, and lived among us in total obedience to the father.

father. Jesus had totally surrendered his will to the father during his earthly sojourn. The power of God was upon him and he was able to do the things that he did because of that central fact.

[20 : 30] The power of God. The disciples also came to realize that the father gave the very words Jesus spoke to believers and to unbelievers because those words originated with God.

They were absolutely true without any mixture of error. That's why we should hang on every word in the word of God. Some people say, well, I like to read the red words.

Well, don't ignore the ones in black. They're just as inspired. Okay? The disciples believed. After Pentecost, the indwelling Spirit of God who would reveal truth to them in unimaginable ways would energize them.

This energy would allow them and those who would follow to carry the gospel throughout the world.

You know, picture in Acts, it was Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the world.

It was a pebble that was thrown into that calm pond and it started going like this. And you know what? That original pebble, it's still spreading in this world.

[21 : 48] There were men and women saved today as a result of that spread. In Kazakhstan and Afghanistan and China, wherever, it's still spreading.

It's still spreading. We can only pray that say in Las Vegas that some will come to know the Lord Jesus that lost family members and some that were injured critically.

The disciples believed. And after Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came and bolstered that belief. The Father had uniquely given these disciples, as He does all true believers who would follow, to Christ Jesus.

He gave them to Jesus. Jesus. And we see this in verses 9 and 10. I ask on their behalf. He says, I do not ask on behalf of the world.

Liberal church hates that verse. They won't read that. But of those whom you have given me, for they are yours, and all things that are mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I have been glorified in them.

[23 : 03] The true disciples had responded in genuine faith. They demonstrated the genuineness of their faith by obedience to the commands of the Lord.

They failed. Who doesn't? But they had been obedient. They were a gift from the Father to the Son. Jesus was not asking for the people of the world, but those and only those whom the Father had given him.

And he knows his own, doesn't he? He knows his own. Now, God does show a love to all the people of the world. The Puritans and Reformers called it general grace.

Everyone on this planet receives general grace. Believers and unbelievers. Well, what is some of that? They breathe. Provides oxygen.

They have blood coursing through their veins. They eat, they drink, they reproduce. It rains on the just and the unjust.

[24 : 17] Unbelievers plant crops. The rain comes and waters them. They feed their families. And this type of grace is extended to even those who are hostile to God and have rejected His Son.

So God is in effect extending the olive branch of grace to the unsaved all the time. And that's one of the reasons the Bible says men are without excuse when it comes to their relationship or lack of relationship with God.

I think going out to my farm and looking up in the night sky and seeing the fingerprints of God is a general grace. grace. You can look up there and say, there's someone more powerful than me. But let's remember something. General grace is not saving grace. It may lead someone to further inquiry, but it won't save.

That is a work of special grace granted only to those who would believe. Now remember, we're dealing in our study with the intercessory work of Christ.

[25 : 29] He intercedes for His own before the Father. There is only one time that Christ prayed for the lost and that was from the cross when He asked the Father to forgive those who were murdering Him at that very moment.

In the high priestly prayer, the Lord Jesus prays for those for whom He will make atonement. And we'll be seeing later in future lesson even for down to the 21st century.

Now Jesus underscores the fact that the eleven true disciples belonged ultimately to God. They had been adopted, and that's another great doctrine, the doctrine of adoption.

They had been adopted into the family, grafted in, and then sealed with the Holy Spirit to be kept until the day of judgment. He gave a seal, some say an engagement ring, a signet ring, that's the Holy Spirit.

Christ put an engagement ring on the bride, and then He went back to heaven, and that engagement ring is the Holy Spirit living in us.

[26 : 42] Living in us. And when Jesus says that all things belong to Him and the Father, He is affirming His deity with the Father and with the Spirit, Christ shares fully in the glory of the triune God.

Now Jesus knows something when He gets to this prayer. He's about to depart this world. So He prays for His disciples. His prayer is in two directions.

He prays for them because they have been given to Him as a love gift from the Father. As a believer, you've been packaged up in a nice red bow, and you're a love gift from the Father to the Son.

Is there any gift given by the Father to the Son that the Son rejected or spurned or didn't want? Of course not. Diane and I have a game we've played for 40 years.

I'll buy her a gift in April, have it nicely wrapped, take it home to her, and I'll set it on the mantel or whatever, and I'll say, don't open that, that's for Christmas. She said, well, I can't do that, you've shown it to me.

[27 : 57] I said, no, you can't open it. Here, let me take it. And she'll run over there and start ripping paper. We've done that forever. Thank you so much one year, I don't think she got anything at Christmas.

She don't open everything. So Jesus knows He's about to depart. And He knows that the Father has given love gift to Him of every believer.

Believers in every age are unique and a special love gift from the Father and the Son. This is really interesting when you apply this to eternal security.

I want to read to you out of John chapter 10, a few verses. At that time, the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. I'm starting in verse 22.

It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the colonnade of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around Him and said to Him, how long will you keep us in suspense?

[29 : 03] If you are the Christ, tell us plainly. And Jesus answered them, I told you and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me.

And listen to this. Pastor, this will preach. And very seldom have I heard sermons on this, but this will preach. He says, you do not believe because you are not one of my sheep.

Now, we reversed that for 50 years. We said, we don't tell people that verse. We don't say you do not believe because you're not among the sheep.

We say you're not among the sheep because you don't believe. Say these words and you'll be a sheep. And then we just send them out. It's not what the Scripture says. You don't believe because you're not one of my sheep.

And then he follows that up. My sheep hear my voice. That's one sermon. And I know them.

[30 : 15] There's another one. And they follow me. I give them eternal life and they will never perish.

I say to my Arminian friends, how long is never? They're never going to perish? How long is that?

And then I love this. And no one will snatch them out of my hand.

My father who has given them to me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of the father's hand.

I and the father are one. Can you picture that in your mind? We've got Jesus holding us in here. How strong is he? Creator of the universe. Spoke the universe into existence in an instant of time and the father comes and puts his hands over Jesus. And I've said that to Arminian friends and they say, well, I do think you can jump out.

[31 : 29] Okay? Go ahead. Let me see that. Here's what I'm saying to you brothers. brothers, your eternal security and mine rests totally in the relationship between the father and the son.

It is not performance based. Although we have a hard time with it. I have a hard time with it. Well, I haven't done a very good job lately and I just think, I know I can't lose it, but I think I might have. It's not performance based, it's promise based. The father has given every believer to Jesus as a love gift. Everyone, from father to son, Jesus gives the objects of the father's love gift eternal life and then he makes a promise.

He enters into a covenant. He says this to the father, of those you gave me, none of them will ever perish.

That sounds pretty secure to me. No one will be able to snatch them out of the son's hand. The father is greater than all and he's got his hands wrapped around the Lord Jesus hands and no one is going to be able to snatch them out of the father's hand and in fact they are so intertwined that the father and Jesus are one.

[32 : 59] And so Jesus prays in John chapter 17 for those disciples whom the father has given him. And our eternal security is based on a promise or covenant relationship between the father and the son.

Aren't you glad it's not performance based? Man. Wow. Don't get me started, I'll get emotional. He also prays for the disciples given him by the father because they have become repositories of his glory.

Jesus was glorified not only by them but in them. Jesus had revealed himself to them and they believed.

He was glorified in their life of faith and in their holiness. Now, not their perfection, not our perfection and holiness, but direction.

their direction was that way and ours is supposed to be too. He was glorified in the obedience and in their sufferings including martyrdom.

[34 : 14] Hard to believe that the Lord can be glorified if somebody is being martyred for his faith. But just read the Beatitudes and go to the last three verses there. It mentions persecution four or five times.

So let me close with a question for you. Do your sins plead loud against you from time to time? The blood of Jesus pleads even louder.

Does Satan stand at your right hand and accuse you? Because he's the great accuser, isn't he? Your advocate stands at God's right hand to plead for you.

And Jesus, by the way, is an advocate that never lost a case. He never lost a case.

That's pretty good. Advocate is a defense attorney. Jesus is your defense attorney. And you know, if you'll think about that, one day you're going to stand before the Bema, the judgment seat of Christ, which is really the reward seat.

[35 : 22] your judge is your defense attorney. Now, if you've committed a heinous crime and you've got to go down here to the district court or the federal court and show up and sitting up there on the bench is your judge and he's your defense attorney, you're going to start having some warm and fuzzy feelings about that.

It doesn't work like that, humanly speaking. But Jesus is our defense attorney, our advocate, and our judge. And he's an advocate who never lost a case.

And I want to say this, and he will never lose a case. That's right. Of any man or woman that was ever committed to his care.

Not going to lose any. If any man sin, does that include anybody in here? If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father.

Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He's our advocate. Thank goodness. Thank you.