

For His Disciples

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 25 September 2017

Preacher: Tom Holland

[0 : 00] Well, and again, we're going to continue our study on the holy ground of John chapter 17.

! Sometimes known as the High Priestly Prayer, if that's good. It never was known as the Lord's Prayer, although that's really what it is. And we're going to come to a portion, which we'll probably cover again next September, of our study where Jesus prays for His disciples.

And here's what He had to say. John 17, verse 6. I have manifested your name. Now, He's talking to the Father. We understand that, right?

Jesus says, I have manifested your name to the men whom you gave Me out of the world. 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 from You, and they believed that You sent Me.

[1 : 32] I ask on their behalf.

And I had two thoughts when I was going through that, that are not in the notes. I'm going to get those out of the way, and then I'll go back to my notes. But He says, I've manifested, I've revealed Your name, that's the Father's name, to the men whom You gave Me out of the world.

They were Yours, and You gave them to Me. When were they the Father's? When did we belong to the Father? Before the foundation of the world.

Guys, there's a Lamb's Book of Life where it's written the names of everyone who will believe, who will be saved, I should say. Everyone.

And it was written before the foundation of the world. Before there was a universe, stars, angels, humans. How could God do that?

[3 : 05] He's God. That's no other explanation. And then I had another thought. I may lose that one because I got off on there.

I do not ask on behalf of the world. You know, universalism is prevalent.

Universalism basically teaches everybody's going to be saved. A wing of universalism is you're either going to be saved and go to heaven or you're going to be annihilated. And I'm going to tell you, the Bible never speaks of annihilation.

It speaks of eternal punishment, but not annihilation. But he says, I do not ask on behalf of the world, the lost people.

He's not asking them. He's not praying this prayer to them. And the interesting thing is, in an age of universalism, and I heard Dr. Sproul actually teach this, the prevailing theology in our day, when death visits, is justification by death.

[4 : 24] You die, you go to heaven. You die, you go to heaven. 35 years ago, I had a tape by Charles Stanley, and he said, and he said, this has happened to me hundreds of times in my ministry, and this was 35 years ago.

A woman comes to me. Would you go visit my husband? He's not saved. If he dies, he's going to hell. And Dr. Stanley would say, well, yeah, I'll go see him.

But, you know, I've been there five times. He didn't want anything to do with you. I know, I know. But would you do that for me? Yes, I'll do it. So he goes to see him, you know. He doesn't want anything to do with Christ, the church, you know.

Man dies. Wife comes to him. Would you preach my husband's funeral? She said, yeah, I'll preach his funeral. And he said, she said, you know, he's in heaven.

I said, is that right? She said, yep. He was a good man. Paid his taxes. Fed his family. Mowed the lawn.

[5 : 33] Shovelled the driveway. When he needed it. And God never lets a good person go to hell. And maybe he doesn't.

Trouble is, Romans 3 says there's no one good. Not one. Not even one. So he's not praying here for the world.

Now, there are two great truths contained in the Bible concerning the salvation of a soul.

First of all, God is absolutely sovereign as to who gets saved. And second, humans are absolutely responsible for how they react to the gospel message.

Well, who gets the witness that there's a God? Everybody. You can look up in the night sky and know there's a God. You could be the little pygmy in Africa.

[6 : 42] That was big when I was young. Got to pray for the pygmies, you know. I never met a pygmy. But you look up at the night sky and Romans chapter 1, even creation cries out.

And so we have here the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. And men have beaten their heads against a wall for generations trying to reconcile those two truths without success. They try to bring them together. One seems to cancel out the other. If one is true, then certainly the other has to be fault. And in our finite minds, it does not seem possible that both can be true. But they are. And we must embrace both, believe both, teach both. If we don't, we are in error. Now, the Bible makes no apologies for the fact that God the Father chose believers in his son before the foundation of the world.

The Word of God refers to this as predestination. That's one of those names that a lot of people hate. A whole lot of them. Everyone who will ever believe was predestined for justification, for adoption, for sanctification, for ultimate glorification.

[8 : 21] And every believer in every age is waiting for a heavenly inheritance. God even gave us a deposit, an escrow count, if you will, the Holy Spirit.

He gives us the Holy Spirit as the assurance that we will have a heavenly inheritance. And you know what, guys? It's not based on any merit. Aren't we glad?

It's no merit. God saves believers through a holy calling that is not according to their works. My youngest son called me just minutes before I came over here.

And a guy left their church because he said, If I believe the way you believe, Rob, then I'm not sharing in my salvation with God. And Rob said, That's right.

I'm working on a paper I'm writing. It may be a sermon someday. But let me tell you, when we start injecting I and me in the salvation experience, if we're not careful, we rob from God's glory.

[9 : 30] It all belongs to Him. And we don't want to be guilty of that, do we? So we have a reference here to the heavenly inheritance, not based on merit.

God saves through this holy calling, not by works. It is a calling and a salvation based upon God's own purpose and God's grace.

And it has granted us in Christ Jesus before the universe was created. And the question usually arises, not in here, but why didn't God just save everybody?

Wrong question. Why did God save anybody? Why not start over? We wouldn't have known. Start over.

Adam and Eve, you blew it. I'm going to start over. The truth is that God did this before the universe was created.

[10 : 30] Because this is true, men and women can take not the slightest credit for his or her relationship with God in Christ. Though I've had dozens and maybe hundreds of people describe their salvation in terms where they do share.

Probably the most extreme was the guy in this church that told me God didn't choose him, he chose God. But they want to share slightly. And when I talk about, well, you were dead in trespasses, well, I think I was wounded.

Papa didn't teach that. Papa didn't teach that. And you know when you're dead, you can't do anything, right? So how do we, how do we, Dan, do you ever sing that song, If You'll Take One Step Toward?

You'll take one step toward the Savior, my friend. Yeah. You'll find yourself in Hawaii. It's been several years. I've gotten to it. I don't want to hear that. I'm dead.

I can't step. I can't even hardly step tonight and I'm alive. Don't do that. It'll be in my head all night. I'll be dreaming. I'm going to call you up and sing that. Yeah.

[11 : 42] What are we to do? All credit flows to God the Father and is possible only through the sacrificial death of His Son.

All this is because of the cross, the blood. Now, so certain is this truth that the Bible repeatedly points out that every individual born into this world comes in dead in trespasses and sins. Now, let me quickly add. Where do babies go when they die? Where do little kids go when they die? They go to heaven. Because their sins, though they were born in sin, they have to be actionable. Does that make sense? They have to, until a certain age, and I'm sure it's different from different kids, they're not actionable. We're born in trespasses and sin. We're dead. It is God that must impart in us spiritual life, which gives us the ability to believe. I don't know that I wrote this down, but I'm supposed to tell you at the end of this, you know, our responsibility in all this is to believe.

[12 : 57] You've got to believe. The Greek word pistou, meaning trust, commit, but don't forget Ephesians 2, 8, 9, For by grace are you saved through faith, that not of yourselves.

It is the gift of God, lest any of us should boast. Even the ability to believe our faith is a grace gift of God. Repentance required.

Grace gift of God. He gifts His children with the grace of repentance. It is God that imparts spiritual life. Even the ability to believe.

The Lord Jesus told us in John 6, 44, and I love that chapter. No one can come to me, that's Jesus talking, unless the Father who sent me draws him.

How many people could come without that? No one. That doctrine, by the way, has rightfully been called the doctrine of inability. Left to his own, man is incapable, unable, even unwilling to come to God for salvation.

[14 : 07] Paul makes that abundantly clear in the third chapter of Romans and elsewhere, chapter 9, that salvation does not come through the will of man or the works of man.

And the Lord made that clear also in John chapter 1. It comes solely through the mercy of God. And while on earth, Paul preached to thousands of people, and the scriptures say, those who had been appointed by God to eternal life believed.

Boy, that's pretty powerful. No one outside of God's predetermined purpose of salvation believes. In fact, they consider the message of salvation to be foolish.

Only a fool would believe such things. They will never embrace Christ because they think he is foolish as well. They are happy where they're at. Now, does this lessen our responsibility to preach to every creature?

No. We don't know who they are. And maybe they'll get saved late. We don't know. We just give them the truth. We don't manipulate them. We don't want to do that.

[15 : 19] But we give them the truth. And let God do a work. Let God do a work. And you know, we unfortunately in this day have this vision. I've used this before that Jesus has put locks on the church door and bars on the windows.

You can't come in here. You're not one of mine. He's thrown the doors open. The people that are not going to be saved don't want anything to do with it. They're not listening.

But every now and then someone comes and says, oh, I kind of like that. I want to hear more. Well, you're on to something. You're on to something and he may well be.

And do you ever worry about your salvation? Have you ever worried? I have. You know what? That's probably one of the clearest indications you're saved or you're going to be.

Because the guys that aren't there, they don't worry about that. They worry about where's the next bar and where's the next, you know, game going to be played. I wonder how my third wife's doing.

[16 : 21] You know, that's just the way it is. Those outside the predetermined plan of God don't believe.

In fact, they consider to be foolishness. And now comes the great mystery. The Bible repeatedly entreats all unsaved people, come to Christ in faith and believe.

That's what we tell them. The gospel itself is a call for people to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. But remember, there is a general call that is extended to every human on earth.

Because God touches every human on earth 24 hours a day. He holds our very breath in his hand. We can't take another breath without the grace of God. He sends the rain on the just and the unjust.

Even the heavens declare the glory of God. His witness to the human family extends everywhere. But it's those who confess with their mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe, trust, commit in their

heart will be saved.

[17 : 38] That's the special call. The special call. We need to make clear that the gospel is large enough to embrace all men everywhere throughout human history.

But only the chosen will believe and all others will reject the message of the cross. And I have to really add this. This is vitally important. Their rejection is not based upon their status as the non-elect of God.

They don't reject because they're not one of the elect. No one is going to stand before the Lord and say, Well, that's unfair. You didn't elect me. I couldn't be saved. People who reject the gospel do it willingly.

They are without excuse and at their own risk. Their sins for which they will not repent will ultimately be their downfall into eternal flames. For this reason, the omniscient God did not write their names down in the book of life.

It's like Judas. People say, You know, it's really kind of unfair. Poor Judas. Judas betrayed the master because he wanted to. God didn't make him betray him. He knew he would. But he didn't make him.

[18 : 53] He didn't make him. So we've come full circle to where we begin. The scriptures present the dual realities that God is absolutely sovereign in choosing a redeemed people for salvation.

Sinners are absolutely responsible for rejecting God's gracious offer of salvation through the gospel of Christ. It's a gospel of grace. And by the way, we should not be lumped into that group of people. Who beat their heads against the wall trying to reconcile each and every part of these truths. We're on holy ground here, guys. People every day say, Well, tell me about election. Well, I wasn't there. You know, that's holy ground. I mean, I'll try, but don't ever go beyond what the Bible has revealed to our finite minds when it comes to the things of God.

We embrace God's truth by faith and offer him praise for his wondrous works of salvation in our life. I mean, my prayer lately has been, God, beyond me, why you'd save someone like me.

[19 : 59] I could see Mike Dersham. I could see James. But me? Wow. Wow. The very basis of our praise for God lies in the fact that we didn't get ourselves saved.

We didn't. God chose us. He redeemed us through the work of his Son and our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. And because of this, guess how much glory belongs to God?

All of it. We're not going to rob from God. It all belongs to him. The unsaved do not have any reason to hold a grudge against God.

They have willingly suppressed the truth in unrighteousness. And because of this, they will receive a just penalty, which is a penalty based upon justice.

God's throne is based on justice and righteousness. The redeemed receive mercy instead of justice.

[21 : 09] I heard a guy one time, he said, I'm going to demand justice from God. We don't want justice, do we? No, we don't want justice.

Jesus came to this earth to seek and to save the lost. He came to save sinners. He came to reveal the saving purposes of God.

And just hours before his death on the cross, by which salvation would be received, the Lord voices an audible prayer in which he discusses this great eternal plan of God as it relates to the salvation of souls.

And it was important that the disciples. And it was important that the disciples listen because many things are going to transpire over the next several days and hours, aren't they?

There's a lot that's going to go on. And Christ knew this. And Christ knew this. These very men who love me and I'm going to leave the world in their hands are going to abandon him at the critical moment of his earthly ministry.

[22 : 20] They're all going to flee. They're all going to flee. He knew that their faith was going to be shaken and that the very strongest among them would deny knowing him.

Peter. He would deny knowing him. So he offers this audible prayer to the Father and it's intended, among other things, to strengthen the disciples.

That's why it's done out loud. He could have just done it in his heart or in his head. We can even do that. God can read our subconscious. That doesn't bring me a lot of comfort sometimes.

And it's interesting that this prayer stretches for 26 verses. 14 are centered on the disciples. And then an additional 7 of those verses are focused on those who would believe in the future as a

result of their work.

The disciples' work. Which is essentially the human authors of the New Testament. And guys, that's us. We're sitting here in the 21st century and he's writing about us. He didn't call us by name because it might be too voluminous.

[23 : 34] So Jesus opens the prayer glorifying God. Asking for the glory he wants shared with God to return to him. Next he turns his attention to the disciples.

He intercedes for him. This is an intercessory prayer. He's already on earth began what he's carrying on even now in heaven. His prayer for them is twofold.

He prays for those whom the Father has given him. And he prays for them in light of his imminent departure. And for several chapters now the departure of Christ has been a paralyzing thought to the disciples.

In fact, they tried to ignore it. They could not accept the fact that Jesus was going away. Most of their emotions on this was related to the fact that he'd become their provider.

He was a free meal ticket, wasn't he? And it was good eating. He had fed them on many occasions. He had protected them from storms. Protected them from the ocean and the sea.

[24 : 50] He met their needs. He met their needs. Now he's going away. And once again they're going to have to depend upon their own resources to survive.

That's their thought. So we find Jesus preparing them for the inevitable. When they will once again be alone in the world. And of course we know that they're not going to be alone.

Because Christ is going to send the Spirit of God to live in them and empower them and be with them. But they didn't understand that at this particular point in time.

His message to them was that he was going away but would continue to meet their needs and love them just as he'd been doing all along.

So the Lord prays to the Father on behalf and for the welfare of the disciples. Jesus wants his disciples to realize that the Father will answer their prayers when he's ready to do it.

[25 : 59] And it will be based on his good. Verse 6 of the High Priestly Prayer transitions us from the Son asking the Father for glory to the Son asking the Father to protect and look out for the disciples.

And he informs the Father that he is praying for those to whom he has manifested the Father's name. To whom he has revealed the Father's name. Somewhat confusing language.

We need to understand what Christ is saying. The mission of Christ on earth was to make the Father known to his children. Manifested in Greek means to reveal, to show, to make known.

The name of God encompasses all that God is. Creator, Savior, Sustainer, Justifier, and we could go on and on and on all night.

It touches on the character and the attributes of God. God's name, or we could say his presence, has been manifested throughout his creation.

[27 : 03] Guys, we could say his fingerprints in streams and in rivers and mountains and the sky and clouds and stars, flowers, butterflies, and so on.

But the greatest manifestation of God is in the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's God revealed.

God became a man. He took upon himself human flesh. He walked among us. He pitched his tent with us. He tabernacled with us.

Jesus revealed the Father so perfectly that he could say the Father and I are one.

One of the reasons the unbelieving Jewish leadership wanted him dead. Blasphemy. The Father and I are one. He said, he who sees me sees the Father.

[28 : 02] Another blasphemy on the Jewish mindset. But staggering to a Jewish person who, and the Jews had grown distant from God, to Jesus, the disciples were the men whom God the Father had given him.

They came out of the world. They were given to Christ by the Father. And it is important that we consider this prayer as we consider it, that we realize that the disciples and through them all who would believe are a gift from God the Father to Christ the Son.

By the way, that's where your security rests. And we're Baptists. We like to talk about security of the believer, right? Our security rests in a promise relationship, a covenant, if you will, between the Father and the Son.

John chapter 10 talks about that. All that the Father gives me, I will lose none. That's our security.

It's between the Father and the Son. The Father says, Son, I'm going to give them to you. Father, I'm not going to lose any. People say, oh, he lost Judas. Judas was never a believer.

[29 : 26] Judas was never a believer. Now, where have these men come from? Same place we came from. A satanically controlled world that is in opposition to God and in opposition to his kingdom.

This is the kingdom on earth. Right here. This church and every true church is the kingdom on earth. This is the closest we will get to heaven until we get to heaven.

Right here. We have been rescued out of the world from that domain and placed firmly in the domain of Christ.

This is one of the reasons the world hates us. It hated Jesus. It's going to hate us. And there's some other interesting language here.

Jesus tells the Father that the disciples originated with the Father. Even before their conversion, the disciples belonged to God.

[30 : 33] They belonged to Him. Every person that believes, every person that's ever believed unto salvation, every person that's ever going to believe already belongs to God.

We belong to God. And it's true of every believer. In the book of Acts, God tells the apostle Paul that there are many in a certain city that belong to Him, but they've not yet been saved.

Isn't that an interesting language? He says, go there, Paul. Paul, there's many that belong to me that haven't been saved yet. Paul also says elsewhere, I'm going that some might be saved.

He never had this universal, well, you know, I mean, I remember one guy saying, once you're going, we need every person saved in the world. Well, start with one. You know, witness to one and let God do a work.

Every believer was chosen before the foundation of the world. Every believer was given as a love gift to the Son.

[31 : 39] Can you imagine the Son receiving this beautiful package, beautiful wrapping paper, beautiful bow from the Father?

Son, I got a believer in here to you. No, I don't want it. Take it back. Can you imagine the Father saying, you remember that gift I gave to you? I need that back. He messed up.

He messed up. And Jesus said, Tom Holland again? Yeah. He doesn't renege on those gifts or a love gift to the Son.

There's our security. Believers are a precious gift to Christ. And how precious were we to Christ? So precious, He was willing to die for them in order to receive them.

Willing to go to the cross. Another little curious language in this section, the Lord's words, He described the disciples as those who have kept the Father's word.

[32 : 55] This speaks of obedience as part of the salvation process. And I'm going to be cautious here. Salvation is not the gift for obedience.

Obedience is the evidence of salvation. And please note, I did not talk about perfection. Wesley talked about it.

And then on his deathbed, I said, I never achieved it. It's not perfection, guys. It's direction. Perfect will come when we see Jesus as He is.

And we'll be like Him because we see Him as He is. But it is to be the direction of our life. What do you do when you've not been obedient? Go to the Lord.

1 John 1.9 I only use that about a dozen times every day. 1 John 1.9 There is nothing meritorious in our obedience that appropriates salvation because salvation is always by grace through faith and it's the faith that God gave us.

[34 : 11] So, where are we at? The disciples had genuine faith. All who obey the words of the Lord are expressing genuine faith.

Jesus knew that the disciples would have faith even as He knew their faith was going to falter for a time. He knew that was going to happen.

He told Peter, you're going to deny me. What, three times? You're going to deny me three times before the cock crows. He knew their faith was genuine and saving because they believed in Him as the true Son of God.

And He knew the disciples were true believers because the Father had given them to Him. Every true believer is a gift from the Father to the Son.