

Shepherds' Conference  
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John 17  
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No profession suffers from more confusion than the pastorate. Clergy malpractice abounds.

The responsibility of the pastor is to preach the Word and do so with sound doctrine. The example of the theological mind is our own Lord Jesus Christ. In John 17 essentially governed everything He said — not only in His preaching, but in His praying. Only here in John 17 do we have an example of the intercessory work of Christ that He has been doing unceasingly in Heaven since His ascension.

The cross was accomplished in hours, the resurrection in days, and the intercessory work has gone on for 2000 years — He ever lives to do this work (Heb. 7:15).

He prays this prayer in the hearing of the 11 — He prays for them (v. 9) and for all who will believe through their word (v. 20), so He is praying for all the redeemed of all of redemptive history. His prayer is soteriological dogma —

- 1. Salvation Starts with the Doctrine of God.**
- 2. Election and the Doctrine of Soteriology**
- 3. The Incarnation and the Doctrine of Soteriology**
- 4. Revelation and the Doctrine of Soteriology**

The gospel needs to be set down in an unalterable and fixed way — it needs to be revealed to the world so that it can be preached through redemptive history, because there is no salvation without this gospel. So we see revelation in this prayer (v. 6) — ***I manifested Your name and I have made Your name known and I will make Your name known*** (v. 26).

How did He reveal God's name? He revealed it in His person (Jn. 1:14, 18). In Jn. 12 — He who has seen Me... and 14:9; Col. 1; Heb. 1. He revealed God in His person.

But He also revealed God in His words. In 12:44ff — ***I did not speak on My own initiative... the things I speak I speak just as the Father told Me***. That is divine revelation; Jesus was inerrant and infallible (cf. also 14:8, 14). He had a commitment to the OT (Jn. 17:12). About 80x in the gospels, Jesus makes reference to 27 OT books. But He also knew that what He was saying was new revelation (e.g., 17:17 was not only a reference to previous biblical writings, but what would be written in the future).

The Lord has a clear view of revelation and Scripture. Salvation depends on that. Salvation is

not intuitive. The Son emphasized the importance of revealed truth in v. 20 — ***they believed through their word***. There is no salvation apart from the Word (Rom. 10:13-15, 17) — salvation comes by hearing the Word concerning Christ. The Word is what saves (Rom. 1:16). The power is in the Word for salvation *and* sanctification (Jn. 17:17). And it will always be this way. There is no other way. The Spirit has inspired the Scriptures and the Scriptures stand forever.

## **5. Regeneration and the Doctrine of Soteriology**

This is the work of God that makes repentance possible. We are born in darkness, blindness, ignorance, and we have to be made alive. Look at John 3. It is the work of the Spirit to regenerate (3:8).

Eternal life is a present work and reality and it is the work of the Spirit (17:2).

What is it to be regenerated? It is to come out of ignorance and to know Christ. John 8 — if you don't know both the Father and the Son, you don't know either.

What is eternal life? It is the true, transforming knowledge of God (5:20). Regeneration has dramatic effect (17:14) — you have been drawn up into the world in which Christ exists. We have been removed from the world — and the world hates us, because we are not of the world. If you want to know more about the world, go back to 15:18ff. We are in a completely different realm. Everyone is hated — Father, Son, and redeemed sons (15:24-25).

So why are we still here in the world? Notice 16:7ff. This is the same ministry we have to the world (cf. 17:18). Christ came to save sinners, not the righteous. He came to preach the gospel. That's our task. So here is our work we are called to do (16:8-11) — this is our work of evangelism. This is the internal work of the Spirit in sinners, but they won't have that until they hear the Word from prosecutors who indict sinners (that's our work). We expose evil deeds done in darkness (Rom. 5; 1 Cor. 14:24). It is the preaching that prosecutes sinners.

Remember Jude 14 — that is not how people preach today. Cf. Jn. 7:7 — a summation of why the world treats Jesus the way it does. Similarly the OT prophets were prosecutors. John the Baptist was God's last OT prosecutor, and it cost him his head.

Regeneration means that we instantaneously become prosecutors of the world — working for their rescue from damnation.

A positive side of regeneration means that the glory of God begins to shine through you (17:10)! It is the transformation of our lives so that we live to the glory of God. We become the temple of the Lord Himself. At the same time we are ripped out of the world that we are alien to it and it is hostile to us.

## **6. Union with God (the Trinity) and the Doctrine of Soteriology**

Union with God is a large part of this prayer (17:11). This is not superficial unity. It is the same kind of unity that is experienced by the Trinity. He is talking about ontological unity, not experiential unity. See also v. 21. The Lord is praying for the salvation of the elect. Also v. 23 — this union is so powerful that it results in the world knowing of the sending of the Son by the Father. This is profound (v. 22). This is a staggering reality of salvation.

We are all wrapped up in the Trinity, sharing the same life (cf. Jn. 14:15-20, 23). That's breathtaking. Salvation is not a ticket to Heaven. It's not as simple as forgiveness of sins. It's about being caught up into the eternal life of the Trinity. We know Christ and the Spirit. We know the Triune God confidently and boldly. And by that union, sin must be known as alien. We are inseparable from the Triune God.

If God is not all our joy here, Heaven will be less for us, because we will have to leave our joys behind and God is the only joy there. If Christ is not a joy here, Heaven will be less.

Verse 26 ends the prayer — *I in them*.

## **7. Sanctification and the Doctrine of Soteriology**

We aren't taken out of the world, because we have to go to the world (v. 15). We *have* to be in the world. Yet His prayer is that we are kept from the evil one. We are safe in the eternal sense; we are in danger in the temporal sense. We live in imminent danger.

One of the most amazing statements in this chapter is in v. 16 — “they are as I am, in relation to the world.” Christ's work is done, ours is beginning.

Verse 17 is the summation of sanctification. How does that happen? Christ is our example (v. 19). What does it mean for Christ to sanctify Himself? It means that He was set apart from sin perfectly. And He describes that in 4:34; 5:19, 30. Christ can do nothing on His own initiative (He *could not* sin — clear statement of His impeccability). Christ sought God's glory and did only the things that brought glory to God. Sanctification came through obedience — His perfect obedience (cf. 8:28-29). He did nothing on His own initiative. Sanctification is perfect obedience to the word and will of God. By what power did He do that? By the Word of God and the Spirit of God.

Jesus walked by the Spirit (1 Jn. 2:6) — that's sanctification and how we are sanctified.

## **8. Glorification and the Doctrine of Soteriology**

This is stressed in the opening verses (1-5). But it also is at the end of the prayer (v. 24). Jesus wanted to put His glory on display. He wanted them to see what it would look like to be loved by the Father forever. The whole intent of the redemptive work of Christ is to bring all those

who were God's by sovereign election...and bring them all to Heaven.

This was the work of the Son (v. 12). Cf. also Jn. 6:37ff — ***I will lose none***. For a few hours in the future, Christ would not be able to keep them; this is His prayer for the Father to protect the elect while He could not do so (v. 11).

I'm glad for what Jude says (vv. 24-25). What is coming for us? Note 1 Peter 1:3ff — it is ***reserved in Heaven for you***. We have an eternal salvation. We will all make it.

Why does He do this? Why does He guard us and keep us protect us?

The Son is hours from the cross and the horrors that He has understood were coming from eternity past. He is hours from being separated from God the Father. And we are on His heart. He is concerned about making sure the sinners He is going to die for get to glory.

It started that night in 13:1ff. Love both begins (13:1) and ends this section (17:23-26). He wants to take us to glory so we can see what it means for Him to be loved by the Father *and* to be loved in the same way! How can that be? Because He loves His beloved Son and we are in His Son.

Only an infinite God could live infinitely and eternally. Does God love us now like this? He loves us *now* like this! He loved them then, on that night. Isn't He offended by our sin? Yes, He was offended by His Son, when the Son took on sin. But there is no anger now — the Son has absorbed that anger.

So the Son prays for us to bring us into Heaven.