

JESUS' INTERCESSORY PRAYER

BIBLE TEXT : John 17:1-26

LESSON 238 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20, 21).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

John 17:1-26 (KJV)

¹ These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

² As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

³ And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

⁴ I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

⁵ And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

⁶ I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

⁷ Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

⁸ For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

⁹ I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

¹⁰ And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

¹¹ And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world,

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Jesus, the Son of God

- 1 The hour of Christ's glorification, accomplished through and in accord with the power of God the Father, was at hand, John 17:1;

1 Peter 1:18-21 (KJV)

¹⁸ Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as silver and gold*, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers;

¹⁹ But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

²⁰ Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

²¹ Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

- 2 The result of this glorification would be eternal life to all who would believe in the Father and the Son, John 17:2, 3;

John 3:14-16 (KJV)

¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

¹⁵ That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

- 3 Jesus prayed for the restoration of His former glory, John 17:4, 5;

Philippians 2:6-9 (KJV)

⁶ Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

⁷ But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

⁸ And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

⁹ Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

Hebrews 1:3 (KJV)

³ Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

- 4 The disciples had received Christ's words, thereby receiving the revelation of His Messiahship, John 17:6-8;

Matthew 16:13-17 (KJV)

¹³ When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

¹⁴ And they said, Some *say that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

¹⁵ He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

¹⁶ And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the

and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we *are*.

¹² While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

¹³ And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

¹⁴ I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

¹⁵ I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

¹⁷ Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

¹⁸ As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

²⁰ Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

²¹ That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

²² And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

²³ I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

²⁴ Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with

Christ, the Son of the living God.

¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

II Jesus' Prayer for the Church

- 1 The Savior interceded with the Father to keep the disciples in unity and separate from the world, John 17:9-11;

John 10:28-29 (KJV)

²⁸ And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.

²⁹ My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.

Philippians 4:7 (KJV)

⁷ And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

- 2 Jesus had kept His disciples in the Father's name and through His Word, John 17:12-14

- 3 The disciples had a work to perform; therefore they were not to be taken out of the world at this time, John 17:15, 16;

Philippians 1:23-25 (KJV)

²³ For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

²⁴ Nevertheless to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you.

²⁵ And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;

III Sanctification and Its Importance

1. Sanctification was to be wrought through the truth of God, John 17:17;

1 Corinthians 1:30 (KJV)

³⁰ But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

Hebrews 10:10 (KJV)

¹⁰ By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

Hebrews 13:12-13 (KJV)

¹² Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

¹³ Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

2. Jesus sanctified Himself that the disciples might be sanctified, cleansed, John 17 :18, 19;

Ephesians 5:25-27 (KJV)

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

²⁶ That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

²⁷ That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

3. The intercessory prayer for sanctification and oneness included the disciples of all ages who believe on Him, John 17:20;

Acts 10:15 (KJV)

¹⁵ And the voice *spake* unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

Acts 10:34-35 (KJV)

³⁴ Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I

me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

²⁵ O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

²⁶ And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it*: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

perceive that God is no respecter of persons:
³⁵ But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

Hebrews 2:9-13 (KJV)

⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

¹⁰ For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

¹¹ For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are* all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

¹² Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

¹³ And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.

4. The oneness of the Church would prove to the world the truth of Christ, John 17:21-23;

Acts 2:1 (KJV)

¹ And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Acts 4:13-14 (KJV)

¹³ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

¹⁴ And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

Romans 12:5 (KJV)

⁵ So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

5. Jesus prayed that the truly sanctified Church might be with Him in final glory, John 17:24-26

NOTES:

Our High Priest

The separate offices of prophet, priest, and king that were held under the dispensation of the Law are found to be merged into one, in the Person of Jesus Christ. Each of these offices portrayed an individual phase of the work that Jesus would accomplish in the plan of God. A prophet is one who declares the message of God to the people — the office that Jesus fulfilled during His ministry of three and a half years on earth. A priest is one appointed by God to represent men before God. In this matchless intercessory prayer, recorded for us by the beloved Apostle, a preview is given of the second phase of Jesus' all-important work — that of being God's High Priest and great Intercessor for the souls of men. The scene of this office and work is in Heaven at the right hand of God. "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Romans 8:34). The last phase of Jesus' work — that of King — will be fulfilled at the end of the intercessory period. Jesus will then be crowned King of kings and Lord of lords, to the complete happiness of the myriads of saints and heavenly beings, but to the complete consternation of all who have rejected Jesus and the call of the Spirit. We fully believe that this last phase of Jesus' work is soon to be brought to pass.

Prayer for Himself

As the high priests of Israel's history always offered for themselves first and afterwards for the people, so did Jesus, the

perfect fulfillment of the Law, open His great intercessory prayer with a petition for Himself. Jesus knew that the appointed hour had come when He should offer His blessed life for the sins of the peoples of the world. He spoke of the hour as already being accomplished; and He could do so because the price of His life had already been paid in His heart. The hour of Jesus' suffering had been marked in God's time clock from the very beginning of time, and no hour could possibly mean so much to the human race. Jesus' birth was cause for great rejoicing by hosts of angels and sons of men, but the hour of His death brought liberation from sin to all true believers. The hour that saw Christ's greatest humiliation was the hour that brought to fulfillment God's promise of redemption. (**Genesis 3:15 (KJV)** ¹⁵ And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.) Satan's power was broken through Christ's victorious death on the cross. The prayer for Himself did not take into consideration the suffering, humiliation, and curse of sin that would be meted to Him as the purchase price of redemption; but He was concerned only that through this paid price God the Father might also be glorified.

The Means of Redemption

Sin brought an extreme separation between God and man, and a means had to be found whereby man could be brought back into favor and fellowship with God. The only acceptable sacrifice for sin, the Blood of the sinless Son of God, was about to be made. Jesus prayed that the Father might glorify this offering of His life, and that in turn, the Father would be glorified by the many sons of men brought unto redemption and righteousness. Because of this sacrifice, the sons of men could stand in the presence of God, because their souls had been washed in the Blood of the Lamb. Jesus is the manifestation of God the Father unto the world, "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." Through faith in the Son of God and the merits of His shed Blood, a man can be brought once more into the knowledge and family of God. "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:11, 15, 16). This Christ-revealed knowledge of God, and fellowship with Him, secure eternal life for all true believers.

Jesus ended the portion of the prayer that concerned Himself and the Father with the plea for the restoration of former glory. A few more hours would finish the work that the blessed Jesus came to earth to perform. He remembered the glorious abode, the ivory palaces, the constant communion with His Father, that He had left in Heaven to accomplish this work; and His Spirit longed to take its flight from this vale of agony and tears to be once again with the Father.

Prayer for Apostles

Jesus came to save the men of the world from their sins, yet His prayer at this time was restricted chiefly to the disciples. The responsibility of preaching the Gospel would fall upon their shoulders when Jesus departed to be with the Father, and the important thing was that the disciples should be fitted for that duty to which they had been called. Jesus was speaking

particularly to those disciples who later were known as Apostles, because it was their responsibility to keep and proclaim to the world the Word and Gospel that Jesus brought to this earth.

Jesus could plainly declare that He had manifested the Father especially unto the men who had been given to Him out of the world. Jesus had kept these disciples in the Father's name; but now in His departure He prayed that the Father would strengthen and keep them in the Gospel without the aid of Christ's physical presence. The students of Christ were about to become teachers for Christ of the doctrines of Christ, and Jesus desired that God would give them grace to meet and overcome every obstacle that might overthrow their newly-found faith.

Disciples' Security

A careful study of this prayer clearly shows that a man can be lost in eternity even though he had once been truly saved in this life. Who can deny that Judas was once truly converted, when Jesus said of His disciples, "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition." The only eternal security that any man can rightly know is true repentance for sins committed and then a continued walk in the center of God's will. That was the secret of the disciples' victory — "they have kept thy word." Jesus said, "Keep them from the evil," and "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world"; thereby indicating that they lived above the sins of the world. All the disciples were given to Jesus by the Father, and He had kept them. The eleven had been kept because they willed to be kept, while Judas was lost as the result of his own ill-choosing and sin. The keeping power of Jesus Christ is a most wonderful thing. A Christian is not kept in the sense that he is bound to Christ by bands of restraint, nor is he kept in a confinement away from the world; but he is kept by bands of love. The Christian is free to depart from Christ at any time, but he continues with Christ because of the deepest love. The true Christian feels as did the disciples when Jesus said, "Will ye also go away?" (John 6:67). Their answer was, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). The devil tempts every Christian to turn back to the weak and beggarly elements of the world; but the overcomers press into the Gospel to make their calling and election sure, because they see the beauties of the Gospel, "having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (I Timothy 4:8).

No one can rightly say that these disciples for whom Jesus prayed were not genuinely converted men. They had received and kept the Word of God that Jesus brought to the earth; they had believed on Jesus as the only begotten of God. They were no longer of the world; therefore the world hated them. Are any further proofs needed to show that these men had been redeemed from sin? Justification alone gives men the power to live above sin; but Jesus knew His disciples needed more grace to live a consistent Christian life in unity one with another, and at the end of their life to be prepared to see God in Heaven. He prayed that they might be sanctified through the truth of God. Jesus, in His incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and glorification, is the embodiment of that truth of God.

Sanctification

Sanctification is the cleansing from all inherited sin; it takes out the root of sin and all carnality, and the Adamic nature is absolutely destroyed. Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). Sanctification gives a man

that purity and holiness of heart which is so essential to an overcoming life.

Before coming to God there is in every soul a twofold nature of sin — actual, committed sin, and inbred sin. There is a definite work of grace at justification, whereby every transgression is forgiven and blotted out, and that man becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. There is also a second, definite work of grace, sanctification, whereby the sin that has been inherited from the forefathers is taken out and destroyed. A man must be born of God and free from the law of sin before he is eligible for the great work of sanctification, just as the disciples were for whom Jesus prayed.

For the inheritance of depravity, man is not responsible. He did not commit it, nor can he repent of being so born. God's remedy is cleansing, called sanctification, holiness, or perfect love. When a sinner is born again, the fruits of sin are cut off and the fruit of the Spirit at once appears; but the root of the old nature of sin is still there and will give trouble. It must be eradicated and destroyed through sanctification.

The word sanctify means both to set aside to an appropriate and special service, and to cleanse and purify. There is a part for man to perform, as Jesus sanctified Himself; or in other words, He renewed the consecration of Himself to the work that God had planned for Him. There is also a work that God performs through a second application of the Blood of Christ to the heart of man in which the carnal nature is destroyed. When a man's consecration is complete, when he desires to be completely separated from inbred sin and dedicated to God, when faith in Jesus' Blood is exercised, then his prayer is heard in Heaven and God performs the act of entire sanctification in the heart. The man who is thus cleansed and thus dedicated has that mind in him which was also in Christ Jesus. One scholar said of sanctification, "A man may be said to be perfect who answers to the end for which God made him; and as God requires every man to love Him with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and his neighbor as himself, then he is a perfect man that does so — he answers the end for which God made him." This requirement of holy living can be attained only through the Blood-bought experience of sanctification.

Importance of Sanctification

Is the great work of sanctification immaterial? Is it left to the individual Christian as to whether or not he should seek for this second, definite work of grace? Not at all! God has enjoined men throughout the whole Bible to seek this wonderful grace. He commanded Abraham, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Genesis 17:1); and He commanded the Children of Israel, "I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy" (Leviticus 11:44). The command to the redeemed is no different today. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (I Thessalonians 4:3). How can any man profess to love the Lord with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and yet not be willing to obey the will of God?

There are many Scripture passages that pertain to the Bible theme of sanctification and personal holiness for the Christian. The world and the devil fight it, because the sanctified life is above argument or reproach. It cannot be simulated nor counterfeited — sanctification must be genuine and from the Lord. This work of grace will gain its possessor an entrance into Heaven. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). Sanctification will

make the Christian's life and work for God on earth successful to a much greater degree. It is easier for the sanctified person to overcome the world, and that grace will bring a unity into the Church that nothing else will. The world cannot overlook the oneness of the truly sanctified Church, and they will necessarily realize that Christ, the hope of glory, is in their midst.

QUESTIONS

- 1 What hour was at hand for Jesus, the Son of God?
- 2 What is the profit to the sons of men for believing in Jesus Christ?
- 3 For whom was the intercessory prayer of John 17 prayed?
- 4 How had the disciples been kept while Jesus was with them on earth?
- 5 How were they to be kept when Jesus returned to the Father?
- 6 Why were the disciples to remain in the world, even though Jesus departed?
- 7 Describe what it means to be sanctified.
- 8 Name several of the benefits of sanctification, and tell why it is so essential.
- 9 Why does the world and the devil hate and fight sanctification?