

SOME PROPHECIES OUR LORD MADE

John 16:1-15

Intro: Our Lord Jesus Christ occupies three positions, or fills three offices, in His relationship with men and in connection with His redemptive work. He is:

- 1) A Prophet.
- 2) A Priest.
- 3) A King.

Generally speaking, these three positions have reference to three different periods of time:

- 1) During His earthly ministry our Lord acted as a Prophet.
- 2) In His death, His resurrection, His ascension, and His ministry at this hour in heaven, our Lord is acting as our Great High Priest.
- 3) When He returns to the earth to reign, He will come as King of kings, and as Lord of Lords.

It seems that the Apostle John has reference to these in Rev.

1:5 when he identifies our Lord Jesus Christ as:

- 1) The faithful Witness -- or a Prophet.
- 2) The First Begotten of the death -- or a Priest.
- 3) The Prince of the kings of the earth -- or a King.

To identify our Lord further in these positions, we can say that:

- 1) In the Gospels we see Him as a Prophet.
- 2) In the book of Hebrews we see Him as the Great High Priest.
- 3) In the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ we see Him as the One Who comes to reign upon the earth as King!

Or, to state it just one more way from the Gospel of John. We have the same emphasis in the passage we are presently considering:

- 1) In the Upper Room Discourse (John 13-16) we see the Lord ministering to His disciples as a Prophet.
- 2) In John 17 we have our Lord's High Priestly prayer.
- 3) In the closing chapters of John's Gospel he tells us how Pilate brought the Lord out to the people and said to them, "Behold your King!" (John 19:14b). And also, in v. 19 of that same chapter, that when our Lord was crucified,

" . . . Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS."

This morning we want to think about our Lord as a Prophet.

And even here we have to make a distinction because a Biblical prophet usually filled a twofold role:

- 1) He was one who primarily was a forthteller, or a preacher, one who proclaimed the truth of God -- and most of the time by special, divine revelation!

- 2) He was a foreteller, or one who (also by divine revelation) would predict future events. It is in this latter role that we are thinking about our Lord this morning.

Every time our Lord spoke about something that would happen in the future, He was speaking as a foreteller, as a prophet. Every such utterance was a test of His prophetic office. He gave us literally hundreds of them. Not one of them has failed, or will fail!

Not all of these have to do with great, major events. Nor were all of them just to be fulfilled one time. We will see the nature of some of these prophetic declarations as we look at our text this morning.

There are at least four prophecies in these 15 verses.

I. A PROPHECY OF WHAT THE DISCIPLES WERE TO EXPECT FROM THE LEADERS OF THE SYNAGOGUE (John 16:1-4).

It was really twofold:

- 1) First, they would be put out.
- 2) Second, it would be considered an act of worshipping God to kill anybody who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why would they do this? See v. 3.

Why does the Lord tell His disciples this? See v. 1 -- so they would not expect results from their preaching that they would never get!

Up to now the hatred of the religious leaders had been directed against the Lord, but, once He was gone, it would be turned toward those who believed in Him.

We are not
to expect
the whole
world to
be saved.

The same is true today with respect to the professing, organized church -- and we may live to see the day when it will get worse than it is now!

II. A PROPHECY OF THE OUTCOME OF OUR LORD'S WORK ON EARTH (John 16:5, 6).

It was not just the Cross, nor the grave, nor even resurrection by itself, BUT ASCENSION: "I go my way to him that sent me."

Not only was it important for them NOT to expect what was NOT going to happen, but it was important for them to know what would most certainly happen -- to be able to see the outcome while going through all of the events which were to lead up to it!

The way might appear to be one of humiliation and defeat,

but the ultimate outcome is a victorious one!

But there is a third prophecy which the Lord utters here:

III. A PROPHECY OF THE SPIRIT'S COMING AND OF HIS WORK WITH PEOPLE IN THE WORLD (John 16:7-11).

Three times before in this message our Lord had spoken of "The Comforter." See 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26, 27.

Now He speaks specifically of the Spirit's ministry to the world -- and He clearly indicates that no one in the world can possibly be changed in their attitude toward Christ, and in their relationship to Him, apart from the Spirit's work.

He does not say that all are convicted in the same way, or even that all are convicted, but that if such conviction is to come it is to come only through the work of the Holy Spirit -- working through the people of God concerning three truths:

- A. "Of sin, because they believe not on me."
- B. "Of righteousness, because I go to my my Father, and ye see me no more."
- C. "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

There can be no true evangelism of the world apart from the ministry of the Spirit, and the blessing of the Spirit will only be given as believers in their witness center upon these three great truths of verses 8-11.

IV. A PROPHECY OF THE SPIRIT'S MINISTRY TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD (John 16:12-15).

How important this has to be for the Lord to single it out with such detail as a subject for one of His prophetic utterances!

Note: He does not speak of these things as that which can happen, or may happen, but as that which most certainly will happen!

Again -- the Spirit is concerned about three things with each believer:

- A. "He will guide you into all truth"(v. 13m). This means into all revealed truth -- all of the Word. No part is excluded since He is the Author of it all!

B. "He will show you things to come" (v. 13b).

When the Lord spoke these words, the Word of God was not yet complete. This is a promise of future prophecies, and of the Spirit's blessing in enabling believers to understand those revelations which God has been pleased to make of future events.

C. "He shall glorify me" (vv. 14, 15).

This is what we have in Scripture.

And this is what will become more and more the delight of any child of God who is taught of the Spirit.

Concl: How does our Lord rate as a Prophet? 100%!

These are not prophecies which are fulfilled with a single event, but they find their emphasis throughout this age as we await that glorious day when our Lord will appear as King of kings and Lord of lords!

THE PROMISE OF PEACE
John 16:25-33

Intro: Next Sunday we begin the study of the real Lord's prayer. It is the greatest of all recorded prayers -- the Lord's prayer because He is the only One who could pray it! Few passages (if any) give us such a clear picture of the heart of our Savior. John 17 is a chapter which is deserving of all of the time that we can give it.

My present plan, the Lord willing, is to spend six weeks on this one chapter. I would like for you to read it daily at least one time during these six weeks -- starting tomorrow.

If you read it that many times, you will memorize it -- BUT I also want you to make a special effort to commit it to memory. Begin with verses 1 through 5 -- and I would suggest that you use the King James Version. Then we can all say the portion each week that we have been memorizing.

BUT LET US BE PRAYING THAT THE LORD HIMSELF WILL GIVE US A TRUE UNDERSTANDING OF THIS CHAPTER. IT IS HERE BECAUSE THE LORD WANTS US TO KNOW HOW HE PRAYED EVEN FOR US -- AND THAT THROUGH READING AND PRAYING AND MEDITATING AND MEMORIZING THIS PRAYER WE MIGHT ALSO BE DRAWN INTO A CLOSER FELLOWSHIP WITH EACH MEMBER OF THE GODHEAD.

It might be a cliche (a trite or commonplace expression or idea), but it is true nevertheless: "The more you put into it, the more you will get out of it" IF YOU ARE PUTTING TIME INTO IT WITH YOUR TRUST IN THE LORD TO TEACH YOU WHAT IT MEANS.

So -- for next Sunday, let us all read John 17 each day,
and let us memorize verses 1-5.

Now let us look at the last 9 verses of John 16 -- verses which give us THE PROMISE OF PEACE.

At least 8 times in John 14-16 the Lord says, "These things have I spoken unto you," or its equivalent. See John 14:25; 15:11, 17; 16:1, 4(2x), 25, 33 -- twice in our text for this morning.

In John 16:25 He tells His disciples how He had spoken to them, but in v. 33 He tells them why: "that in me ye might have peace!"

There probably is a sense in which this latter statement applies to the whole Upper Room Discourse, but it certainly applies to our Lord's last words in that message!

The Lord wants us to have peace! From verses 32 and 33 it is evident that our Lord does not mean that they will have no

trouble, but He does mean that they will have quietness of heart, rest, confidence and assurance, in spite of their troubles!

Such peace can only be found IN CHRIST -- and in no other person or place or thing or circumstance. "These things have I spoken unto you, that in ME ye might have peace."

From this statement it seems evident that, if we are to have peace, we must know what our Lord said, and, as the Lord enables us, we must seek to understand and believe and, if necessary, obey what He said.

Let me point out seven things from this passage:

- 1) One obvious fact, and
- 2) Six statements which our Lord makes in this passage, which are designed to bring us to a place of peace -- and to keep us there!

I. THE OBVIOUS FACT.

Look again at our Lord's statement in verse 33: "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace."

The obvious fact is this: PEACE COMES THROUGH THE WORDS OF CHRIST.

Or, we can expand that statement and be just as accurate if we say, PEACE COMES THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD -- through hearing it and understanding it and believing it and obeying it.

The Psalmist in the OT said this very thing in Psalm 119: 165, "Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them."

Eliphaz gave a good word to Job when he said, "Acquaint now thyself with him (i.e., the Lord), and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee."

When Solomon spoke of learning the wisdom of God's Word, he said, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

The NT is also full of this teaching. Cf. 2 Peter 1:2, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord."

Such knowledge can only be found in the Word of God!

So it is a basic truth that, if you want and need peace this

morning (and we all need it), peace can only be found in knowing Christ and the truth of God as we find it in the Word of God. *v. 33 - a great comfort to John Huss prior to his martyrdom. Also to Spurgeon during the Downgrade Controversy.*

But -- what are the truths which the Lord spoke here that bring us peace in this world of tribulation?

There are at least 6 which our Lord mentions. You may be surprised at what they are, but this is the way of peace nevertheless.

II. THE SIX TRUTHS WHICH BRING US PEACE IN CHRIST.

I need to mention, first of all, that these are truths which apply only to those who have received the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. There is no true peace outside of salvation.

- A. The first truth, in v. 25: "I shall shew you plainly of the Father."

The disciples were having trouble understanding some of the things that the Lord was saying, but the Lord indicates that He would bring them to a clear understanding of the Father.

This means that in the truth of God's Fatherhood, there we have one of the great sources of our peace.

Just take, for example, those words our Savior spoke when the disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray." He responded with the words, "When ye pray, say, Our Father . . ." (Luke 11:1b, 2a).

- B. The second truth, in v. 27: "For the Father himself loveth you, because . . ."

This is a truth which never changes. The Lord may have to discipline us, but He never stops loving us. Oh, that we could learn this.

The peak of Paul's teaching in Romans is in chapter 8, vv. 38, 39, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Are you persuaded of that truth, too? It is a marvelous source of peace!

- C. The third truth, in v. 28a: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world."

This has to do not only with the Father, but also with Christ.

This has to do with our Lord's Deity, His mission in coming to the world, the sovereign, eternal purposes of God.

This teaches us that all that has to do with our relationship with God is of divine origin, not human!

John teaches us in 1 John 4:14,

"And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."

Does this not bring peace to your heart?

- D. The fourth truth, in the same verse (v. 28b): ". . . again, I leave the world, and go to the Father."

What does this mean?

- 1) It means a finished work.
- 2) It means that He would be accepted by the Father.
- 3) It means that we have the truth of John 14:1-3.
- 4) It means that He is there as our Great High Priest, interceding for us.

Do you really appreciate Romans 8:34 which says that "Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again . . . is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us"?

It is wonderful to be able to pray for each other, but how much more wonderful that He prays for us! What peace this should bring to us!

- E. The fifth truth, in v. 32.

Much of what is being said about peace today has to do with us -- just as though we are the source of our own peace! But notice what the Lord says about the disciples in this verse -- their failure! But at the same time we see the unfailing character and power of the Father! ". . . ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, BECAUSE THE FATHER IS WITH ME."

And one commentator reminds us what this actually means:

"When he says that the FATHER will be with him, the meaning is, that God will be on his side,

so that he will have no need to borrow anything from men" (Calvin, XVIII, 161).

What peace this brings!

- F. The sixth and last truth, in v. 33: "I have overcome the world."

Tribulation comes to us in the world. The world is the enemy of all that is godly and holy. It is designed for our downfall, BUT THE LORD IS THE VICTOR. Nothing in the world or about the world can defeat us, nor can God's purposes for us be defeated!

Thus, we are to "be of good cheer."

The Lord speaks to the Father about this very thing in His prayer in John 17. See vv. 11b-15.

Concl: There we have it -- the six great pillars of our peace -- all have to do with the Godhead, and all are found in the Word!

It is especially worth noting that none is dependent upon you or upon me.

Are you enjoying this peace? Do you have it? Or, is your peace the kind that you have only when things are peaceful? This is not true peace. The peace which God gives is a peace which can be ours when the circumstances are the worst.

OUR LORD PRAYS FOR HIMSELF
John 17:1-5

Intro: John 17 is the passage that deserves the title, The Lord's Prayer.

It is a prayer which only He could pray.

What is commonly called, The Lord's Prayer, is a prayer that He would never have any need to pray -- with its prayer for forgiveness.

One writer has said that "in John 17 we have the most precious document ever transmitted to the children of God." I am inclined to agree.

If so, then it is deserving of our most careful and prayerful consideration. We cannot know it too well. It needs to be written upon the tables of our hearts -- and we need to come back to it again and again for fresh insights into the heart of our Lord, and to gain fresh inspiration from this passage for our own prayers.

All of the prayers of Scripture are helpful for us as we seek to know more about this most vital and most neglected ministry, but none is more helpful than this prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I ask you again to memorize it.

I ask you to read it over and over -- daily if possible while we are considering it together.

And every time we come to it let us turn our own hearts to the Lord for the blessing of the Holy Spirit in enabling us to understand this prayer as we should.

While this is not a prayer that we would take and pray as it is, it is a prayer in which we see our Lord as Our Example and Our Teacher. This morning, as we consider the first 5 verses in which we see our Lord praying for Himself, I want us to consider these verses thinking of the Lord as Our Example in prayer that we may learn how to pray more effectually ourselves.

Remember that PRAYING, INTERCEDING FOR US, IS OUR LORD'S PRESENT MINISTRY. Let me remind you of three passages in the Epistles of the NT which bring this out.

- 1) Rom. 8:34, "Who is he that condemneth? 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."

- 2) Heb. 7:25, "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."
- 3) 1 John 2:1, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Thus, John 17 is also important because it teaches us how the Lord continues to pray for us.

Let us look, now, at the first five verses.

I. THE LORD IS OUR EXAMPLE -- IN THE TIMING OF HIS PRAYER.

It came after His ministry of the Word to His disciples.

He had also prayed before. See John 12:27-30.

This is where we so often fail. We forget to precede and to follow up our teaching with prayer. Without prayer our ministry will lose its effectiveness -- even with the emphasis that there is in all of these chapters on the sovereignty of God and the eternal purposes of God.

II. THE LORD IS OUR EXAMPLE -- IN THE SPIRIT (or, attitude) HE MANIFESTED TOWARD THE FATHER IN HIS PRAYING.

Note each point carefully.

A. In His dependence upon the Father.

Remember that we are seeing the Lord in His humanity -- and there is much about this that we cannot understand.

1. He "lifted up his eyes to heaven."

This is like Psalm 121:1 -- the question.

2. He called God, "Father."

Six times we have the Lord doing this throughout the prayer -- a fact that evidently has great power with God.

B. In His confidence in the Father.

This is seen in many ways, but let me point out two prominent ways in which we see it in our text.

1. The certainty that the timing of events leading up to His death were under the sovereign direction of the Father.

"Father, the hour is come."

Remember how we have had repeated references to the fact that it had not come; now it has!

2. The certainty that His mission would not fail.

See v. 2.

Let this truth get into our hearts. Let it teach us the majesty of God, the power of God, the certainty that His purposes for our salvation cannot fail!

- C. In His knowledge of what eternal life is.

Oh, the marvelous truth that we have in John 17:3! Let us never lose sight of this, and that the Lord makes Himself known. We proclaim the truth, but He does the work.

- D. In His obedience to the Father.

See v. 4.

Are we ever guilty of asking the Lord to bless that which is really NOT His will? Do we seek His blessing when we have been unconcerned about doing His will?

What power there is in prayer when we are able to say, by the grace of God, what our Lord said in v. 4!

- E. In His desire to see the Father glorified.

See vv. 1, 4.

And, before we consider what this means, let us notice the third and final way in which the Lord is our Example in the way in which He prayed for Himself.

- III. THE LORD IS OUR EXAMPLE -- IN THE PRAYER THAT HE PRAYED -- in the request that He made for Himself.

We have it in v. 1, and again in v. 5.

There is a difference between the two:

- 1) The first has to do with the Cross (v. 1).
- 2) The cond has to do with His acceptance back into heaven. Cf. v. 5.

Note that both were guaranteed in the purposes of God, and yet our Lord prayed about them, and for them! This should teach us about the necessity of praying for things which God has decreed shall come to pass.

Concl:

OUR LORD PRAYS ABOUT HIS OWN
John 17:6-10

Intro: It is obvious from these verses that before our Lord prayed for His own, He prayed about His own.

Before we consider these words, let us keep in mind the great importance of this chapter.

In the last century a man who has written a book on John 17 wrote the following words, giving us a quotation from another expositor of an even earlier time:

"It is a quaint remark of an old Scottish divine, that 'the best sermon that was ever preached in our world, was followed by the best prayer that was ever offered up in it.' It is scarcely necessary to say, the sermon is contained in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of John's Gospel, and the prayer in the seventeenth chapter of that Gospel" (John Brown quoting Robert Traill, p. vii).

The same writer has commented about this chapter that "all that is most peculiar (by which he means, distinctive) and wonderful in Christianity is here" (Brown, John, The Intercessory Prayer of Our Lord Jesus Christ, p. viii).

It is important because it is our Lord's prayer.

We can certainly say two things that go together:

- 1) He would not pray to His Father words which were not true. Instead, we must expect that at such a period in His own history upon earth,
- 2) He would speak of the most vital of all truths as He prayed for Himself and for His people.

The first request FOR His disciples does not come until we get to v. 11. Before that He prayed FOR HIMSELF, as we see in vv. 1-5, and then He prayed ABOUT HIS DISCIPLES in our text for this morning.

May the Lord open our hearts to the truth that is here.

There may be things that we do not understand, and we may have questions -- but let us remember that these are the words of our Lord Jesus as He spoke to His Father about His own people, things that would never enter into our hearts, but things which are nevertheless true!

First of all, we see in our text . . .

I. THE NATURE OF OUR LORD'S MINISTRY. Here we are concerned with WHAT He did, and WITH WHOM.

Two verses tell us what He did -- stated somewhat differently, and yet inseparably bound together.

A. What He did (vv. 6a, 8a).

1. "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world" (v. 6a).
2. "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me" (v. 8a).

This is the first lesson that we must learn if we are to see the Lord's blessing in evangelism, in missions. GOD'S BLESSING NEVER COMES UPON MEN EXCEPT THROUGH HIS WORD BECAUSE IT IS IN THE WORD THAT THE FATHER IS REVEALED TO US.

There never has been a true revival, and there never will be, but what the preaching of the Word, the preaching of the doctrines of Scriptures, was at the heart of it all.

Our Lord Himself did this, and He is teaching us to do the same.

But now we come to the second part of our Lord's ministry. Note His emphasis on . . .

B. Those about whom He was particularly concerned.

In v. 8a He simply uses the word, "them."

In v. 6a it is clearer -- and the expression occurs several times throughout our Lord's prayer. He said, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world."

And if we might be inclined to say that this applied only to the disciples, then what are we going to do when we go down through the prayer and find our Lord praying in v. 20 for all future believers, and then saying in v. 24,

"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am . . ."

Surely this is not a request just for the twelve!

We preach the Gospel to every creature, and we are to go into all the world. But who are we after as we preach. We have learned in Romans 3 that "there is none that seeketh after God" (v. 11b). ALL MAY COME, BUT WHO WILL COME? Only those who are given by the Father to the Son.

This point will become clearer as we go on to our next point.

II. THE RESULTS OF OUR LORD'S MINISTRY.

We also see in these verses which we now want to consider,
THE VARIOUS STAGES IN SALVATION.

Let us note first,

A. The fivefold statement of a favorable response. See vv.
6-8.

1. In v. 6b -- "and they have kept thy word."
2. In v. 7 -- "Now they have known that all things
whatsoever thou hast given me are of
thee."

There are three in v. 8b:

3. "And they have received them."
4. "And have known surely that I came out from thee."
5. "And they have believed that thou didst send me."

Would you not like to see more people like this today?

Results are where we have our problem in modern evangelism.
Go back one month later, or one year later, or five years
later -- and where are the converts. Experience shows
that it is almost impossible to find them. Perhaps we are
going about all of this in the wrong way.

Look with me for a moment at . . .

B. The steps which lead to the results.

Surely we cannot set this all aside saying again that
this was only for the disciples at that time. Have we
not been learning in several of our studies that salva-
tion is the same in the OT and in the NT? Would it be
true then that the Lord had a special way of saving the
twelve Apostles which does not apply to us?

Absolutely not! What the Lord says about their salva-
tion is true also of ours.

Note what He says -- and the order that He gives.

1. "Thine they were" (v. 6m).

A look at the context means that they were the Lord's
even before they were saved -- His from eternity.

*The Father
did not need
the Son to tell
him these
things, but
the Son prayed
about them
nevertheless.*

Thus, let us remember that salvation begins with God -- not our choice of Him (although that will come), but His choice of us!

Note Eph. 1:3, 4,

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: ACCORDING AS HE HATH CHOSEN US IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

Or listen to Paul's words to Timothy (which surely included both of them, and also the rest of us). Speaking of GOD he writes,

"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, WHICH WAS GIVEN US IN CHRIST JESUS BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN."

Do you see now what it means when the Lord says about all who have been saved, and about all who ever will be saved, "Thine they were" -- from eternity past, those who most certainly will be saved. Man will not seek God, but God has chosen us, and He seeks us, and brings us to Himself.

But what is the second step?

2. "And thou gavest them me" (v. 6b), which means, gavest them to me.

This is what happens every time a person is genuinely saved -- God is giving someone to His Son.

This precedes our faith. This precedes any action on our part. We become conscious that God is doing something in our lives. And whereas before we did not care in the least about God, now we become greatly concerned -- and we begin to seek Him because of what He is doing with us!

Some of you may be in this very condition this morning. God is getting ready to save you. He is about to give you to His Son. You may even wonder why you are here, but you were not able to stay away!

But, then, there is a final step in this process that our Lord is describing. Note it at the end of v. 6,

and in the four other statements I pointed out a moment ago in vv. 7, 8.

3. "And they have kept thy word."

How can we tell when a person has been genuinely saved? Is it when they go forward in a meeting to profess faith in Christ? Millions have done that who have shown later that they have not been saved. Is it by joining a church? No, because there are also millions today who belong to churches who do not even profess to be saved.

I could ask other questions, but what is it that really marks a person out as a true Christian?

The Lord tells us: Their lives are changed, and continue to be changed through faith in the Word and by obedience to the Word!

Oh, how we have watered this down! Look for this in your own life. Look for it in the lives of your children. Salvation is a divine change which God brings about in our hearts, and it is evident most of all by our response to the Word of God.

I do not think that there is any question but that we have a weak church today, and many adherents to the church which are not saved because we have ignored this plain teaching of our Lord and of all of Scripture.

But I have one final point.

Some are always inclined to say, IF GOD HAS CHOSEN US FOR SALVATION, THEN WHY WITNESS, AND WHY PRAY. Someone will always say that if God knows who is going to be saved, and if He has chosen us to be saved, and if His chosen ones are certain to be saved, then there is no need for us to do anything -- to pray, or to preach.

I would be the first to confess that some have pushed the doctrine of election in that direction, but I would also say that they are dead wrong!!!

Why do I say this? Let me give you three reasons:

- 1) We should pray and witness because the Bible tells us to.
- 2) We should pray and witness because God has chosen to make us a part of the work that He is doing as He gives His chosen ones to His Son for salvation. Our work is a vital part in all that God is doing. We are "workers together with" GOD, as Paul says in 2 Cor. 6:1.

But there is a third reason, and this brings me to the last point of my message where we see . . .

III. OUR LORD'S CONCERN THEN -- AND NOW!

See vv. 9, 10 -- and then read v. 20.

REASON

THE THIRD (and perhaps the most convincing argument of all) IS THAT WE MUST PREACH AND WE MUST PRAY BECAUSE OUR LORD DID!

He prayed for those who were saved, and He prayed for those who were most assuredly going to be saved down through the history of the Church "through their word" (v. 20).

Concl: Can you think of any truth more encouraging than this?

God is working, and we are by divine grace entering into what He is doing. We do not have the knowledge that the Lord had, and so we do not know who is going to be saved, and who is not. But we can be sure that some are going to be saved. The Lord will draw them as we preach and as we pray. They will come.

And when we stand before the Lord in that great day to come we will all glorify Him for His marvelous grace, and that His purposes in the salvation of men have been fully accomplished!

PRAISE HIS GLORIOUS NAME!

OUR LORD'S FIRST REQUEST FOR HIS OWN
John 17:11-14

Intro: Memorizing -- vv. 15-19, 20-23, 24-26. You now have a week to catch up, or even to begin (if you have not started).

In verses 11-14, where are we in our Lord's prayer?

The Lord Jesus began by praying for Himself -- in vv. 1-5.

Then He prayed about those whom the Father had given to Him -- in vv. 6-10. It was something of a report that the Lord was making to the Father about His earthly ministry.

Now, in our text for this morning (vv. 11-14), we have the first request that the Lord makes for His own! (See v. 9 where the Lord emphasizes that He is not praying for everybody, but, as He says, "for them which thou hast given me.")

As we begin, I want you to notice in the text . . .

I. THREE REASONS WHY THE LORD MAKES THIS PARTICULAR REQUEST FOR HIS OWN. It will help us to understand the request itself if we know the reasons behind the request that were on the Lord's heart.

A. The first -- in verse 11: Because the Lord Jesus Christ was leaving them.

He speaks like He is already gone -- like His work is finished; that He had died,
that He had been resurrected,
that He had ascended to the Father,
and that He was seated at the Father's right hand!

The Lord spoke like this in verse 4b,
"I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do,"
and yet it was not actually finished!

BUT THE LORD CAN SPEAK LIKE THIS. THE PURPOSES OF GOD ARE CERTAIN, AND WHAT HE WILL DO IS JUST AS CERTAIN AS ANYTHING HE ALREADY HAS DONE!

But try to imagine how you would have felt when the Lord talked about going away when you had never worked without having Him in His bodily presence with you! To the disciples this was nothing short of the greatest possible tragedy!

And so the Lord prays for them -- that they will under-

stand the new order of things into which they were entering and see that the Lord was not leaving them without any help, but that He was, if anything, giving them more help than they had ever had before!

- B. The second -- in verse 13: "That they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves."

I am sure that, as we come to consider the request, you will see that the Father's answer to our Lord's request brings the greatest possible joy -- joy which originates and comes from our Lord, joy which can only be found in Him.

The reference here has to do with the Lord's prayer even though John 15:11 speaks also of what the Lord had been teaching them.

But this is the second reason for our Lord's first request.

- C. The third -- in verse 14: "and the world hath hated them."

The Lord will eventually take His own out of the world. See v. 24. But that is not His purpose now. See v. 15. In the meantime, the Lord Jesus prays for the Father to "keep" them.

The world is not an easy place for the child of God to be. He is "hated" there -- if he is living the way he should. But it is good for him to be here because in the world the Christian learns:

- 1) How empty the world is, how destitute of anything that really brings joy.
- 2) How inadequate he, the child of God, is to cope with life in the world -- and thus He is thrown upon his God.
- 3) How sufficient God is -- how faithful,
how wise,
how mighty,
how loving,
how gracious.
- 4) How to walk by faith, and not by sight. This means that He can count on the presence of the Lord at all times, and that He learns to trust the promises of God, always finding God faithful to His Word.

The world hates God, and hates the Christian because he belongs to God. But he is left here for all of the reasons given above, and many more -- and yet he is not left without the faithful intercession of his Lord!

Now let us look at . . .

II. THE REQUEST WHICH OUR LORD PRAYS TO THE FATHER (John 17: 11b, 12).

Let us look at every detail of this request as time permits. It is all tremendously important and rich in the truth which it contains.

First, consider with me . . .

A. The details which indicate for us the importance of this request:

1. Note Who is praying: Our Lord Jesus Christ! Surely for something to be upon the heart of our Lord so much so that He would pray to the Father about it is all that we should need to realize how tremendously important the matter is!
2. Note the One to Whom our Lord prays. It is not a charge given to angels, nor a responsibility placed upon the disciples, and not just a request to the Father, but He addresses God in a way which is peculiar to this passage: "Holy Father"!

This gives us an idea of what it means to be kept. Holiness is the attribute of attributes as far as God is concerned. It is His crowing glory -- that He is "holy."

When you look at the world, you see that which is totally unholy. And even when you look at the people of God, you always see that which falls far short of the holiness of God.

3. Note the place that this request has in the prayer: It comes first!

This is usually the case even about our prayers: we pray first about that which is most upon our hearts. Listen to a father pray when his family needs food. Listen to a mother pray when her child is sick with a high fever. Listen to a soldier pray when he is in the battle.

Surely we can say that there is nothing that is of greater importance for the child of God than that he be kept! And for the Son to pray to the Father about this means that it is not within the power of any child of God to keep himself. This is something which God must do, or all is lost!

Notice secondly,

B. Those for whom the Lord prays.

It is not for everyone, but for "those whom thou hast given me."

He is praying for His own! This means that He is praying for all true believers. How precious they are to Him! And how needy they are, desperately in need of the Father's blessing.

In this connection note what our Lord says about Judas in the latter part of v. 12. There are those who profess to be believers -- and who even act like it! Sometimes they preach, and even perform miracles! But like Judas, they are not saved. He is called "the son of perdition" (which word has the same root as the word "lost" earlier in the sentence). It is a Hebrew idiom which means "ruined, or devoted to destruction" (Calvin, XVIII, 176).

This is not a case where the Lord failed to keep Judas. Instead, it was a case where Judas never knew the Lord -- and Psa. 109:8, quoted in Acts 1:20, indicated this very thing!

The Lord has a perfect record of keeping all who truly are His people.

But now let us look at . . .

C. The actual request: "Keep."

Our Lord uses two words which are translated "keep" or "kept."

- 1) The first is τηρέω. It is the verb used in v. 11, and the first one in v. 12. It describes the result. It also can indicate the present condition. The disciples were safe at the moment the Lord prayed this prayer.
- 2) The second is φυλάσσω. It is the second word in v. 12. It is the verb which describes all that needs to be done to keep a person -- the guarding, the defending, the protecting. It even means to keep a person from running away.

See in this connection the truths we had in John 10:27-31.

Cf. Paul in 2 Tim. 1:12, ". . . for I know whom I have . . .," and Peter in 1 Pet. 1:4, 5, "To an inheritance incorruptible . . . Who are kept . . ."

But how will the Father do this?

D. The means by which we are kept.

Note this very carefully: "Keep through thine own name."

What does the name of God represent? It points to all that He is -- the sum total of all of His attributes:

- 1) His power.
- 2) His wisdom.
- 3) His righteousness.
- 4) His holiness.
- 5) His mercy and His grace.
- 6) His love.

All that God is is brought into action for the purpose of keeping every person which the Father has given to His Son -- every true child of God.

You may see some church members fall away. You may see people attend church for years, and then depart, never to come back again. BUT YOU WILL NEVER SEE A TRUE CHILD OF GOD ULTIMATELY AND FINALLY TURN AWAY FROM THE LORD. He may sin and turn away for a time, but he cannot leave because he is kept!

Oh, what a wonderful Saviour and what a wonderful heavenly Father we have!

Finally . . .

E. The purpose of our being kept: "that they may be one, as we are."

Recently I spoke to a young couple about marriage. And in speaking to the young man I was referring to the standard which the Lord had set for all husbands in Eph. 5:25 -- a standard which no husband has ever reached! It means that we can always love our wives more than we do, that we must always be striving in this direction.

The same is true here. We will never reach in this life the perfect oneness that exists between the Father and the Son, but we are to be moving all of the time in that direction that we might display more of that oneness.

What does that oneness mean?

- Is it organizational oneness?
- Is it oneness in which we ignore doctrine?

The answer to both of these questions is, "NO!" Who can read through the Gospel of John and get the idea that

the Lord came to establish a large world-wide organization, or that, to Him, the truth was not important!

No, the world and often churches are off on the wrong track at this point.

Perhaps the greatest tragedy in the true Church today is the fact that we are so divided.

Our Lord's concern was not just that we should be kept from the world, the flesh, and the devil, but that we should be drawn together in a oneness concerning the truth, a oneness of devoting ourselves to the will of God, to the purposes of God, a oneness in our hope that eventually those divine purposes will find their fulfillment to the honor and glory of our God and of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is not a oneness which we make. It already exists. It is a oneness which we manifest, and it takes the keeping power of God and of Christ to make this a reality!

Concl: Is your heart not overwhelmed with these truths? I have not dealt with the passage exhaustively, but surely we have seen enough to make us worship and adore our "Holy Father."

If you lack assurance, all you will ever need is here.

If you have never believed in Christ for salvation, then this should give you hope -- and I trust would be the means that God would use to bring you to Himself.

KEPT FROM THE EVIL ONE
John 17:15-19

Intro: Are you memorizing John 17?

You should be down to v. 19.

Next Sunday is Easter Sunday. Let us make a special effort to invite our friends, neighbors, and relatives to attend church. I am going to turn aside from John 17 to preach on the last part of 1 Cor. 15 -- the resurrection chapter!

But two weeks from today we will be back with John 17 -- verses 20-23. And, then, the following week, we will conclude our study of the chapter with a message on verses 24-26.

Even if you have not even started memorizing this great chapter, I am sure that most of you could start now and have it memorized by the time we complete our study of it in our morning services.

Where are we now in the prayer as we come to verses 15-19?

We have considered three parts of the prayer up to v. 15:

- 1) First, you will remember, our Lord prayed for Himself -- in verses 1-5. He was concerned with His own glory and with the glory of the Father.
- 2) Second, in verses 6-10, He gives a report to His Father as He prays about His disciples -- what He had given to them, and how they had responded.
- 3) Third, He presented His first request for His disciples to the Father: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." The passage is found in verses 11-14.
- 4) This morning -- and fourth -- we come to our Lord's second request for His disciples, and yet it is related to the first request in the preceding passage. He prays that they might be kept from the evil that is in the world, or, as many interpret it -- that they might be kept from the Evil One. The Greek permits both interpretations.

But the main point in this part of the prayer is that they are going to be kept from the evil in the world, or from the Evil One, not by being removed from the world, but by being sanctified through the truth of the Word of God!

Now let us turn to our text for the morning (vv. 15-19), and let us quote it, or read it, as we begin to look into it.

(Read or quote vv. 15-19.)

We are concerned in this passage with the Biblical doctrine of sanctification. And sanctification is a part of the whole work of salvation. The doctrine of sanctification means that God has

saved His people to make them holy -- to make them holy as He is holy!

Our sanctification includes two things:

- 1) It means that we must be kept from the evil of the world (which includes the evil in our hearts) and that we must be kept from the power of the Evil One -- Satan, or, as he is also called, the Devil.
- 2) It means that we must take on new characteristics, that we should be made to partake of the divine nature -- in short, that we should become like God and like our Lord Jesus Christ.

The two things are not separate from each other, but are two parts of the same work that are going on at the same time.

AND NOTE THAT, WHILE THERE ARE OBVIOUSLY HUMAN ASPECTS TO THIS WORK OF SANCTIFICATION, THE WORK ITSELF IS A WORK OF GOD. IT IS GOD WHO KEEPS US FROM THE EVIL (OR, FROM THE EVIL ONE), AND IT IS GOD WHO MAKES US HOLY. Our Lord's requests are directed to the Father, and so we cannot interpret His requests in any other way than that they are meant to teach us that we do not sanctify ourselves, but it is God Who does the work! We cannot possibly interpret these requests in any other way.

But let us look at the details in the passage.

- I. WHAT OUR LORD DID NOT ASK THE FATHER TO DO: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world . . ."

This is one way that believers could be delivered from the problem of evil.

Would it not be wonderful if we did not have to live in an evil environment, surrounded by evil influences and by evil people, and under the influence of the Evil One who can so easily draw a response from our evil hearts? Haven't you longed to be rid of it all?

Thank God, that kind of a deliverance is coming (see v. 24), but that is not for now -- at least, not for us. Actually, we are as justified as we ever will be when we are first saved, but we are not sanctified. The Lord does not keep us from evil by removing us from the evil, but He does this in another way. To remove us from the evil would leave us weak and untaught -- not knowing our own great need, and not knowing that only the Father is sufficient to meet our need.

Remember all of this as far as our children are concerned, too.

- II. WHAT OUR LORD DID ASK THE FATHER TO DO: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

Now we have the two aspects of sanctification that are necessary, and which are both the work of our heavenly Father:

- 1) He keeps us from evil, and/or from the Evil One.
- 2) He sanctifies us through the truth.

Illus: Often in reading the works of men who have lived in the past, you can easily feel that what they wrote was for today.

Let me give you a couple of quotations from John Calvin (1509-1564):

" . . . there are fanatics who indulge in much useless prattle about sanctification, but who neglect the truth of God, by which he (God) consecrates us to himself. Again, as there are others who chatter quite as foolishly about the truth, and yet disregard the word, Christ expressly says that the truth, by which God sanctifies his sons, is not to be found any where else than in the word."

And then Calvin also says this:

" . . . sanctification is not instantly completed in us on the first day, but that we make progress in it through the whole course of our life, till at length God, having taken away from us the garment of the flesh, fills us with his righteousness" (XVIII, 179, 180).

Don't we have the same kind of people with us today -- those who talk about sanctification without the Word, or who go beyond the Scriptures for the truth, or those who say that it is possible for us to be fully sanctified while we are still in this flesh?

Look at what we can learn about sanctification from just the 17th verse:

- 1) Sanctification is the work of God.
- 2) Sanctification is a process (not suddenly imputed like righteousness is).
- 3) Sanctification is through the truth, and only through the truth.
- 4) The truth by which we are sanctified is the Word of God -- and only the Word of God (to avoid any possible confusion on the subject).

From this we can see the importance of what Bishop Ryle says (who lived about 100 years ago now) in his commentary on John (Vol. II, p. 447):

"Here lies the immense importance of regularly reading the written Word, and hearing the preached Word. It surely, though insensibly, promotes our sanctification. Believers who neglect the Word will not grow in holiness and victory over sin."

How important it is for us to understand the words of John 17:17, and then to see to it that our lives are devoted to the Word of God, trusting the Father to conform us to His own holiness through the effect of the Word of God upon our own hearts!

Are you having trouble with sin? The answer is to be found by looking to the Lord to use His Word to keep you from evil and to conform you to Himself and to His Son.

But notice another point in our text:

III. THE REASON GIVEN BY OUR LORD AS TO WHY HIS PEOPLE NEED TO BE SANCTIFIED (John 17:18).

Instead of taking them out of the world, He was sending them into the world. And they were being sent into the world for the same purpose that the Father had sent His Son into the world -- for the salvation of men.

So that the more we are in contact with the world, the greater will be the need we have for the keeping power of God in delivering us from the Evil One and in sanctifying us through the Word of God.

Finally . . .

IV. THE PLACE THAT THE WORK OF CHRIST HAS IN OUR SANCTIFICATION (John 17:19).

In what sense would our Lord need to be sanctified -- surely not as a sinner?

No, not as a sinner! Sanctified in His case means to be set apart to do the work that the Father sent Him to do.

Now I want you to notice carefully the words of this verse -- words which our Lord deliberately used. And I trust that the Lord will open your hearts to see the meaning of what our Lord is saying.

Notice that He says, "And for their sakes I sanctify myself." It means, "And for their sakes" I set myself apart to do the work which the Father sent me to do, to go to the cross and to die as a sacrifice for sins, "for their sakes . . . that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

But the point is this: Who is He talking about when He says "for their sakes"? Who does He mean by the word, "their"? Does He mean everybody in the world? It can't mean that because He had stated specifically in verse 9,

" . . . I pray not for the world, but for them which

thou hast given me . . ."

No one could possibly deny that the death of Christ is sufficient to save every person who ever lived -- and that our Lord could have saved millions and billions more. But is that what He came to do? Must we think of Him helplessly pleading for people to receive Him, frustrated because so many will have nothing to do with Him? Or -- ARE WE TO BELIEVE THAT HE ACCOMPLISHED WHAT HE CAME TO DO, AND THAT HE ACTUALLY GUARANTEED THAT THOSE WHO WERE GIVEN TO HIM BY THE FATHER WOULD BE SAVED, AND WOULD WITHOUT FAIL COME TO HIM AND BE SANCTIFIED?

This appears to be the meaning of His prayer -- and that by His death our Lord did not just make salvation possible, but that He made it absolutely certain for those given to Him by His Father!

Concl: What blessing it will bring to your heart to see this truth! It makes us recognize that the Lord gained a great and certain victory when He died on the cross!

And yet, again, as we have seen before in our Lord's prayer, we find Him praying for the very things which cannot help but take place -- showing that our teaching and our praying and our evangelizing and our mission works are all a part of what He is doing to accomplish His purposes -- that the salvation of men rests in His sovereign hands, and not in the hands of sinful men.

May God grant us the wisdom to see this, and then give us the peace and the boldness which always accompanies an understanding of His sovereign will and purpose!

ONENESS
John 17:20-23

Intro: By the time we get to this place in our Lord's prayer it seems clear that the one, predominant burden upon His heart was that His disciples would be one.

He mentions it 5 times in His prayer:

- 1) First in v. 11.
- 2) The other 4 times are in our text:
 - a) Twice in v. 21.
 - b) Once in v. 22.
 - c) Once in v. 23.

In v. 11 the Lord had mentioned this in connection with the first request that He made for His disciples: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."

It is in this respect that the disciples were to be:

- 1) Kept from the world and from the evil, and/or the Evil One, in the world.
- 2) Sanctified through the truth.

All, then, seems to center on this oneness, this unity, for which our Lord was so deeply concerned.

And there is little wonder for His concern when we notice:

I. THE PURPOSE FOR THIS ONENESS.

There are actually two that are mentioned here, but they are so closely related that it is impossible to separate them and they need to be considered together. You never find one without the other.

See the latter part of v. 21, and then the latter part of v. 23. (Read.)

We are not to think that this is the only reason for the oneness of the people of God, but this is the reason that the Lord emphasizes here!

Undoubtedly this is the greatest factor in our witness to the world. The way in which the Lord uses "believe" in v. 21, and then "know" in v. 23 would lead us to recognize that they are used synonymously here. Through the oneness of the people of God the world will come to recognize, will be forced to recognize:

- 1) The divine mission of Jesus Christ.
- 2) The special love that God has for His people.

This does not mean that everybody in the world will be saved,

but it certainly implies that some will. According to v. 20 some were going to believe through the testimony of the Apostles, and the indication is that others would follow after that -- all traceable ultimately to the testimony of the Apostles!

So -- how could anything be more important?

But let us look, now, for a few moments at

II. THE PATTERN OF THIS ONENESS.

Perhaps it would be helpful at this point to say what this oneness is NOT, before we notice from the text what IT IS! We hear a great deal about the ecumenical movement among churches today. Is this what the Lord had in mind? John 17 is often cited by ecumenical leaders as authority for what they are doing.

Let us notice in passing that the word, ecumenical, is not a bad word. In fact, it is a good word. One definition that has been given for the word is that it means promoting or fostering Christian unity throughout the world. That is good! But we must always bring things under the test given to them by the Word of God to see if it is true or false. The Devil has a counterfeit for everything that is taught in Scripture.

So let me speak, first of all, about . . .

A. False unity.

The ecumenical movement as we see it in the world today is a false movement.

It looks upon unity as outward. It is not based upon the truth of the Word of God, but it sacrifices that truth. It might better be spoken of as fostering uniformity, rather than unity. The main objective of those in the ecumenical movement is that we get together, and they are not concerned about the preservation of the truth in the so-called unity that they seek. In fact, they are so broad in their interests, that they would include religious groups that do not recognize Christ, nor the Bible, nor the Biblical truth of salvation. Many would include all world religions as well as Christian groups which differ widely in what they believe.

But this is not true, Biblical unity -- the unity for which our Lord was praying!

B. True unity.

You have it stated clearly in 21: "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee."

Thus we can say that:

1. True unity has its foundation in God, not in man. The Lord is not talking about any other kind of unity than that which is based upon the truth con-God, even the Persons of the Godhead, Their relationship to Each Other, and our relationship to Them.
2. True unity is inward and spiritual in character. Note how the Lord uses the little preposition, "in" -- "as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee."

Who could possibly explain this fully?

It certainly speaks of the oneness of their nature. It points also to the oneness of their purpose. It speaks of the oneness of their concern for the truth. There is no more profound subject in all of Scripture than the subject of the relationship between the Father and His incarnate Son.

Any unity that does not begin with God, and stay on that basis, recognizing the relationship between God and Christ as it is taught in Scripture, cannot be true Biblical unity!

But, to be even more specific, let us look more closely at . . .

III. THE PARTICULARS OF THIS ONENESS. *To be seen in the true Church, the Body of Christ.*

How important it is for us to understand this if we are to enjoy the blessing of God, and if we are to spend our time on that which will not only glorify God, but that which will bear fruit for all eternity.

Who wants to build with "wood, hay, stubble"?

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS SUBJECT IS TO BE SEEN IN THE FACT THAT THE LORD PRAYED SO SPECIFICALLY AND EARNESTLY FOR IT. Also, you should know that there is one book in the NT which is really devoted to this subject. I speak of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. We could call it The Epistle of Christian Unity. Read it again as soon as you can noting what Paul has to say in it about oneness, about unity. But for now let us consider our Lord's words in His prayer.

- A. The unity that our Lord prayed about includes only those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.

Once you depart from this, you depart from what the Lord

was praying about.

This shows that it cannot include all world religions. It cannot even include all church members, or even all Christian denominations. It includes only those who through faith in Christ have acknowledged that they are sinners, and that only Christ by His death and resurrection can save them!

But there is a second point closely connected with this:

- B. The unity that our Lord prayed about includes absolute faith in the message of the Apostles.

Note: ". . . them which shall believe on me through their word."

There seems little doubt but that by this statement our Lord was referring not only to the preaching of the Apostles, but also to their writing!

And the Apostles did not say anything that was not fully supported by the teaching of our Lord in the Gospels, nor did they in any way contradict the teaching of the Old prophets!

By our Lord's words we can see that faith comes through the Word.

But we can also see this: There can be no true, Biblical unity, which does not stand solidly upon all of the teaching of Scripture. In other words, we do not set aside the Scriptures, agreeing not to talk about things we cannot all accept, but it is basing upon Scripture all that we believe and teach.

Let me mention two more things:

- C. The unity that our Lord prayed about is a unity based not only upon the oneness of the Father and the Son, but upon our union with them.

Note again the first part of v. 21.

The only possibility that even redeemed sinners could possibly be one with each other is through their personal oneness with God and with His Son.

And this is the most practical of truths. His life is our life. His Word is what we believe. We are to be submissive to His will. His purposes become the great desire of our hearts. We have no wisdom, no strength,

no love, of our own. All that we are and have that can possibly unite us we have in Christ -- and only in Christ!

You and I will spend the rest of our lives learning what this means -- and perhaps it will take all of eternity, too!

The last particular is closely related to the one I have just mentioned, but the Lord has made special reference to it -- and so I shall do the same.

D. The unity that our Lord prayed about is a unity based upon "the glory" which He has given to us.

See v. 22.

What is God's glory? It is the revelation of Himself.

What does it mean that He has given His glory to us -- the glory which the Father gave to Him?

Obviously this must be spoken with reference to His humanity. See John 1:14, "And the Word was made flesh . . ."

See the ultimate glory in Rom. 8:28-30.

See it as it relates to us now: 2 Cor. 3:18.

What does this all mean?

It means that we are unity by our common destiny, and by what should be our common desire: to be like our dear Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Concl: Does this seem to be like the ecumenical movement? No, it is far from it. We need to take the term away from those who pervert it, and let the world know what true ecumenism is!

This oneness is what the world needs to see today -- not a unity ignoring Christ and the Bible, but a unity glorifying to God because of the pre-eminence it gives to the Word and to Christ, a unity of true believers which make no claim to any goodness except that which they have in Christ.

Such unity among the people of God can lead to the great spiritual awakening which we so desperately need today!

THE FINAL REQUEST
John 17:24-26

Intro: Prior to this final request our Lord has petitioned the Father for three things:

- 1) Their preservation.
- 2) Their sanctification.
- 3) Their unification.

At our first reading of verse 24 we might think that the Lord is finally concerned with their destination. But as we read it more carefully we will see that, while destination is a vital part of His final request, the real request is for their glorification!

Surely, if our Lord were concerned enough about these things to pray about them, then they ought to be our daily concern.

In the three verses of our text we have:

- I. The Request of the Son (v. 24).
- II. The Righteousness of the Father (v. 25).
- III. The Revelation of the Father's Name (v. 26).

I. THE REQUEST OF THE SON (John 17:24).

There has been much discussion as to whether or not our Lord expressed this as His will, or simply as His request, or His desire. The Greek word, ὁ ἐλθῶ , will permit either translation.

Perhaps the best thing to say is that it is both!

It certainly is the will of God and of Christ that believers be where they are. The Scriptures are very clear on that.

But it is also a blessing, isn't it, to see that this is really what the Lord Jesus desires! We could understand why we would want to be where He is, but it should pass our comprehension that this is what the Lord wants. And yet it is!

Note that the request is twofold (introduced in the Greek by two times that we have the word ἵνα), and then there is a reason given.

A. The twofold request:

- 1. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am."

Cf. John 12:26; 14:1-3.

In John 17:15 the Lord prayed that His disciples would not be taken out of the world then, but the

time is coming when they will be taken out! Cf.
1 John 3:1, 2.

So it is not just a possibility, but an absolute certainty, a part of the eternal plan of God for us!

But why, specifically, does He want us in heaven -- in addition to the fact that He delights in us? Note the second part of the reason:

2. "That they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me."

See the Lord's requests for Himself in vv. 1, 5.

"Behold" means to look "with interest and for a purpose" (Thayer, p. 290). It includes two things:

- 1) To get a knowledge of the glory of our Lord.
- 2) To partake of that glory.

What is His "glory"? It is the divine majesty of our Lord. It is the manifestation of what He is -- His Deity, His perfections, etc.

Note how this has been a part of John's Gospel in John 1:14; 2:11; 11:40; and now in John 17.

There is nothing that we have to do now that is more vital than beholding the glory of Christ in the Word. See 2 Cor. 3:18.

Where do we see His glory in the Word?

- 1) In the revelation of His Deity, His attributes.
- 2) In the revelation of His humanity.
- 3) In His Names.
- 4) In His offices, the positions which are His.
- 5) In His works -- His miracles, His teaching, and especially in His work at the Cross.

These need to be the things that we are looking at every day, and we are certain to experience under the blessing of God the transforming effect of these truths! It is the purpose for which our Lord wants us in heaven, and that is one reason we need to be so concerned about it now.

This has been the interest and the experience of saints in the past:

- 1) Abraham -- John 8:56.
- 2) Moses -- Ex. 33:18.
- 3) Job -- Job 19:25-27 and Job 42:5, 6. (Use the second reference first.)
- 4) David -- Psa. 27:4.
- 5) Isaiah -- John 12:41.

But then notice:

- B. The reason given: "for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

Why would this be a reason? What does this statement mean?

This statement, "before the foundation of the world," or statements very similar, have to do with the eternal purposes of God in salvation.

Note 2 Tim. 1:9 where Paul, speaking of God, says,
 "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

Salvation is not an after-thought with God. He was not taken by surprise by Adam's sin. Salvation is a plan devised of God in all of its entirety "before the foundation of the world."

It is in this sense that the Lord Jesus refers in our text to the fact that He was loved by the Father. And to prove it, note John 10:17:

"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again."

The Lord Jesus Christ in John 17:24 presses this claim upon the Father that His own be with Him in heaven to behold His glory "because" the Lord was fulfilling the eternal plan of the Godhead in coming to provide salvation for sinners -- and the Father could not turn away from such a claim!!!

But now let us notice, secondly,

II. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE FATHER (John 17:25).

Three times in this verse you have our Lord using the same verb: . It speaks of a knowledge that is:

- 1) In its beginning stages.
- 2) "A discriminating apprehension of external impressions" (Thayer, p. 118).
- 3) "A knowledge grounded in personal experience" (Ibid.).

Here the Lord is at the close of His earthly ministry. The world as a whole had not even started to know Him. The disciples had made a start, but there was so much that they needed to know. Many feel that it is not right for everyone not to know the same things, but notice, if you will, that

our Lord expresses His entire satisfaction with things as they were. He has no objection to raise against the Father. And so He calls Him, "righteous Father."

What a lesson for us, too, as we think of the Gospel -- and as we consider our own trials and testings. The Father is always "righteous" in all that He does!

Finally, note what our Lord says in concluding this great prayer concerning

III. THE REVELATION OF THE FATHER'S NAME (John 17:26).

To declare, to make known the Father's Name is equal to seeing the glory of the Son.

Note:

- A. This is what the Lord had been doing: "And I have declared unto them thy name."

He had done this by what He was in Himself. He had done this by His works. He had done this by His teaching. In fact, He had done this so perfectly that it is recorded in John 14:9 that He said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

- B. "And will declare it." *This is what He continues to d.o.*

In John 16:12 we have our Lord's words to His disciples: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

Paul in 1 Cor. 8:2 wrote,

"And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

The Lord continues to reveal the Father's Name,

-- not through His own physical presence on earth,

-- and not through additions to the Word of God,

but through the Word. We need to realize this and to recognize our need for it.

But why?

- C. The reason: "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Who cannot see a connection between these verses and such verses as John 14:21, 23; 15:9, 10?

Learning of God is the foundation of everything else. Such knowledge produces in us both the desire and the power to be obedient. And, like our Lord, obedience brings added manifestations of the love of God, and of the very presence of Christ in us.

Concl: There is much in John 17 that seems to go beyond our comprehension. And yet, like every other passage of Scripture, the more we consider it and the more we obediently enter into it, the more we see rich aspects of truth that had escaped our notice before. And, what is most important, the more we will be brought into fellowship with our Lord -- enjoying, as we will, the rich blessings that always accompany such a life!

Let us not worry about what we cannot understand. The Lord will make that known to us in His own time. What is important is that we live in the light of what we do understand.

Let us then live in the contemplation of Christ, knowing something of the blessings it brings now, and that this is to be our joy throughout eternity. Meditate every day on Christ -- Who He is (His attributes), what He said, what He did, His Names and Titles, and the hope we have in Him. There will not be room to receive the blessings that will come.

AN UPROAR IN THE GARDEN

John 18:1-11

Alternate titles: THE ARREST OF JESUS CHRIST, or
THE BETRAYAL OF JESUS CHRIST.

Intro: John's account is somewhat different from Matthew, Mark and Luke when we come to the suffering and death of Christ as it is about the life and ministry of Christ. It is generally agreed that John wrote later than the others, and this may account for its difference -- that the Spirit of God was using John to give us additional facts and a different emphasis.

A reading of the first 11 verses of John 18 will indicate to us that there is a threefold emphasis in these verses:

- 1) We are concerned with the "garden" in vv. 1, 2. We are not told why the Lord was there except for the fact that this was the place where Judas would expect to find Him "for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples." From the other Gospels we know that the Lord Jesus was there to pray, but John is pointing out the fact that our Lord was actually going where His enemies would be able to find Him.
- 2) We see the Lord, secondly, in His relationship with Judas and the men who had come "from the chief priests and Pharisees" to arrest our Lord. This is in vv. 3-9 -- the longest part of the passage. Consistent with the fact that the Lord would deliberately come to the very place where He would be taken by His enemies, we see in these verses both the glory and the authority of our Lord.
- 3) Finally, in the last two verses (vv. 10, 11) we see our Lord dealing with the courageous but foolish Peter, and using even these circumstances to teach the Apostle whom He intended to use so mightily in the coming days.

In all three of these sections there are some very important lessons for us -- and we want to be sure to note what those are.

I. THE LORD JESUS ENTERING THE GARDEN (John 18:1, 2).

As I have mentioned before, the Lord was there primarily to pray. John does not record our Lord's prayers in the garden probably because the other Gospel writers have done so, and also because John has recorded the prayer that we have just considered in John 17.

Notice three things about this:

- 1) First (and this is where I want to place the emphasis on these two verses), the fact that the Lord went there.
- 2) Second, the fact that He went there with His disciples.
- 3) Third, the fact that Judas knew that He would go there.

This last fact is what makes the action of Judas so deplor-

able. Nothing is sacred to him. He would use the very place where he had been with the Lord many times, and the place where he knew that the Lord would be in prayer with His Father. But nothing is actually sacred to a man who was unregenerate like Judas was!

But look at these facts with me for a moment -- and notice:

- 1) What they tell us about the Lord, and
- 2) The lessons for us to learn.

- A. As the Lord approached the Cross, one thing was certain: the Lord Jesus would go to His Father in prayer.

And Judas knew this!

What an amazing reputation for the Lord Jesus to have with His disciples! They knew the vital place that communion with the Father had had in His life upon earth, and they knew that without fail He would go to Gethsemane in this, the darkest of all hours in His earthly ministry!

Is this what you and I do? Do we have this kind of a reputation among those who know us the best? When we even think that trouble is coming, or when we are in the midst of it, what place does prayer have -- prayer that means real communion with the Father?

Oh, what peace we often forfeit,
Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer!

Let our hearts be open to the Lord concerning this as we think of Him in the garden.

But the second part is also important:

- B. As the Lord approached the Cross, He not only went to the place where He loved to pray, but He took His disciples there with Him.

Spurgeon says that our Lord did this for two reasons:

- 1) Because the disciples need^d it.
- 2) Because He needed the disciples.

We do not know if the Lord actually prayed with His disciples. He took Peter and James and John with Him and then even left them as He went on into the inner part of the garden, but we cannot ignore the fact that He took them with Him to the garden.

We all want others to pray for us, but do we realize the

importance, the power, the blessing of having others pray with us?

Cf. Matt. 18:19, 20. He has even promised to join such a prayer meeting. "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth . . ."

But let us go on to the second main point in our text:

II. THE LORD JESUS WITH JUDAS AND HIS OTHER ENEMIES WHO HAD COME TO ARREST HIM (John 18:3-9).

It is important that we get the right perspective here. We have been learning in many ways through the first 17 chapters of John that Jesus Christ is God -- identical in His Deity with the Father. Therefore, we must not have the idea that the Lord was taken by surprise, or that He was outnumbered by His enemies, or that this was a situation out of His control. And John uses two incidents at this time to help us to see that our Lord was sovereignly in control even at this crucial moment.

These two incidents have to do:

- 1) With something the Lord did.
- 2) With something that the Lord said.

A. The manifestation of His glory (John 18:3-6, esp. vv. 4-6).

If we were to ask John what occasions he had in mind when he wrote John 1:14, he would surely mention this.

There was a display of the eternal glory of the Son of God here in the garden -- and our Lord's enemies fell helplessly "to the ground" when this happened!

All He said was, " " -- "I am he." And this should bring back the times in John's Gospel when it is recorded that He said, "I am . . ." What He was on those occasions, He is at this very moment!

Be sure to remember this as you study the passion of our Lord. He never ceased to be the Lord. He was in complete control throughout the whole time.

B. The Lord's care for His disciples (John 18:7-9).

Twice the Lord asked them, "Whom seek ye?"

And twice they had responded by saying, "Jesus of Nazareth."

And it was then that the Lord issued a command: "If

therefore ye seek me, let these go their way."

And then John tells us in v. 9 why He said it.

Do you wonder why the disciples were not taken, too -- especially after Peter did what he did in v. 10? There is just one reason: The Lord would not let His disciples be taken! When the Lord says, "No," all of the men on earth cannot prevail against Him!

How important it is to see this! If you do not, then you cannot possibly understand the events which follow.

But here again -- note the meaning for you and for me: The Lord is in absolute control of our circumstances, too. And this is the basis of our peace.

But let us hurry on to the last point:

III. THE LORD JESUS WITH THE APOSTLE PETER (John 18:10, 11).

What an amazing ignorance of the ways of the God Peter manifested at this time! How quickly he resorted to human measures to protect the Lord! And this was in spite of the fact that the Lord had been dealing with him about this very thing! Read Matt. 16:21-23.

There are some wonderful lessons for us all in the words which our Lord spoke to Peter in v. 11.

What are we to do in times of suffering, of tribulation, of danger, or persecution?

- A. Our Lord told Peter to put away the use of any measures we might employ on our own: "Put up they sword into the sheath."

We usually do this after we have exhausted every human measure, but our Lord told Peter that this is the way to begin to deal with your problems.

This does not mean that we do not go to a doctor if we are sick, but it does mean that we do not launch out on our own plan, disregarding the will of God!

- B. Our Lord told Peter to see the Father's hand in the trials that come upon us.

The Lord did not look upon this as something which Judas was doing, or that the scribes and Pharisees were doing, but as something that the Father was doing!

Dwell on that question: " . . . the cup which my Father

hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Note: "My Father."

Thomas Manton says that there are three cups spoken of in Scripture:

- 1) The cup of salvation, in Psalm 116:13,
"I will take the cup of salvation, and
call upon the name of the Lord."
- 2) The cup of consolation, mentioned in Jer. 16:7.
- 3) The cup of tribulation -- which is what we have here. It is spoken of also in Psa. 11:6.

It is interesting to think of "the cup" in connection with the Lord's Supper -- a cup of suffering for the Lord, but a cup of salvation and consolation for us.

But, in speaking of "the cup," the Lord does not look at second causes, nor even to God as God, but to God as "my Father"!

Job recognized the hand of God in His sufferings:
"The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away;
blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

So did David when Shimei cursed him: ". . . the Lord hath bidden him" (2 Sam. 16:11).

Joseph needs also to be added to this list: "As for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it for good" (Gen. 50:20).

Read Heb. 12 -- the same teaching is there!

So three things stand out:

1. As with our Lord, there is for us the cup of suffering.
2. It is prepared and given to us by our heavenly Father.
3. We must drink it. The delight is not in the suffering itself, but in what the Lord is accomplishing through that suffering.

Concl: Three great lesson: our Lord's supplications,
our Lord's sovereignty,
our Lord's suffering.

May our hearts be open to what the Lord is teaching us.

CHRIST DENIED AND DEFAMED

John 18:12-27

Intro: Approximately 700 years before the events recorded in our text took place, the Prophet Isaiah wrote the following words about the Messiah:

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

When I speak of CHRIST DENIED AND DEFAMED I am referring to the treatment He received from one of His disciples as well as from His enemies (who were religious men). He was DENIED by Peter -- who repudiated every charge that he was a disciple. Our Lord was DEFAMED BY His enemies -- who did everything that they could to attack His reputation, and to slander Him!

Thus, whether we look at Peter, or at the unbelieving Jews, it is hard to imagine a situation more amazing than what we have in our text. And then to add to the surprising circumstances we need only to look at the Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of all of the people who are involved in His life at this time.

Our text authorizes us to look in these three directions:

- 1) At the hardness, the spiritual blindness of the Jews.
- 2) At the weakness and failure of the Apostle Peter.
- 3) At the submission and majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I. THE HARDNESS, THE SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS OF THE JEWS (John 18: 12-14, 19-24).

To bring out the deplorable spiritual condition of the hearts of these religious men, I want to go back to the passage we had last week to remind you of two events, and then look at two issues in our text for today.

A. The two events from the preceding passage:

1. The manifestation of the glory of Christ -- in v. 6.
2. The healing of Malchus' ear.

In v. 10 we see what Peter did to Malchus. However, Luke tell us Luke 22:51 that our Lord "touched his ear (i.e., Malchus'), and healed him."

There is nothing that will bring out the true nature of men any better than to see what they will do when they are exposed to the light of Christ. If any men will be without excuse, these men will be. They were thrown to the ground by His glory, and they saw Him perform a miracle

right before their very eyes (and even on one of His enemies) -- and yet it all meant nothing to them. Our text for today begins with these words:

"Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, and led him away . . ."

This certainly confirms the story which the Lord told about the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man wanted Abraham to send Lazarus back from the dead to tell his five brothers so that they would not come to that place of torment. Do you remember the conversation recorded at the end of Luke 16? Abraham refused to send Lazarus back from the dead, saying,

" . . . They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he (i.e., the rich man) said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:29-31).

Some of you might feel that you would believe if you could see some kind of a miracle. Or others of you feel that your loved ones would believe if they could see a miracle. But remember: PEOPLE WHO REJECT THE WORD OF GOD WILL NOT BE CONVINCED BY ANYTHING, EVEN "THOUGH ONE ROSE FROM THE DEAD."

But there are two other things to notice while we are thinking about the Jews who came to take the Lord Jesus. You will find them in v. 19:

B. The two things brought up by the high priest:

1. His disciples.
2. His doctrine.

What a contrast there was between these two. "His disciples" were far from what they should have been -- as could be seen in Peter. But there was nothing wrong with "his doctrine"! That was perfect.

Will you notice that the Lord spoke only of "his doctrine"? Let us be careful that our observation of the faults and weaknesses of the Lord's people does not turn us away from the truth of His Word. His Word is the crux of the matter! And it was ridiculous for Caiaphas to plead ignorance because the Lord had made no attempt to hide what He had been teaching, nor had He taught His disciples one thing privately and another doctrine to the

people publicly. In fact, the Apostle John has mentioned at least four times when the Lord taught publicly at the Temple! See John 2:13; 5:1; 7:14; 10:22.

But even if the Jews at looked at "his disciples" with open hearts, they would not have been able to explain why they were the way they were (with all of their sins and weaknesses) apart from the work of the grace of God!

But let us go on to think for a few minutes about Peter.

II. THE WEAKNESS AND FAILURE OF THE APOSTLE PETER (John 18:15-18, 25-27).

In order to understand an event like the denial of our Lord by Peter, we need to bring at least four previous events to this event:

- 1) The request which Satan had made concerning Peter. See Luke 22:31.
- 2) The self-confidence of Peter. See Luke 22:33.
- 3) The prediction made by the Lord in Luke 22:34.
- 4) The prayerlessness of Peter (and James and John) in the Garden of Gethsemane. See Luke 22:45, 46.

All of these things have a weakening and a blinding effect on us as the people of God:

- 1) The work of Satan.
- 2) Our own self-confidence.
- 3) Prayerlessness.

They can only be corrected by the Lord through His Word!

And there is no other way for us to explain the fact that Peter could deny the Lord one time after another than that these factors were at work in his heart.

Why was all of this written about Peter except to serve as a warning to us? "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). "For we wrestle not with flesh and blood . . . Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God . . . Praying always with all prayer . . ." (Eph. 6:12, 13, 18).

I cannot say positively that what I am about to say is true, but one of the early church fathers has written two things about Peter which are at least worth our consideration:

- 1) One was that he never heard a rooster crow after this without tears coming to his eyes.
- 2) The other -- that there were lines on his cheeks running down from both eyes because of the tears he had shed over his denial of the Lord.

Let us not miss the lessons we need to learn from Peter.

Finally we come to

III. THE SUBMISSION AND THE MAJESTY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
(John 18:12-14, 19-24).

I will take just a moment with this even though this is the most glorious part of our text.

May I keep before you the truth that we spent time on last Lord's Day in looking at the preceding passage -- the truth of the absolute sovereignty of our Lord Jesus Christ! There were two and only two reasons why these Jews, blinded by the sin of their own hearts, could take our Lord, and bind Him as a criminal, and lead Him away.

The first is stated by Peter in the words he used on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2:23:

"Him (speaking of Christ), being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."

The second is stated by our Lord Himself in John 10:18 where He speaks of His life:

"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

Bishop J. C. Ryle (Vol. II, p. 476) has said,

"Surely if there is any doctrine of the Gospel which needs to be clearly known, it is the doctrine of Christ's voluntary substitution. He suffered and died willingly and unresistingly, because He knew that He had come to be our substitute, and by substitution to purchase our salvation."

Concl: So there are lessons for everyone here -- some of the most important lessons we can ever learn.

If you do not know Christ as your Savior, I hope you have seen that your desire to see something spectacular is only an evidence of how deeply rooted your heart is in sin. God has given you the strongest possible witness in His Word. Open your heart to the Word today, and believe what God has said. If you turn away from the Word, there is no other hope.

For those of us who know the Lord, may this passage serve to teach us:

- 1) The very real power of Satan.
- 2) The folly of trusting in ourselves instead of the Lord.
- 3) The daily need we have for prayer -- much prayer.

CHRIST IN THE JUDGMENT HALL
John 18:28-40

Intro: No one can read the record of the way in which the Jews sought to hurry the Lord Jesus off to death without being aware of the fact that they had several reasons (brought out very well by Matthew Henry, Vol. V, p. 1182):

- 1) They wanted to get the Romans involved in it so that they would not get the blame. This, too, would make it more legal.
- 2) They wanted to get the case settled before the masses of the people knew what was going on. They would have been less likely to support the Lord after a verdict had been given than they would have if the outcome were still in doubt.
- 3) They obviously wanted to humiliate the Lord as much as possible by having Him crucified. This was the most disgraceful way of executing criminals.

All of this had to be in their minds, especially when you contrast the way they treated the Lord in comparison with the way Stephen was treated later when they martyred him by stoning him to death!

But let me point out another fact to you from the passage that we have before us this morning. It is this that I want to develop in my message. I want you to see that, in addition to the fact that the Lord Jesus was on trial, both the Jews and Pilate were also on trial! This has to be the case when they were dealing with the Son of God. Our Lord's course was laid out from eternity past. And He could have destroyed His enemies with just a word. But they were being tried concerning their attitude toward the Lord Jesus Himself -- a decision that would have eternal consequences on each one of them who turned against Him.

And so let us look this morning at what happened when Christ was taken before Pilate, but let us look, first of all, at the trial of the Jews, and then at the trial of Pilate.

I. THE JEWS ON TRIAL (John 18:28-32, 38-40).

Note three things: 1) Their hypocrisy,
2) Their pride, and
3) Their depraved judgment.

A. Their hypocrisy -- brought out by two things:

1. Their attitude about defilement. See v. 28.
2. Their outward concern for what was "lawful." See v. 31.

Concerning the first of these, in v. 28, you can see

that, like most hypocrites, they were more concerned about outward defilement than they were about true defilement -- the defilement of the heart!

Mere religion is always like this.

Or, instead of seeking inward cleansing first that the outer life may be clean, a hypocrite will try to cleanse the heart by merely reforming his outward habits.

Be sure that you are not deceived about this. If you are to be clean, the heart must be clean -- and only God can cleanse your heart of all of its defilement.

But there is another interesting point regarding the hypocrisy of the Jews: There was nothing in the OT Scriptures to indicate that going into the Judgment Hall would defile them and render them unclean for the Pass-over. THIS WAS ONE OF THE TRADITIONS OF THE ELDERS! Thus they were doing another things that hypocrites will do -- THEY WERE PLACING THE WORDS OF MEN ABOVE THE WORD OF GOD!

And this leads us to see their hypocrisy in being concerned about that which was "lawful." The Word of God will not lead us to such an inconsistent place as the Jews had put themselves in. They claimed to be abiding by the law of Rome while they were condemning an absolutely innocent Man -- a thing which would not have been tolerated even by the strict interpretation of Roman law.

But this is not all when we are looking at the way in which the Jews condemned themselves. Note:

B. Their pride.

This, too, is brought out in two ways.

1. The way they spoke to Pilate in v. 30 -- their impudence.

After all, they were the underlings -- he was the one in authority over them. And yet they talked to him as though he ought to be ashamed for questioning their word.

But there is another thing that is evidence of pride in v. 30:

2. The indication that they had already decided upon the guilt of the Lord Jesus, and, therefore, the case was already decided.

Man's pride will always make him feel that his opinion is the right one, and that anybody who disagrees with him has to be wrong! Many people seal their own doom eternally because they blindly think that they are right -- when they are just as wrong as these Jews were who stood outside of Pilate's Judgment Hall.

But there is one another point by which the Jews showed that they were worthy of judgment themselves:

C. Their depraved decision (John 18:39, 40).

The Jews cried out for the release of Barabas. John mentions only that he was "a robber," which was bad enough. But Mark tells us that Barabas was also an insurrectionist, and that he had committed murder in the insurrection. ON ALL THREE POINTS HE WAS GUILTY OF VIOLATING THE MOSAIC LAW! And yet, in their depravity, they showed no concern about who was right before God so great was their hatred for the Lord Jesus and so intent were they on seeing that He was put to death!

What would be your verdict regarding the Jews -- were they right, or wrong; innocent, or guilty?

Let these circumstances speak to your own heart. It may be that some of you this morning are just as needy as these Jews were who sought the death of the Lord Jesus Christ!

But let us go on to the second trial:

II. PILATE ON TRIAL (John 18:33-40).

All men are "without excuse," but Pilate will not be able to find words to explain his reaction to Christ in the Gospel in the day of judgment.

Note:

- A. The Lord's direct dealing with Pilate (John 18:33, 34). Pilate felt that he was examining the Lord Jesus, but the actual fact was that the Lord Jesus was examining him. Pilate was on trial before the Lord!

This is evidence of the Lord's concern for Pilate.

- B. Pilate's questions.

Where could you find a better list of questions than the questions which Pilate asked the Lord? All of the right ones are here -- if only he had listened to the Lord,

and then acted upon the answers.

Look at the questions:

1. In v. 33: "Art thou the King of the Jews?"
2. In v. 35: "Am I a Jew?"
3. In v. 35 also: "What hast thou done?"
4. In v. 37, like v. 33: "Art thou a king then?"
5. In v. 38: "What is truth?"

Pilate did not leave out anything that was essential.
He asked about Who the Lord was,

His works,

The truth -- a question about the Word of
God,

and finally about where he stood in relation to all of
this: "Am I a Jew?" -- meaning, Am I a follower of
the God of the Jews?

Unfortunately he asked these questions either as a Roman
official, or as showing his contempt for the Lord. It is
very likely that ever since Pilate died he has been
tormented by the fact that he asked the most important
questions that a man can ask, but paid no attention to
what the Lord said. His only interest was official --
not personal!

What about you?

The condemnation of Pilate is just when we see

C. His verdict concerning Christ -- in v. 38,

followed by

D. His cowardly proposition -- in v. 39.

Oh, I plead with you this morning -- do not let your posi-
tion, or your fear of man, or anything else cause you to
turn a deaf ear to the Lord and to His Word, like Pilate did!
It is not only important to ask good questions, but to get
the right answers, and then to do the only thing that can
result in your escape from judgment. "Believe in the Lord
Jesus Christ . . ."

But there is one more point in our text -- the most wonderful,
the most important of all:

III. THE TESTIMONY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST (John 18:33-37).

There are several things of importance here.

- A. The evidence of divine providence in what the Lord had said previously about His death -- and the way that He would die (John 18:31, 32).

Matthew Henry (V, 1184) makes the following comment regarding God's providential dealings in all of this:

" . . . even those who designed the defeating of Christ's sayings were, beyond their intention, made serviceable to the fulfilling of them by an overruling hand of God. . . . Even the chief priests, while they persecuted him as a deceiver, had their spirit so directed as to help to prove him true, when we should think that by taking other measures they might have defeated his predictions."

- B. The explanation that our Lord gave to Pilate (John 18:36, 37).

It would take at least a whole service to attempt an adequate exposition of these two verses, but let me just point out the main features about what our Lord had to say, leaving the details for another time.

1. About His kingdom (for He was a King) -- it was "not of this world" (v. 36a) -- meaning that it did not originate on earth, nor was it promoted by worldly means.
2. About His "servants" -- They were being trained in different measures of offense and defense -- such as prayer, faith, patience, love, etc.
3. About His mission (v. 37m) -- the preaching and teaching of the doctrines of God, the doctrines which we have in the Scriptures -- which is our mission today as well.

Finally . . .

4. About His success (v. 37b) -- "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

Does this not remind you of our Lord's words in John 10: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, And I give unto them . . ."

I commend these two verses to you for your serious and prayerful meditation if you are concerned about serving

the Lord faithfully and effectively. If you follow the teaching of our Lord in these two verses, you cannot go astray.

And yet Pilate did as so many do, even many who claim to be the people of God -- he shrugged it all off with his contemptuous, "What is truth?" -- as though it were impossible to answer such a question.

Concl: What does this passage teach us?

Many things -- but let me concentrate on one. It is this: When any person sets himself to pass judgment on the Lord, he is the one who is to be condemned, not the Lord! That was true of the Jews in our passage; that was also true of Pilate.

Therefore, let us listen to the Lord. The words that He speaks are spirit, and they are life. As with God, so with Christ -- let Him be true though it means that every man is a liar! Let us fear lest we ever be in a position that places us against Christ. He is "the truth," and there is no greater wisdom than for us to hear Him, and to believe Him, and to trust Him completely in all of the circumstances of our lives.

The Jews could not do away with the Lord; nor could Pilate survive in condemning Him. The Lord lives and reigns, "and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed" (Rom. 9:33b, cited from Isa. 28:16).