

Christ's High Priestly Prayer

John 17:24-26

Part 8

Christ is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God and our hope is that one-day we will be face to face with Him in glory.

In fact, there is an old hymn entitled “Face to Face.” Let me read the words of that hymn for you.

Face to Face with Christ my Savior, face to face - what will it be –
when with rapture I behold Him, Jesus Christ who died for me?

Only faintly now I see Him, with the darkened veil between, but a
blessed day is coming when His glory shall be seen.

Face to face! O blissful moment! Face to face – to see and know; face
to face with My Redeemer, Jesus Christ who loves me so.

So what is our hope? Our hope is that one day we will be face to face with Christ in glory. And how important is it for us to be assured that this hope will actually be realized? It is very important.

Why? First of all, if we are able to keep this hope of one day being face to face with Christ in glory before us, the troubles of this world will be unable to overwhelm us. Isn't this in essence what Christ was telling His disciples at the very beginning of His upper room discourse when He said to them, **“Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also?”** But this is not the only benefit of keeping the hope of being face to face with Christ in glory ever before us. There is another very important benefit. And what is that?

If we keep the hope of one day being face to face with Christ in glory ever before us it will keep us from becoming too attached to this world and the things of this world. Isn't this what Paul was saying to us in **Philippians 1:21** when he told the Philippian church, **“For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”** Why did he consider dying gain? He considered dying gain

because he believed that to be absent from this body as a follower of Christ was to be present with the Lord.

So let me ask you once again this question. How important is it that we are assured of this hope? How important is it for us to be assured that when we pass out of this life that we will be face to face with Christ in glory? It is incredibly important because it is this hope that allows us to not be overwhelmed by our troubles when things are going bad or to become too attached to this world when things are going well.

So the assurance of the hope of one day being face to face with Christ in glory is what we will be focusing on this morning and this brings us back to our study of the Gospel of John and more specifically to our study of the high priestly prayer of Christ.

I have attempted to provide a way for us to track the movement of this prayer by asking the following question: Who did Christ pray for in His High priestly prayer? And that is the question that we have been seeking to answer. So what have we learned so far?

First of all, we learned that Christ in John 17:1-5 prayed for Himself. And what did He specifically pray? He asked His Father to glorify Him in “**the hour**” that had now come upon Him; or in other words, He asked His Father to glorify Him in all the events that that were about to take place that involved Him, such as His arrest, trial, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and coronation. This was His specific request. And what was the reason for this request? He asked His Father to glorify Him in the hour that had now come upon Him in order that He in turn might glorify His Father. This was made clear to us in **John 17:2.**

So after praying for Himself and His own personal glorification, whom did He pray for next? Christ in John 17:6-19 prayed for His eleven disciples. And what specifically did He pray? He prayed two things.

Christ’s initial request on behalf of His eleven disciples in John 17:11-16 was that His Father would keep them in His name. In other words, when Christ asked His Father to “keep His disciples in His name” He was asking His Father to keep His disciples loyal to Him as He Himself, during the

course of His earthly life, had revealed Him. And what was Christ's second request on behalf of His eleven disciples?

Christ's second request on behalf of His eleven disciples in John 17:17-19 was that His Father would sanctify them in the truth. In other words, Christ asked His Father to use the chisel of His Word to continue the sculpting process that He had begun while He was with His disciples prior to His departure in order that they might become the people they needed to be and to do the things that they needed to do.

So who did Christ pray for first? He prayed for Himself in **John 17:1-5**. And whom did He pray for next in **John 17:6-19**? He prayed for His eleven disciples. And finally last week we considered the third and final group that Christ prayed for.

Christ in John 17:20-26 prayed for His future disciples. Let me read for you **John 17:20**. **"I do not ask on behalf of these alone [in other words, for my eleven disciples], but for those also who believe in Me through their word [and then it goes on to say]; (21) that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us."** The unity that Christ is praying for in respect to His future disciples was a unity of life or that very life that Christ and His Father shared.

This prayer was and continues to be answered when those who embrace Christ as their Lord and Savior are baptized or immersed into the body of Christ and are therefore joined to His life.

Can this unity of life that we share with Christ and with one another be manifested in such a way that it can be seen? Absolutely!

But we need to understand that this unity will only be manifested when we are willing to fully surrender the control of our lives to Christ so that His life might be lived through us. If we are willing to do this then we together become an extension of the life of Christ and will therefore manifest the unity that we share with one another in Him.

This thought of being able to manifest the life of Christ in whatever circumstance we find ourselves should be an incredibly uplifting thought, since this understanding will transform any circumstance into an opportunity

for us to display Christ's life and thus an opportunity to manifest our unity with Him and one another.

So who did Christ pray for first? He prayed for Himself in **John 17:1-5**. And who did He pray for next in **John 17:6-19**? He prayed for His eleven disciples. And who was the last group of people He prayed for in **John 17:20-23**? He prayed for His future disciples; or in other words, He prayed for us.

We have now considered all of Christ's various requests that He prayed for in respect to groups that I mentioned, but we are still not yet done. We still need to consider Christ's very brief concluding remarks.

And what do I hope will happen as we consider these concluding remarks? I hope that we, based on these remarks, will be once again assured of the hope that we have in Christ, that one day we will stand before Him face to face in glory.

The epilogue or the conclusion of the high priestly prayer of Christ is found in John 17:24-26. Let me

read these verses for you. **“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory, which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. (25) O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; (26) and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me, may be in them, and I in them.”** So how did this set of concluding verses begin?

Christ began this section of Scripture, not so much with a formal request, but rather with an expression of a personal desire (John 17:24). Let me read for you **John 17:24** and this is what it says. **“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am.”** So what did Christ tell His Father that He wanted?

Christ in John 17:24 told His Father that He wanted those whom He had been given or all true disciples to be with Him. And why was this? Why did Christ tell His Father that He wanted all those whom had been given Him to be with Him? Let us continue to read the verse. And what does it say?

“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory, which You have given Me.”

So why did Christ tell His Father that He wanted all those whom He had been given to be with Him? Christ told His Father that He wanted His disciples, whom He had been given, to be with Him so that they might see His glory (John 17:5).

This is an unambiguous reference to **John 17:5** where Jesus had earlier prayed that He might be restored to the glory that He had with the Father before the world began.

Christ’s disciples had seen the glory of Christ during the course of Christ’s earthly ministry according to **John 1:14** but the glory they had seen was a veiled glory. But Christ did not want His disciples simply to see His veiled glory, He wanted His disciples to see the splendor of His unveiled glory; and this desire is what led Christ to say what He said to His Father in **John 17:24**.

But why would this be so important to Him? Why would it be so important to Christ that His disciples see the splendor of His unveiled glory?

This should not be so difficult for us to understand. It is something, I believe, that we can personally relate to. If we win a race, get a promotion, receive an honor, graduate with a degree, get married, have a baby we want those we care about and who we believe care about us to share in that joy. Jesus likewise wanted all those whom He cared about and whom He believed cared about Him to enter into His joy, the joy of His exaltation.

Today Jesus is sitting at the right hand of the throne of God in His regal splendor waiting for that time when we will be able to share with Him the joy of His exaltation, not simply by faith, but by sight. What did Christ say to His Father in **John 17:24** as He began to conclude His high priestly prayer? **“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory.”**

What is our hope? To be face to face with Christ in glory, that is our hope and that is Christ’s desire for us as well. And why is this so important? It is important because when things are not going so well this hope will keep us

from being overwhelmed, and it is also important for us when things are going well so that we will not find ourselves becoming too attached to this world

So what is this hope from Christ's standpoint in this passage based on? Christ will now address this question, but before He specifically addresses this question He makes a comment about the glory that we will behold. Let us go back one more time to **John 17:24** but this time we will read just a little bit further. So what does it say? **“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me [in other words, every true born again disciples], be with Me where I am [why?], so that they may see My glory [Then what does He say about this glory that we will see? This is what He says.], which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.”** So what does Jesus say about the glory that we will one behold as we look into His eyes face to face?

The glory that Christ desires for us to see when we are with Him in heaven is the glory that was given to Him by His Father in eternity past as an expression of His love (John 17:24). Isn't this exactly what He says? Now we have what we need to answer the earlier question. What is our hope based on?

Our hope as the disciples of Christ, of one day being with Christ and seeing His unveiled glory, is very much based on His Father's love for Him. This is why Jesus, after sharing His desire, spoke of His Father's gift of glory to Him and His love for Him. But is our hope of being face to face with Christ in glory right?

This thought now brings us to **John 17:25-26**. Let me read these verses for you, **“O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; (26) and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”** Christ in these verses once again references His Father's love for Him and connects His Father's love for Him with His desire for His disciples to be with Him and to see His unveiled glory.

When Christ addresses His Father as “O righteous Father” in John 17:25, He is expressing His complete confidence in His righteous judgments. He after

doing this He then lays out before His Father certain facts. So what were those facts?

Let us go back to **John 17:25** and continue to read the verse. And what does it say? It says this, **“O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these [the eleven] have known that you sent Me.”** So what did Jesus tell His Father in **John 17:25**? This is what He said.

Jesus in John 17:25 told His Father that the world did not know Him, but even though the world did not know Him, Jesus makes it very clear that He knew Him and His disciples knew Him. These are the facts that Jesus laid out before His Father, the righteous judge, in **John 17:25**.

But Jesus is not finished with laying out the facts before His Father, the righteous judge. Let us now look at **John 17:26** and what does it say? **“And I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known.”**

Jesus, in using these words, is not only emphasized what He already said about making His Father known to His eleven disciples, but now He adds that He will continue to make Him known to them as well as to every other disciple that the Father had given Him beyond what they already knew. And how will He do this?

We know the answer to this question. He will continue to do this through the person of the Holy Spirit whom Christ will send back to them once He returns to His Father. It is through the ministry of the Holy Spirit that Christ will continue to make His Father known to them. And what will they come to know as Christ's expands their knowledge of His Father?

Christ's continuing work of making His Father known to His disciples will expand their knowledge of His Father's love for Him and therefore for them.

Let us go back and read **John 17:26** and see if this is not so. What does it say? **“And I made your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which you loved Me may be in them.”**

Christ has always been and will always be loved by His Father, and because we have been joined to Christ and Christ is now in us the love of God for His Son is now in us and eternally linked to us.

Are we heaven bound? Will we in fact see Jesus face to face and gaze eternally upon unveiled glory? Absolutely! This is not only what Christ desired for His disciples, but this is always what His Father desires for us as well. Why? He desires this for us because His love for His Son fills us because Christ now is in us.

May God give us the grace to know that God's love for His Son assures us that one day we will be with Christ in heaven basking in the glory of His radiance.