

(John) 20 - Intercessing

by Alan Redpath

Alan Redpath's sermon on John 17 emphasizes the significance of Jesus' intercessory prayer and its implications for believers' character and unity in the Church.

Duration: 52:08

Scripture: Philippians 2:4-6

Topics: "John"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the audience and mentions that there is one person who couldn't attend the gathering. They invite anyone interested to take their place. The speaker then discusses the outline of the book of John, specifically focusing on the revelation of God as light to the disciples. They mention the upcoming topics of sanctification, unification, and glorification. The speaker also highlights the three aspects of the world: substance, people, and condition, and relates them to the Christian believer being saved out of the world.

Transcript

We worship you, and adore you, and lay our lives before you. Speak to our hearts through your word, again, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Please sit down. There's one person who's had to withdraw from coming down to our house tonight, and therefore there's this one vacancy. If you'd like to, anybody, get that out of the lecture and put your name in it, we'd be glad to see you.

Please come down as soon as possible after the last lecture. Now, um, you've got your outline of John there. Just asked me to ask you to look at it one moment.

We have covered so far, up to the end of part one of section B, the revelation of God as light to the disciples. Part one, we did the introduction to the light for them. Now, I have a problem.

I have, um, four more lecture hours, including this morning, the rest of the term, and the problem is to squeeze this into four lectures, which is really impossible. So I'm thinking and praying about it. What I'm going to do is to omit the rest of part, uh, B, except for the last little bit, intercession for the light in them.

That is omitting chapter 14, 15, and 16. Those three chapters contain the greatest teaching in the New Testament on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. But already you've had some tremendous, uh,

lectures on that subject from Billy, and, uh, therefore it's been adequately covered, I'm sure.

So I'm going to bypass those, reluctant as I am to do so. I'll bypass them, and I'm taking just one look, first at the intercession for light in them, chapter 17. And then we'll take one look at the cross, in chapter 18 and 19.

And one look at the resurrection in chapter 20. And a final look at the epilogue in chapter 21. So that'll be it for John's Gospel.

Chapter 17, we'll read together. I find it is impossible to lecture on this chapter, because of all the books of the Bible, and chapters of the Bible, this is holy ground indeed. This is our Lord's Prayer.

Uh, what we usually call our Lord's Prayer is not, it's the family prayer. That's in Matthew chapter six. Our Father which art in heaven, and so on.

But here is the Lord's Prayer. And, uh, will you read it? I'll read it to you. John 17.

When Jesus had spoken these words, that is, um, chapter 14 through 16, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour has come. Glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee. Since thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him.

And this is eternal life, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I glorify thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, Father, glorifying thou me in thy own presence, with the glory which I had with thee, before the world was made.

I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were, and thou gavest them to me, and they have kept thy word. Now they know that everything that thou hast given me is from thee.

For I have given them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and know in truth that I came from thee. And they have believed that thou didst send me. I am praying for them, and not praying for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me, for they are thine.

All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

While I was with them, I kept them in thy name, which thou hast given me. I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

I have given them thy word, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not pray that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but thou shouldst keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Sanctify them in the truth. Thy word is truth. And thou dost send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth. I do not pray for these only, but for those who believe in me through their word, that they may be all, be one, even as thou,

Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. The glory which thou hast given me, I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one.

I in them, and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, even as thou hast loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory, which thou hast given me in thy love for me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world has not known thee, but I have known thee, and these know that thou hast sent me.

I made known to them thy name, and I will make it known that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them. This is the word of the Lord. Just a brief prayer to get on.

Thank you, God, for sending Jesus. Thank you, Jesus, that you came. Holy Spirit, won't you teach me more about his lovely name? Amen.

Now, this section for intercession for the light in them. Now, here is the Lord Jesus outpouring his heart before his Father, and that's not a subject for critical analysis. It's a subject for worshipful thought.

As you read through that prayer, you sort of become conscious of the target, a line of thought, a line of approach. Notice the subjects of the prayer. First you have Christ and the Father, Jesus and his Father, and his prayer for himself.

That's verses 1 through 5. I'll slow down here. Jesus and his Father, his prayer for himself, verses 1 through 5. And then again, Jesus and his Father, his prayer for his disciples, verses 6 through 19. And Jesus and the Church, his prayer for us, verses 20 through 26.

That seems to me the progress of thought as Jesus is praying. I repeat them. Jesus and his Father, that's his prayer for himself, first five verses.

Jesus and his Father, his prayer for the disciples, that's verses 6 through 19. And Jesus and the Church, his prayer for us, verses 20 through 26. That's the subject of the prayer.

Then notice what I would call the substance of it, and mark these great words, and just put them down. First five verses are revelation. The first five verses, verses 1 through 5, revelation.

Verses 6 through 16, preservation. Preservation. Verses 6 through 16.

Then verses 17 through 19, sanctification. 17 through 19, sanctification. Then verses 20 through 23, unification.

U-N-I-F-I-C-A-T-I-O-N. Unification. Verses 20 to 23.

And then glorification, verses 24 to 26. G-L-O-R-I-F-I-C-A-T-I-O-N. Now we've got those words and those verses, and then let me give you a sentence that will show you how this all sort of fits together.

Just be sure that you've got them, that the substance of this prayer seems to me, first revelation, first five verses. Then preservation, verses 6 through 16. Then sanctification, verses 17 through 19.

Then unification, verses 20 to 23. And then glorification, verses 24 to 26. Now get this next, these next sentences, two of them, down word for word if you can.

I'll go very slowly. If I go fast, stop me. All right, there you go.

The revelation of the past and future glory of Jesus. The revelation of the past and future glory of Jesus makes possible the individual preservation and sanctification of all those whom he has redeemed. And these individual blessings, or one by one blessings in each of our lives, these individual blessings enjoyed, are to find expression, are to find expression in spiritual unity throughout the whole church.

Which will result, finally, in the glorification of all who have been enlightened and loved. Now that's, um, I want you to get the connection there. I'll just say it again slowly.

Of course, you need to think into it. But it's all there. That's the substance of the prayer.

It marked, you notice you have those words before you. Revelation, verses 1 through 5. Preservation, 6 through 16. Sanctification, 17 through 19.

Unification, 20 to 23. And glorification. Then, the revelation, that was the first word, of the past and future glory of the Son, makes possible individual preservation and sanctification of those whom Jesus has redeemed.

And these individual, one by one, blessings enjoyed, will find expression in spiritual unity, or unification, throughout the whole church. And will result, finally, in glorifying all those who have been enlightened by love. Now that's John 17.

As, um, it seems to me, the trend of the Lord's Prayer follows those lines. I want you to notice in this chapter some words that keep on recurring. Just jot them down.

And when you come to do your own study, someday, of this chapter, you'll notice them. Father, that's one word. Glorifying, that's another word.

Kept, that's another word. Word, W-R-D. Pray, sent, one, O-N-E.

Know, K-N-O-W. Name, and loved. Now, if you keep those words before you, time and time again, as you read this chapter through, you'll come across them.

Now, look for a minute at the Lord's Prayer for himself. Verses 1-5. Father, the hour has come.

Glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee. He's praying now. I presume that the disciples were listening in.

He never prayed with Jesus. He never prayed with them. He couldn't, of course, because his access to the Father was totally different from theirs.

He didn't need anybody to intercede for him. He always prayed on his own. But there are occasions when he--they must have overheard what he said.

And this is one of them. And he's praying in the consciousness that the hour has now come. The hour which had not come in chapter 2, verse 4, and chapter 7, verse 6. Those two, he said, my hour is not yet come.

It was drawing near in chapter 12, verse 33. The hour is at hand. It's now come.

That's a tremendous statement. It's too big, really, to contemplate. Father, the hour that we planned together before the world was created.

Way, way back. The hour. The one moment in time that matters to us.

The hour. The hour has come. What hour is it? Verse 1 again.

The hour when he would be glorified by death. Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. The hour when he'd be glorified by way of Calvary.

Now, he prays that by completing this act of redemption, which will secure our salvation, glory may come both to his Father and to himself. You notice how he defines eternal life here. Since thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him.

And this is eternal life, that they may know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. He defines eternal life as knowing God through Jesus Christ. Verse 3. We all claim to have eternal life.

All say we're Christians. But this is the proof we have it, that we know God. Just don't know about him.

Few facts, but know him. And we know him through his Son, Jesus Christ. And in verse 5, Jesus prays that he may pass on to glory, exaltation with his Father, which he enjoyed before the world began.

What absurdity to call Jesus a good man, and nothing more. Here's evidence for his pre-existence. He repeats it in verse 24.

I want them, that is you and me, to behold my glory which you have given me in your love, before the foundation of the world. And he wants every one of us to share that. Many evidences of Christ's pre-existence.

The Gospel of John begins with it, in the beginning with the Word. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh.

Jesus. Don't get too familiar with him, will you? Remember he's God. Especially when you're having beat rock.

And also you'll find him in Philippians chapter 2. Philippians chapter 2. The evidence of Christ's pre-existence. Everywhere in the Word. He has, says verse 4 and verse 6, he has perfected, or finished, accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do.

Verse 6. I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world. Thine they were, and thou gavest them to me, and they have kept thy word. The mission of our Lord Jesus was to those who God his Father had given him.

Every time, every time, you have the thrill of seeing somebody born again. Remember that the gift of the Father to the Son. He's not willing for one to perish.

He's not preaching a limited atonement. His concern is for everybody. But when they come to Jesus, and you lead that person to Christ, that person is not your work.

It's the present of the Father to the Son. The gift of that life. I have manifested thy name.

Revealed thy name. See, the completion and perfection of the work of Jesus is the same, identified as the revelation of God's character to his disciples. The completion, the perfection of the work.

When Jesus said on Calvary, it is finished, that he had revealed his name to those whom his Father had given him. And they recognize that his teaching has its source from above. That his mission began with his Father in heaven.

I have manifested thy character. So Jesus speaks about the hour, and therefore he prays, Father, glorify me, thy Son, that he may glorify you. You've given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him.

And this is eternal life, that they know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I glorify thee, O Lord, having accomplished, or completed, fulfilled the work which thou gavest me to do. Now, Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world.

The Lord's prayer for himself. Now just look at what he asks for us, verses 6-26. He asks for the disciples, verses 6-19, and for his body, the church, in verses 20-26.

Oh, I'm sure you often discuss and talk together about, what's the will of God for my life? How am I to know what is his will for me? That's the predominant question, and Kate's enraged just now, I would think. Well, this prayer leaves us in no doubt at all. Because, you see, God's, it's mostly people are concerned about, what am I to do? Where am I going? And, what am I going to do after I get home, etc.

etc. Well, God's will for what you do will never be shown to us unless we accept for God's will concerning what we are to be. God's will for our service remains dark to us until we accept God's will for our character.

That must be first. God's will for our character comes before God's will for our service. You can put that down if you wish.

God's will for our character comes before God's will for our service. Now, this prayer leaves us in no possible doubt about that. No doubt about that.

God's will for our service, for 195 people here in Cape Mary, is 195 different things in different places. But God's will for our character is one thing, for us all. You could do short end.

Perhaps you can. I don't know. The first thing is, the first part of God's will for my character is that I should be saved.

Verses 2 and 3. You can tick that one, I hope. God's will for my character, that I might be saved. And then, having been saved, that I might be kept.

Verse 11. Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in thy name, which thou hast given me.

I have guarded them, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. Kept. Isn't it wonderful to know that the Lord Jesus in heaven prays that for each one of us, that we may be kept.

Preserved. Christ prays not for our removal from the world, but for our moral and spiritual safety in it. Verse 15.

I do not pray that thou should take them out of the world, but thou should keep them from the evil one. Jesus prays, I repeat, prays not for our removal from the world, but for our moral and spiritual safety in it. Verse 15.

Of course, we need to know what a Christian's relationship to the world is, and what's the world? What is it? Well, it's really three things I've just given to you briefly. It is substance, that is what is material, it's substance, you get that in Psalm 93 in verse 1, that's the world in substance. And then it's people, John 3.16, God so loved the world, people, John 3.16. And then it's condition, 1 John 5.19, the whole world lies in the evil one.

Condition. So, those three things you could say about the world, it's substance, or it's material, Psalm 93 verse 1, it's people, the people are in it, and it's condition. 1 John 5.19. Now, look what Jesus says about a Christian, a believer.

First, he's saved out of the world. Verse 6. I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world, thine they were, and thou gavest them to me, and they have kept thy word. A Christian is saved out of the world.

He's also set in the world. Verse 11. Now, I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, they are in it, set in it, and I'm coming to thee.

They are set in the world. Verse 11. And they're separated from the world.

Verse 14. The world has hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. They're separated from it.

And in verse 18, they're sent into it. As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. Now, that's a great thing to recognize that about each one of us, personally and individually.

Saved out of it, set in it, separated from it, sent into it. Our relationship to the world in which we live. The first thing, then, is it's God's will that we should be saved and kept.

Number two is this. It's God's will that we should be sanctified. Now, I'm going to explain that in a moment.

God's will that we be sanctified. Verses 17 through 19. Sanctify them.

In the truth, thy word is truth. As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. For their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth.

It's not enough that we should be kept. Save God. His will is that we should be sanctified.

1 Thessalonians 4.3, just a verse to put down. This is the will of God. Even your sanctification.

Now, sanctification, let's be careful here, sanctification is really separation. But separation is not isolation. Sanctification is really separation.

But separation is not isolation. Hebrews 7, verse 26. I'll venture into Hebrews just for one moment.

It was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, unstained, separated from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Jesus, that is. What is he? Holy, blameless, unstained, separated from sinners.

Now, in the same sense, it's God's will that we should be sanctified. Again, I say, that is not isolation. Jesus was absolutely separated, but no one was ever so close to people as he was.

I'm sure if he was alive, individually, in person, today, you would find him in Soho, London, in nightclubs. You would find him in red light areas. You would find him where the action is, and where people are.

It's this holy huddle of idea of separation that gets me down. I'm sure it grieves the Lord, when Christians separate themselves into a little holy huddle, a little church, and just go on, absolutely cut off. That's not Christianity.

It's not isolation. It's identification with people. The nearer I can be to people, while at the same time, different and separate from them, that's being like Jesus.

And honestly, it's only hard. It's very hard. Because inside all of us, there's a tremendous pull that would easily be drawn right into the hell of it.

That's why we need to be kept. Kept by the power of God. It's God's will that we should be sanctified.

Of course, that word means separation, but it also means wholeness. And wholeness is spiritual health. It's not going around with a halo.

It's spiritual health, wholeness. That is God's will for us. It's God's will also that we should be witnesses.

Verse 20. I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word. God's will that we may be witnesses, in order that other people may be saved.

Now you can take me up on this. Challenge me. Ask me for proof.

Or the statement, but I believe it with all my heart. Nobody is saved without the intervention of some instrument in the hand of God. Romans 10, verse 14.

Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. That's right. How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without any preacher? That's why it's so tragic that 91% of Christian work is done among 9% of the world's population, while two-thirds of it have never heard about Jesus.

Every saved person should be a witness. Every one of us. It's God's will that we should be witnesses.

And number four here, leading out of that is, it's God's will that we should all become missionaries. As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. In other words, the one who himself was sent, Jesus, has himself sent me.

As thou didst send me, I was sent, Jesus says, into the world, so have I sent them into the world. He doesn't say how far anybody should be sent. As a matter of fact, that word missionary is totally unbiblical.

It isn't in the Bible. Everybody is either a missionary or a mission field. Everybody.

Worldwide. Four and a half billion of them. Everybody is either a missionary or a mission field.

If Jesus is your Lord, you're a missionary. If he isn't, you're a mission field. Get me? Get me? Don't say, look, I think the Lord might be calling me to be a missionary.

You don't need to think about it at all. He has. Please don't just vaguely say, I think the Lord might be calling me to be a missionary.

Absurd. He has done. You already are one.

If Jesus is your Lord, you've been doing something this last week. That's a missionary. It's not a question of geography.

If you go to people who are lost in your own city or your own village, you're a missionary. Obviously, you must go further afield. Once again, you can challenge me about this.

I quite love it, actually. This country is the greatest mission field in the world. I say that as an Englishman.

But it is. No country has gone so far, gone so far with God, known so much of God, experienced so much of his presence and power as has Britain. And no country has gone so far down, gone so far back.

Tragic. Everyone is called to be a missionary. I have to shut myself up.

I want to say so much more. But come on, stop and get on with it. I beg your pardon, that's to me.

What did I say? Oh, yes. It's God's will that we should all become missionaries, right? Yes, obviously. But it's God's will that unity should characterize his church.

That unity should characterize his church. Verse 22 and 23. The glory which thou hast given me, I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one.

I am them, and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know. Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, even as thou hast loved me, that they may be one. Only God can create Christian unity.

We are responsible for maintaining it. Just to quote two verses in Ephesians. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 3. Be eager to maintain, maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Maintain it. It's already created. Until, verse 13, we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God.

The whole trouble is that the Christian church today seeks to reverse that, and insists on unity of faith before there's oneness in action. You can't do that. Unity of Spirit.

That's what Jesus has given to us. Unity of Spirit. And to maintain it.

Until we all come to unity of faith, unity of doctrine. If you put doctrine first, you're sunk. There are essentials, of course, which we must believe.

But, if you divide the church on doctrine, you're just going wrong, hopelessly wrong. Doctrine should never divide. Love should always triumph.

He's made us one, and will evidence that oneness. I know a missionary society, well known, but not named. I'm quite close to it, actually.

It has, it's now been split into three different missionary societies. Because, because, when it was only one missionary society, they could not agree on the program of our Lord's return. And they demanded that every missionary should sign a statement that they believe in the pre-tribulation rapture of the church.

And if I'm not prepared to sign that, then I'm out. And they withdrew support from some missionaries who wouldn't sign that. And some who were on the council resigned from it.

That missionary society is now three missionary societies. One in the states, one in this country, one in Australia. That goes on all the time.

Why divide about a thing like that? What on earth does that matter, when you're dealing with a tribe of pygmies in central Africa? Whether it's going to be pre-tribulation or post-tribulation rapture, who cares? What matters is that they might be born again and know Jesus. That's the, how about that? But that's, that's, that's just the, well, leave it. I know what I believe about the thing.

Oh, you probably know. Why did I say that? Yeah. It's wonderful every day to say, Lord Jesus, perhaps today.

I believe the next great intervention in his great redemption will be that he'll come for his people. I believe that with all my heart. But I'm not going to fight with people who don't.

I know many, many people who are much more able theologians than I am, who don't believe that. I have no malignance at all. It doesn't matter.

I'm just waiting till we get to heaven. And I'll be so glad when they come to see me, they'll see me and say, well, after all, you're right. I mean, forgive that piece of spiritual pride, won't you? But it's not, it's just to enforce a point.

That's all. The point being that we're to maintain the unity of the spirit and not divide it until we all attain to unity of doctrine and faith. It's God's will that unity should characterize the church.

And one last word and then we stop. It is God's will that we should love one another as he has loved us. And we're back again to that thought again.

Verse 26. I made known to them thy name and I will make it known that the love which thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them. There's one other, just one other sentence.

I won't comment on that because we've had it before. We should love one another as he has loved us. And the last one, number seven, is God's will that we should spend eternity with him in heaven.

Verse 24. Father, I desire that those also whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am, to behold my glory. What a wonderful prayer.

There's power in that prayer. I wonder if there's purpose in my heart. Power in that prayer.

May there be purpose in my heart.

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