

Jesus' Intercession

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 0 0] anticipates his intercession in heaven now that he's actually ascended to glory and continues to remember us in his intercession his people in his intercession and as you come to this third section it widens out on what we've seen previously we've seen the first section to be praying about himself and for himself and then the the middle section there as we saw for the disciples that were then immediately with him and now he comes to widen that out to those as he says who are going to believe on me will believe on me through their word so that really extends to ourselves and to all those who will come to believe in christ right through to the end of the world it incorporates the whole of his believing people through to the end of time and there are some profound truths in these few verses and i'm not going to pretend at all in any way that i can adequately bring these out because having gone through it so much this afternoon and previously as well there are still some things that really are so wonderfully deep and glorious and brilliant that they really in a sense speak for themselves and some of the terms that he uses here and some of the descriptions are really very very difficult indeed to bring out the full meaning of but let's ask first of all who are these people that he's now praying for and then secondly we'll ask what is he praying for them and then we'll finish thirdly by looking at the immediate purpose of his prayer at that time the immediate purpose that is to say the witness of his people and how that is going to impact the world to their benefit well he prays who they are there he prays for those he says who will believe in me through their word that they all may be one even as you father are in me and i in you now notice it is as we said those who will believe in jesus through the testimony of these first apostles but also those who followed on from that as bearing witness to jesus throughout the course of the church's history and it's very specific here where he says who will believe in me and the word in there is very precise it really means literally it's into me and it really captures for us the sense that faith in jesus or saving trust in jesus is actually very much rooted in him it goes into his person it rests on this person we are not believers simply in the words of scripture we're not believers a trustingly as it says here in theology itself though we do trust in the theology of the bible in that sense it's not that confessions of faith form the basis of the foundation on which we lay our trust and it's not really even the bible itself because so often the bible itself brings us round to this that our faith rests in the bible itself is in the bible itself is in the bible itself and it's not that our faith and not simply or merely in the written word authoritative and infallible though that is and inseparable from the person of jesus but he specifically says i pray now for those who would believe in me in me in me in my person through the their word through the word that they actually pronounce and when you think about their word that's really essentially the gospel testimony remember that as jesus spoke these words in the upper room to them he was talking to them in relation to their going out

into the world as his disciples as his apostles uh to set the new testament church on its course under his direction and that of course as the book of acts makes so abundantly clear that was something which involved centrally and constantly uh the testimony of the gospel itself the the word of god the preaching of that word of god and the testimony of the apostles as they pass that on to the next generation but it's not simply it's not simply that itself it is through their word who will believe in me through their word through their gospel testimony but given that this is actually couched in a context of emphasizing unity we also have to say that the unity of god's people in the truth of god unity as observed by the world as we'll see in a minute is something that's very much a key to the result of what jesus is saying here in terms of the world coming to believe people coming to place their trust in him also through hearing the testimony of the church the preaching of the gospel the witness of his people so it's these people who will believe in me through their word through the gospel and his testimony and will come that way to be also his disciples and followers and that's really a great incentive isn't it for ourselves tonight and at all times actually and when you

come to think of your testimony for the gospel and as we'll see later our unity in the gospel our unity together in the truth of god here's a wonderful incentive to us to keep on witnessing to christ serving christ preaching the gospel maintaining that gospel testimony because this really anticipates a gospel intake as the church makes this testimony known to the world jesus is saying here i'm praying that for those who will believe in me through their word uh so that they too will come to believe in me so this is really a rolling program if you like under christ's lordship and christ direction a rolling program of intake of people coming to believe in himself through the presentation of the truth to them and through god's blessing so that's the first thing they are these people these are the ones he's praying for and this is our great incentive point to take from that just to maintain that gospel distinctive that's why we've been um so concerned to actually keep um keep uh testifying to the gospel online keeping up gospel services online um keeping up a prayer meeting online such as tonight because all of that is a testimony all of that is the gospel itself through us we believe reaching out into our community and reaching to each other to build one another up in faith as well as to reach out to those who we trust and hope and pray will come to believe for themselves so what is he actually praying for them well he says i'm praying for those who will believe in me through that word that they may all be one just as you father are in me and i in you that they also may be in us that they may be one that they may be united that they may be a unity is what he means but it's not simply a unity in love and of course that is essential the love that god's people have for each other is is very much inseparable from the true unity of god's people together but there's more than that in this context specifically because it is a unity around specifically around an acceptance of the revelation of god in jesus christ this is what he's been saying that the father has given to him uh this great task and this great privilege that he regarded as a privilege to make god known to make him known to as many as the father had given him um and as we saw back in chapter in verse three uh to know jesus to know god and jesus christ was indeed to have eternal life this is eternal life when you come to verses uh six to eight there as we saw going through the chapter jesus said i have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world they were yours and you gave them to me and they have kept your word now they know that everything that you have given me is from you for i have given them the words that you gave me and they have received them and i've come to know in truth that i came from you and they have believed that you sent me you see the unity that's built into um the references there they have come together to believe that i came from you he's saying to believe this in truth and they have come to believe that you sent me so when he's praying here now later in the chapter in these verses that we have tonight he's praying that they may all be one he's following up on these verses six to eight and what he's essentially saying is as the father and the son concur fully in creation and redemption there's no disparity there's no difference between the father's will and the son's will in the works of creation and in working out redemption the sending of the son into the world the coming of the son into the world all of the things that he mentions are there in the father's purpose and will and equally in the son's purpose and will the father and the son are absolutely and perfectly united in those issues and what he's saying now is what he's praying for now is that those that will believe in him following these initial apostles that they will be united in these same truths or in that same truth god revealed in christ god acting in creation but also redemption in christ that is really the unity that he's mentioning and you notice what he's actually going on to say from that um that they may be in us as the older translation said that they may be one in us that wasn't necessarily wrong at all um but the word one really shouldn't feature in the translation so what he's saying here is that being in the father and in the son that wonderful spiritual union that god's people have with himself that is affected by the holy spirit that also includes the father giving these people to jesus even before the world was that union with god is the very root of our unity we don't create the unity we don't manufacture it we don't bring it about by our own efforts though we have a responsibility to look after it and to maintain it but it's created by god it's in paul's terms it's the unity of the spirit it's the unity that god brings about and it's by planting us in himself by actually having us to be united to him and then through faith to actually come to be that unity of of god's people that's what he's praying for here i'm praying father that they may all be one just as you father are in me and i in you that they also may be one that they may be in us so the unity follows on from the union with jesus and you can follow that through in chapter 15 as well the imagery there of the vine and the branches but he goes on to say the glory that you have given me i have given to them that they may be one even as we are one i and them and you and me that they may become perfectly one now like i said at the beginning we are really

taken into depths spiritually theologically and there are as you would probably expect different views as to what this verse actually means and what he means by the glory that you have given me i have given to them so if we keep it within the context of the chapter and especially in the theology of john itself himself um in his writings i think we could say that there are three things at least that follow on from this reference uh as to how we have to understand this glory that the father gave to jesus and that he is now saying he is giving to his people or has given to his people the first of these is that it's the glory of our unity as believers what he's doing is comparing our unity together with the unity that he and the father have together so the glory of our unity as believers is actually patterned on the unity that's within the the trinity specifically here between the father and the son the son and the father are united completely as we said earlier and the unity that god has given to believers is a unity that is based on and patterned on that unity you could say it's not different in kind although we have recognized that of course the son is eternal person of the son and there are aspects to that that don't belong to our humanity as such but the glory of our unity as believers it's a staggering thing in itself that the unity of the trinity is the pattern for our unity together i have given them this glory i've given them this wonderful privilege i've given them this position just as we father are in union and unity together just as you father are in me and i and you that they may be in us i have given them the glory that you have given me that they may be one even as we are one i and them and you in me so there's a wonderful glory and privilege if you like to this unity that we have together and we we um we do prize that unity we actually uh value it so much that uh as paul says to the ephesians we are to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace looking after it that god has given us in being united together in christ and with the father so that's the first thing i think that follows on from what he's saying here in verse 22. secondly it's the glory of being united to reveal god to the world now glory especially in john is most often used with regard to the manifestation of god the revelation that god has given of himself and specifically here through jesus christ we often go back to chapter one um where we we read there about the the sun being in the bosom and in the very depths of the father's

uh bosom he has brought him to light to us he has revealed him to us whoever has seen me the the son has seen the father jesus says elsewhere so the glory as it has to do with the manifestation of god you can just think of a few verses maybe to jot down in regard to that you can follow it up afterwards luke chapter nine for example in verse 32 that's luke's account of the transfiguration uh where in chapter nine verse 32 uh we read as follows that uh jesus having uh actually gone to up to the mountain and we we uh we we find that uh that he is transfigured uh and uh as he was transfigured uh he was praying the appearance of his face was altered his clothing became dazzling white and you remember moises and elijah appeared with him in glory and peter and those who were with him were asleep and when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two who stood with him so that's a manifestation of god although it's a it's a it's also a prefiguring or a foretaste if you like of the glorified jesus as well but it's certainly the glory of god shining through that uh that um in that instance jesus in that context and you remember john 2 um the miracle we saw the first of those studies in the miracles where john refers to that as the first sign that jesus did and in verse 11 of chapter 1 this is the first of the signs that jesus did at canaan galilee and manifested his glory and his disciples believed in him so you can see the conjunction there between god manifesting his glory in christ through christ and the matter of believing in him in relation to that you find the same in 11 chapter 11 verse 4 when they came to the grave of lazarus where jesus said to to martha when she was a bit afraid of him uh of uh the grave being opened after being uh closed for four days and the body of lazarus being there for that time did he said not did not i not say that if you believed you would see the glory of god in other words jesus is the vehicle uh the vehicle for the revelation of god to human beings to humanity and just as jesus is that in his union with the father so we together as a unity in christ become the means of revealing god to the world and that's another glorious privilege that as god creates this unity of believers not only is there a glory and a privilege in being united together patterned on the unity of the trinity but there's also a glory and through that unity making god known revealing god in our witness in the preaching of the church in our testimony of different ways so that the world sees that and that brings you to the third aspect of this which is glory in the sense he said the glory i you have given me i have given to them that they may be one even as we are one i in them and you in me that they may become perfectly one perfectly that means entire or complete so the third aspect of of this glory i think we could say is the glory of being glorified with jesus because that leads immediately into verse 24 which we'll leave till god willing next time where jesus

[20 : 18] prays that those that have been given him will be with him where he is to see my glory that you have given me so that is what uh and what jesus is praying for in regard to the being glorified with jesus the idea of being complete and isn't it a wonderful thing that that's actually going on right now even as god's people live out their lives in this world second corinthians chapter 4 and verse 6 and where paul there is is dealing with similar with a similar thing we actually looking as in a mirror at the glory of the lord are being changed into the same image from glory to glory and in romans chapter 8 you recall there the words that we often uh quote and are precious to us that all things work together for good to those who love the lord those who are called according to his purpose but then of course that passage goes on and we mustn't leave the next part of it out for those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and those whom he predestined he also called and those whom he called he also justified and those who be justified he also glorified there's the unbreakable chain of grace right through to being glorified glorified in and with jesus but go back to verse 28 we know that for those who love god and as the present tense all things are working together for good not just will work together for good they are actually now working together for good they are working together because they're under god's direction the the things that cause us so much pain at times but also the things that give us so much comfort and assurance and joy it's not that the one lot are over here the other lot are over here you know human experience you know believing experience and really they hardly ever come together it's as they're coming together it's as they're coming together in the daily experience of living for christ and following christ that god sees to it that they are working together for good and that good is what's described in the following verses as being glorified ultimately with christ that's where it ends that's what it's reaching forward to so being glorified with jesus and glory given to us a privilege of making god known through our unity throughout witness and the glory simply of being united together as believers in christ that's what he prays for them and i've skipped through that very quickly as you as you are well aware of i want to finish by just looking uh for a couple of minutes at the immediate purpose and that's going to take in these two references that he is making here um first of all in in verse 21 uh so that the world may believe that you have sent me this is the immediate purpose that jesus has in mind for the unity of his people and the unifying of his people now that obviously requires that that unity the unity he's praying for the unity that we prize that it be an outward visible thing and thus being an outward visible thing it has its own compelling influence by the blessing of god we don't we don't fall into line with the modern ecumenical movement however many things that may be good about it it's it's mostly not the

best thing because what's what what happens there generally is that so all of these all the denominations that can come together um what they're doing really is have been doing of course for years is reducing the core of what is agreed on to a bare minimum in other words you leave out certain doctrines that were understood for example at the reformation by uh those who came like like luther to to set out justification by faith in christ well you can put that aside and let's leave that let's not make that essential let's just agree on something reduced something small something minimal well you can't actually fit that into this passage in john because it's for one thing a believing as we saw and a unity as we saw in the truth of god in christ the truth of god as that comes to us in all that jesus is and all that jesus says and all that follows on in the teaching of the apostles afterwards so that the world may believe that you have sent me is something that is um compelling a result of this unity and it really shows us how important um visible unity structural unity is among god's people we just will not get away with the idea that unity is all right as long as we just emphasized the invisible things that you cannot physically see that we all believe certain things but still can really live at a great distance from each other in terms of what we are able or not able to do together whatever jesus is saying the unity that is going to impact the world is going to be a visible outward organized unity not just the organic one and then the second one is following on from that um where he says there in verse 23 i and them and you and me that they may become perfectly one so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them that's the disciples that's including those who will believe following this lot of disciples even as you loved me that you sent me and i've loved them even as you loved me what an amazing statement that we could actually as believers in christ be brought into the same love that the father has for the son that's essentially what it's saying that they may become perfectly one so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them as you loved me even as you loved me it's not a different kind of love that the father has for the son

as that he has for believers in the son because they are all as he puts it earlier i in them and you in me it's a wonderful combination although never losing the distinctions between us and jesus and the father but it's the same love and we are brought into that same love of god that he has for the son because that's the love that's reached us that's the love that's dealt with us and deals with us god doesn't have two loves he has one love for us for a son and into that love and into that into that wonderful combination of relationships without losing any of the distinction between god and human beings nevertheless that's staggeringly what we're told and yet there's just this point as well do notice um what he is saying it's not simply that as believers we brought into the same love as the father has for the son that is true so that the world may know that you sent me and that the world may know that this is the case now this love of god this remarkable love of god has settled on his people in a way that seeks to convince the world that that same love is given to god's people as well now i can't explain how that is going to convince the world nothing that happens without the blessing of the holy spirit but this is essentially what jesus prayed for and this within his intercession and what an incentive that is to evangelize in unity so that the world may believe that you sent me so that the world may know that you sent me so that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me so the love and the unity as they're combined together for these disciples for those who will believe in me through that word and that they all may be one and that the glory which christ has given to us that glory will be blessed by god in our unity for the benefit of the world that the world may come to believe who jesus is what he's about why he's important what lies behind his mission in this world lord of god we give thanks for the way in which your word sets before us so many wonderful truths so many things oh lord that we find ourselves struggling to cope with in regard to the depth that you bring before us in these wonderful facts we thank you that all of these things are known to yourself that you know this relationship perfectly between the son and the father and the holy spirit that you are also perfectly familiar with the ties that bind us to you and that bind us together we thank you lord for the life that you have given to us together to share in as believers in christ we pray oh lord as our lord himself did in these verses we pray that our unity may increasingly be evident not only to ourselves but to the world around us that they may believe oh lord that you have come into this world as the savior and that you alone have the words of eternal life so receive us we pray now and continue with us for jesus sake amen let's uh