

With me where I am

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[0 : 00] Here we are given a little insight into the priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Because we know from the scriptures that as the high priest of his people, he not only has offered sacrifice on their behalf, but he also intercedes on their behalf.

And by his intercession, secures the application to his people of the benefits of that redemption, which was purchased by his death.

And there's a phrase in the Old Testament, in the prophecy of Zechariah, which refers to a priest upon his throne. And if ever we get a little understanding of the spirit and the position of a priest upon his throne, we believe that we get it in this chapter, and particularly in this verse, where the Lord Jesus intercedes, not as someone who is seeking a favor, but as someone who is asking a right, someone who is giving expression to his own will concerning his people.

And we would like to look for a little while at some things that are brought to our attention out of this 24th verse in particular.

[1 : 41] And first of all, a word about the people for whom this request is being named. The people who have a place in the intercession of the Lord Jesus.

And he describes them as, they also whom thou hast given me. Now, we can see from this chapter that the intercession of Christ is a very discriminating thing.

He does not pray for everyone. I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me. His intercession is discriminating.

His intercession is particular. And his intercession embraces all who belong to this category, those whom thou hast given me.

He does not pray for anyone else, but he prays for all of them. Not just for the great saints, such as the apostles, but for the least of his people, those who feel themselves that they will only creep in, as it were, through the gates into the city.

[2 : 58] Every one of his people has a place in his intercession. Every one of his people will benefit eternally from that intercession.

Now, this description of those for whom he prays is a description which brings home to us the fundamental character or implication of being a Christian.

We often speak about Christians and we speak of them in terms of what they have themselves experienced or we speak of them in terms of what they have themselves been enabled to do by grace.

We talk about believers and so on. But behind anything that the Christian experiences and behind anything that the Christian does, there is this glorious transaction which has taken place between the Father and the Son.

The Christian is not, first and foremost, a person who has believed. He's not, first and foremost, a person who has come in his own experience to know the Lord.

[4 : 09] There is something much more fundamental, much more basic than that. The Christian is a person whom the Father has given to the Son and that is the foundation of our salvation and that is the foundation of our security for time and for eternity.

If our Christianity consisted just in what we had done ourselves or in what we had experienced ourselves then it would be a poor thing to rely upon for eternity.

But whatever we have of gracious experience and of gracious confidence in God has sprung from the fact that God had a people and God gave that people to Christ.

Now they belonged to God the Father as his creature and they belonged to him in a particular way as his choice. And let us not be ashamed of the glorious doctrine of divine election that what lies at the foundation of salvation, what lies at the fountainhead of every blessing that any sinner enjoys is

the fact that God has loved that sinner with an everlasting love and he has done it just because he wanted to do it.

He has done it in the exercise of his own sovereign good pleasure. It's not the free will of man that saves a sinner but it's the free will of God. God has chosen to save and God has chosen those whom he is going to save.

[5 : 42] And what God has done with them is give them to Christ. Now that's a description which which I cannot even attempt to unfold.

It's something that we have only got a little glimpse of, a little understanding of because it takes us back into the eternal fellowship that existed between the Father and the Son and the eternal covenant of love which existed between the Father and the Son.

and it emphasizes the fact that in eternity and who can understand what eternity is that in eternity God the Father entrusted to God the Son the salvation of those whom he in his love had purposed to save.

And that this was something into which the Son entered heartily himself as an equal person of the Godhead taking from the Father's hand those whom he was giving to him as a charge and as a responsibility.

And let us never forget that the sovereignty of the Son in receiving from the hand of the Father a people whose salvation was going to bring him down into the very depths of the curse of God in our human nature.

[7 : 13] The Father in this everlasting covenant of grace entrusted to the Son the salvation of the people whom he had chosen to save.

He gave them to him as a responsibility but he gave them to him as a reward and as a crown and as a means of manifesting forth his divine glory.

Isn't that a wonderful thing to think about? These poor sinners who feel in themselves that if they had their due they would be cast forever into hell.

They have been given to Christ not just to make them happy not just to save them but so that in their salvation the glory of the Son of God and the glory of the whole Godhead will be manifested eternally.

the angels themselves get their greatest views of the glory of God and the glory of the Son of God not from what they have seen in the work of creation not from what they have seen as it were directly in their own experience in heaven but from what they have seen of the work of redemption accomplished by Christ on the earth on behalf of poor lost sinners like you and like me the Father gave them to Christ so that Christ would save them and so that Christ would be glorified eternally in their salvation and there's one thing more only that we would say about those for whom Christ is interceding those whom the Father gave to him and that is that the giving of these people to Christ by the Father does not cease until they are actually put in Christ's possession it is not just a transaction that has taken place in eternity but the implications of it come to pass in time you remember what he said himself all that the

[9 : 15] Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out that's how you know if you've been given by the Father to the Son not by searching in the secret book of God's decrees but by asking yourself the question have I come to Christ we were trying to look at that in the morning come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest have you come if you have come you have come in terms of what Christ himself said all that the Father giveth me shall come to me and if you have come to Christ with all your sin and all your need and cast yourself as a poor lost sinner upon his saving power you have in that very fact the greatest evidence that you belong to these people whom the Father gave to the Son and for whom the Son is interceding in his presence now the next thing that we would like to refer to is what

Christ desires for all of those for whom he is interceding what does he desire for them father he says I will that they also whom thou has given me be with me where I am that they may behold my glory which thou has given me I will that they be with me where I am that they may behold my glory which thou has given me he desires that his people will be with him where he is now it says earlier on I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil and we believe that this prayer father I will that they also whom thou has given me be with me where I am is a prayer or a petition which includes not only the end which he has in view but all the means and all the steps towards that end when he says I will that they be with me he is desiring for them everything that is necessary for them from this moment until they come to glory it's a very

comprehensive prayer how could they be with him where he is if they weren't called effectually by his grace how could they be with him where he is if they weren't justified freely from all things how could they be with him where he is if they weren't regenerated and renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit how could they be with him where he is if they were not kept by the power of God through faith and to salvation ready to be revealed in the last time so when he prays that they may be with him where he is he is praying for them every spiritual blessing that is necessary to bring them out of the world and to bring them to himself and to keep them on the way that comes to glory that's where we got our regeneration from and our forgiveness that's where we got our faith and our repentance and our love we got it as a result of the atoning sacrifice of Christ and this pervading intercession because in order that we might be with him he has conferred upon us these blessings which are necessary if we are to be Christians and if we are to come to glory and it also I think includes the desire for every necessary experience in providence to fit them and to prepare them for glory the Lord is as much interested in the providences of his people as he is in their possession of spiritual blessings and everything that comes to them even the things that distress them and trouble them and try them come to them from the same intercession that is seeking heaven for them and may the Lord enable any of his people to remember that who are anxious and troubled about something in their own experience just now or something that is going to be in their experience shortly whatever trials you have whatever troubles you have whatever difficulties you have they come from the same covenant as Christ came for your salvation they come from the same covenant as your regeneration came yes they come from the same covenant as your hope of heaven comes and they come with the same love and they come for the same purpose and that is that you might be to the glory of his grace throughout eternity the troubles and the trials of the Christian are part of this intercession part of the answer to this prayer because the Lord knows the way that we take and the Lord knows what is necessary in his own purpose for our good and he doesn't very often translate people straight to glory but he puts them through one trouble after another you may remember reading of one minister who was called to visit a person who was dying and he said concerning that person I found him in a state of nature I saw him in a state of grace and I left him in a state of glory it's most unusual most unusual the thief on the cross was in that condition he went on to that cross as far as we can understand a sinner without one desire for God or for salvation and before he died he heard the words of Jesus today shalt thou be with me in paradise but that's not the usual way there's usually a long haul for the Christian from the moment that he is brought to Christ until he gets to glory and there are often experiences which make him wonder if he'll ever get there at all but remember this all these experiences are covered by this intercession father I will that they also whom thou has given me be with me where I am if he's going to have them with him in glory they can't lose their grace and they can't be overwhelmed by the experiences through which they pass in providence but ultimately he wants them with himself in glory and that's what makes heaven to be heaven to a Christian and if we may say so with reverence that is what makes heaven to be heaven to Christ that they whom thou has given me are with me where I am heaven would not be heaven to the believing sinner if Christ were not there and heaven would not be heaven to Christ if one of those whom the father gave him and for whom he died was not there remember that when you're tempted to question your perseverance in order that heaven will be heaven to Christ he will ensure that every one of his people is brought to glory but we emphasize particularly that what makes heaven to be heaven to the

[17:08] Christian is that he is there with Christ with me where I am where was he he says I am no more in the world I come to thee he is speaking of himself as in the presence of the father as surrounded by the father's love as enjoying the most uninterrupted communion and fellowship with his God with his father and that is where he wants his people to be with him he desires that they too may in his presence and under his protection enjoy the uninterrupted fellowship and communion and favour of God with me where I am enjoying Christ's presence but in

Christ's presence enjoying the pleasures that are at God's right hand forevermore man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever we don't know very much of what it means to do either but if we have grace we have perhaps a little taste of both of these things and that's what makes us feel that there is nothing that can explain heaven to us better than to think of it as a place where we'll be where Christ is and where we will be able in company with him to glorify God perfectly and to enjoy him forever father I will that they also those who will believe on me through their word even the

poorest of my people will be with me where I am in the presence of the father in my father's house there are many mansions if it were not so I would have told you

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 unto myself that where I am there ye may be also there's something awfully cold and mysterious and dark about death and we don't know what eternity is but one thing we know what will make heaven to feel home to the believer in the moment of death is Christ is there that's how Andrew Boner comforted one poor woman who was speaking on her deathbed about the fears that she had and how she got deliverance from these fears was through the thought that he has the keys of death and of hell and if he has the keys of death and of hell then he is the first person that I will see when I pass through the experience of death not only is he the first person we'll see but he is the one who will conduct us into

God's presence and will enable us to enjoy that presence eternally that they may be with me where I am that they may behold my glory which thou has given me there's a sense in which heaven will only be the continuation of what has been begun in the experience of the Christian on earth and that comes out in this matter of beholding his glory because that is something that has begun here we beheld his glory the glory as of the only begotten of the father full of grace and truth we behold it by faith we behold it in the mirror of his word and there's so much about us that obscures our vision the revelation itself is clear enough although it is not a revelation which is as clear as what it will be in the world to come but our main trouble is our own darkness our own blindness our own hardness of heart there's such a glorious revelation of

Christ in the pages of his word and yet we see so little of it we can read verses which have put some of the saints into raptures of worship and praise and yet we would as well be reading something out of the newspaper for all the effect it has upon us but even at our best what we are seeing of the glory of Christ is so imperfect compared to what we will see in glory in heaven because there there will be nothing to obscure the vision of the Christian we shall see him face to face now we see through a glass darkly but then face to face can you imagine what it must be like to see him face to face so that we are no longer just depending as it were on the reflections of his glory that there are in the pages of his word but we're seeing him as he is the view we have of [23 : 02] Christ here is what lies at the foundation of any comfort we have and any holiness we have now that is something that is very true to the experience of the Lord's people here we are quite sure you know yourself that there is nothing that can make you hate sin like a little glimpse of Christ and of his preciousness nothing that will make you love holiness like some sense in your soul of the glory of your redeemer how can you love sin in the presence of him who has given himself for you there's nothing that can give you comfort whatever your trouble is like a view of Christ by faith that is true to the experience of God's people whatever troubles you have whatever burdens you're carrying however spiritual they are or however temporal they are there's nothing that can cheer your heart like a realization of the glory of the person and the work of

Christ for you what is it going to be like in heaven when faith is transformed into sight and when the devil can't get near you and when you haven't got one scrap of sin in your soul no more unbelief no more doubt no more worldliness nothing of these things that comes between your soul and Christ what will be your portion then but complete holiness and complete happiness and that is what Christ is wanting for his people that they'll have that view of him eternally which will fill them with perfection of holiness and of happiness and will enable them to fulfill the purpose for which they were made which is to give true worship and perfect worship and glory to God the glory which thou has given me now we can't go into this but you know that there is a glory which belongs to the son of God eternally and essentially and was never given to him

God the son our saviour is as much God as the father is and as the holy spirit is all divine attributes all divine glory all divine power belongs to him essentially there never was a moment when he began to possess the glory of God it is his eternally but he is speaking here in our nature he is speaking here as the mediator he is speaking here as the God man and he is speaking here of the glory which the father gave him in appointing him to be the saviour the glory which is manifested in his accomplishment of that work and the glory which he has now that the work is over and he is exalted at God's right hand a glory that will reach his consummation in the great day of judgment when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus

Christ is Lord to the glory of God the father you remember the version in the new testament which says these things said Isaiah saw his glory what did he say when he saw his glory he said things

like this he was wounded for our transgressions he was bruised for our iniquities the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed that's when Isaiah saw his glory on the cross as the lamb of God suffering in order to make atonement for sin have you seen the glory of Christ not as he is now in heaven but as he was there on the cross of Calvary despised and rejected of men a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief he's not worthy to live

I am as a warm and no man and yet at that very time there's a very real sense in which we can say he was never more glorious there's where you see the divine power and there's where you see the accomplishment of the redeemer on the cross leading captive captivity doing away with sin and death and hell for his people and that's what they'll see perfectly in heaven the lamb in the midst of the throne they'll see his glory in his atoning work and in the accomplishment of that atonement but they'll also see the glory of the actual enthronement of the Lord Jesus he was despised and rejected of men but God has highly exalted him and in that same human nature in which he was despised and rejected his divine glory will be manifested can you imagine what it will be like for those who have rejected him those who have used his name as a swear word those who have turned their backs upon the gospel of grace those who have spoken in a derogatory way concerning the saviour can you imagine what it will be like when they see

[29 : 07] Jesus of Nazareth on the throne of God and they see his divine glory manifested in connection with that true humanity the glory which thou has given me the glory of being a redeemer the glory of having accomplished that redemption the lord is desiring for his people that they would be with him where he is in God's presence so that they will behold that glory and not just as it were for its own sake but because of the fruits that it will bring forth because the sight of his glory is what will produce all the right attitudes and all the most blessed experiences in his people eternally well this is the lord's intercession for the poorest of his people that they may be with me and he won't lose any of them he won't miss any of them they'll all be there in that day when the books are opened and when the names are read out of all who ever existed there'll be no one of those given to christ and redeemed by christ who will not be in his own place in the father's house now just a word about the authority and the confidence with which this desire is expressed by our great high priest he says father i will father i will he's not down on his knees begging for a favor but he is speaking as an equal and he is speaking with authority to the father behind this intercession there is the sense he has of the perfect harmony which exists between him and his desire and the father and his desire he says father here in a way in which no other person could ever say it not just because he is speaking as the eternal son but because he is speaking as the son who has revealed the father and who has accomplished the father's purpose of salvation you notice he says i will not i would like or i desire but i will he is asking not for a favor but for a right now let us remember that salvation is altogether a favor to us it is grace from beginning to end your salvation and my salvation from beginning to end is grace supposing we would be christians for half a century and supposing we would be used to some extent in glorifying his name at the end of the day we are sinners saved by grace as much as we were at the beginning and no matter what we do or what we experience it will not enter into the reckoning as far as our salvation is concerned the sinner who is taken out of the gutter and brought to christ and dies within a day is saved as certainly as the one who was serving him for half a century because the basis of salvation is the sovereign grace of god but let us remember this too that while it's all grace to us it's all justice to the saviour he worked for it he did all that the father gave him to do he kept covenant he has given the perfect obedience he has given the atonement for sin which makes their salvation an act of justice and we feel more and more that this is something that we should underline for our own edification and that of others that justice as surely as grace underlies the salvation of the sinner grace to us but justice to christ that's why he can say i will i have kept the terms i have met all the conditions i have done all that had to be done and now there is no reason for them not being saved there is every reason for them being saved and therefore i will and that's what ensures heaven to the christian that it's grounded in the satisfaction of divine justice and the heaven of the christian is something that is due to christ it's due to christ and god will not deny him that's why christians go to heaven because god will not deny christ his heart's desire and he will not deny him the fruit for which he has worked for which he has suffered and for which he has died he speaks with authority with his authority as the covenant partner of the father father and with his authority as the one who has finished the work which the father gave him to do now there's one more thing before we finish and that is how his plea his petition his expression of will is undergirded by the love which the father had to him before from

before the foundation of the world father i will that they also whom thou has given me be with me where i am that they may behold my glory which thou has given me for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world i think the lord is there referring to the fact that it is the love of the father for himself from all eternity that's at the foundation of all he did as savior and of all that he gives as a savior to his people why should they come to heaven why should i ever have become the redeemer why should i ever have accomplished the work that was necessary for their salvation why should i now expect that thou will confer this benefit upon my people the reason is thou lovest me before the foundation of the world now we know that the father loved the son as the son eternally love the love the father and the son and the holy spirit they didn't need you or me they didn't need the world they didn't need angels they didn't

need anything outside of the godhead within the unity of the godhead there is an eternal fellowship of most satisfying love the father loved the son and we believe that it's from that love for the son that his giving of his people to him his entrusting of their salvation to him proceeded not just from his love to them but from his love to him because the father devised this way of manifesting forth the glory of his son and through him the glory of the godhead eternally but I think particularly it's referring to the love of the father for the mediator even from all eternity there's no beginning to that love god never thought of us apart from him god never loved us apart from the love which he had to the mediator with whom he bound us up and that love which he had for the son in our nature as the mediator was given expression to in this world remember when the lord was baptized he was baptized into union with his church that's the significance of baptism our baptism is a sign and seal of our engrafting into christ his baptism was a sign and seal of his taking the church into that union with himself and at the very moment when he was experiencing that baptism he heard these words this is my beloved son my beloved son in whom I am well pleased the father loved him not just in his own passion but as the mediator as the representative as the covenant head of his sinful people and then again on the mountain top when the disciples saw

Jesus speaking with Moses and Elias they were speaking about the decease which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem and again these words this is my beloved son Jesus Christ on the way to Calvary as the sin bearer the object of the father's love and what the Lord is saying here we believe is this that that love which thou hast for me as the mediator is a love whose streams will flow out eternally in the salvation in the blessedness of my people that's where our salvation comes from that's where our hope of heaven comes from the love of the father to the son embracing him as the representative of his people is a love which will put them in possession of salvation eternally your getting to heaven is a stream from the fountain of the father's love to

Christ and before you'll be lost if you're a believer in Christ before you'll be lost there'll have to be a change in the relationship between the father and the son there'll have to be a change in the attitude of the father to the son as long as the father loves the son and he loves him eternally there's not a single sinner who believes in Jesus who will come short of glory well we must stop there but let us look at everything in the experience of the Christian including death itself in the light of this petition where we are always sad when the Lord's people are taken away whether they're young or whether they're old but the death of the Christian is as it were the second last step in the answer to this petition that they may be with me where I am the souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory even when the tears are beginning to fall from the friends who are standing around that soul is in glory but their bodies being still united to Christ do rest in their graves till the resurrection and at the resurrection believers will be raised up in glory and that will be the culmination of it all that will be the final answer to this petition when soul and body together enter in to the joy of the Lord there's encouragement there for the Christian but what about those who don't have any experience of

[42 : 17] Christ you may be here tonight and you would like to get to heaven but you have no interest in the saviour who wouldn't want to get to heaven but what is the kind of heaven that you want to get to is it a heaven where Christ is central and supreme where God is glorified well you'll never get there unless you come by this way I am the way the truth and the life no one cometh unto the father but by me but if we come through Christ we'll certainly get there no matter how sinful we have been no matter how weak we are and Christ himself is the pledge and the guarantee of that we're either going to heaven or we're going to hell we're going to live eternally and what will make the difference is our relationship to Christ some of the worst people who ever lived on the earth will be in heaven and some of the best humanly speaking will be in hell because the best has no righteousness of the

Christ