

Text

Please turn to Rom 8

Main Point

His Intercession Our Blessing

Introduction (300)

Hook

How many of you have known the comfort simply from knowing a friend of yours is praying for you?

Or felt the comfort when you heard someone pray for you at a prayer meeting or Bible study?

Hearing them take the care to understand what you are facing, express it to God ,and petition to God on your behalf, using scripture to express your request.

Those times are a great comfort and refreshing to the soul, and we praise God for that blessing, but how much more comforting to know that Jesus is praying on your behalf? That the our Great Lord and King is interceding for you?

But what does that even mean? and what does that look like?

From the confession

This evening, our study through the confession takes us to the wonderful truth of our Mediator's intercession.

In paragraph 4 of chapter 8 we read:

*[He] was crucified, and died, and remained in the state of the dead, yet saw no corruption: on the third day he arose from the dead with the same body in which he suffered, with which he also ascended into heaven, **and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father making intercession**, and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world.*

Intercession in Context

As you will remember, we have moved from talking about the person of Christ to studying his works.

As Christ performs his works, he carries three offices. We can hold the office of Prophet, Priest and King.

Another overarching division when thinking about the works of Christ are his state of humiliation and his state of exaltation.

When he was on earth we talk about his state of humiliation.

Now that he is in heaven, ever since his resurrection, we know he is in a State of Exaltation.

So, when we study the Intercession Christ, it is helpful to know that this is part of his priestly office in his exalted state.

Intercession is part of his work as priest in his exalted state.

At its basic definition the word “intercession” simply means to petition, to make an appeal to authority, or to pray to God. We think of our intercessory prayer on Sunday morning as a good example.

But when talking about The Intercession of Christ, we must not think of it as Him “simply praying for us”. There is a lot involved in his intercession, as we shall see.

In short, we can say that the intercession of the **Mediator is Christ applying from Heaven what he purchased on Earth.**

His Intercession is Our Blessing.

To help us grasp this idea we will look at three broad categories:

Outline

Blessing of Salvation (He saves us)

Blessing of Care (He looks after us)

Blessing of Sympathy (He understands us)

Part 1 – The Blessing of Salvation

Exposition

Passage - Rom 8:33-35

So let’s begin by looking how His intercession brings the Blessing of Salvation. Look with me please to Romans 8:33-35

Leading up to this passage Paul has been explaining that all people are condemned before God. But then he explains that God’s Righteousness is made available through the person and work of Jesus.

And so, having painstakingly and thoroughly, established that a person is Justified by faith in the

finished work of Jesus, Paul then moved to explain how a believer is to live in this sin infested world.

How, although the price of sin has been paid for, the presence of sin still needs to be fought.

And so in the midst of this discussion on Sanctification, Paul says:

*³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, **who indeed is interceding for us.**^[1] ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?*

Intercession applies what was purchased – Our justification

This is a stunning verse. Full of comfort and confidence. In the midst of our battle with sin, when there seems to be evidence in our lives to condemn us, we are reminded that our justification is sure.

And notice the confidence of our justification is linked directly to the fact that he is interceding for us.

How does Paul refute any condemnation against the elect?

He appeals to three distinct works of our Mediator. Notice that in verse 34.

First, Jesus died. Yes our sin incurred a debt, but he paid the price in full. His death was a payment.

Second, Jesus was raised – The resurrection shows that the price was complete. The payment was accepted by the father.

And third and finally, Jesus is seated at the right hand of the father. He is interceding for his people– The price was paid, the price that was accepted, and it is now being applied to his people. He is applying what was purchased on the Cross. He is declaring his people righteous.

So we can see the intercession of Christ is a crucial part of our justification. During his intercession, he is applying what he purchased on the cross. He is administering something that is already secured.

Christ's intercession makes sure that our list of sins is wiped clean, thanks to his work. But his work on the cross and resurrection purchased much more than a clean slate.

And his intercession applies much more than our justification.

Our preservation

Notice how Paul continues in verse 35 of Romans 8. He says:

Rom 8:35-39

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither

death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If Christ is interceding for his people, can anything separate them from His love?

If Christ is applying what he purchased with his blood to his people can death or life separate us?

If Christ is administering what was declared by the father as “complete”, can anything in all creation separate us from the love of God?

His current and perpetual intercession gives us confidence in our future preservation.

Application

Constant Reliance on Jesus

As we think about Christ’s intercession as our Blessing of Salvation, we are reminded of our constant need to rely on Him.

He did not simply give us a ticket to heaven and now we need to build a train, pave a way and hope to arrive safely.

Yes, he did give us the ticket to heaven, but he also provides the steam engine who takes us there, the track which keeps us on course, the carriage which keep us safe, and the conductor who leads the way.

Christ is interceding for you.

Let that sink in. He will finish what he started.

Your actions can fail, your faith can falter, your hope can wear thin, but you will finish well. You will make it through this hard world full of temptation and suffering, because Christ is interceding for you.

We rely on Christ from start to finish. His intercession welcomes us and entreats us to depend on him every single day. And it is good for us to be constantly pushed to depend on Jesus and Jesus alone.

You know our own fear, so dependence on Him gives courage.

You know our own failure, so reliance on Him gives confidence.

You know our own frailty, so trust in him gives security.

Part 2 – Blessing of Care

(Intercession protects the saints)

Exposition

Intercedes for our Care Intro

But let us move on from the blessing of salvation, to the Blessing of Care.

Turn with me, if you will, to John chapter 17. Here we have what is commonly called “The High Priestly Prayer” of Jesus.

It is a stunning passage, where, in a rare occasion, we have a record of how Jesus prayed. How the Son communicates with the father. In this prayer we see him praying for himself, for his disciples and for all those who would believe in him.

And in this stunning prayer, we see Jesus' cares for his people.

We see his desire for their good. His desire for their absolute best. Not what they think they need, but what He knows they need.

As he prays, as he intercedes, we see him securing the blessing his people. His prayer here on earth gives us a taste of His heavenly prayers.

Particular

Let us start reading in verse 9.

⁹ I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.

¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹ And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you.

Immediately, we see Jesus praying, interceding, for his specific people (v9-10). He is not praying for everyone. He is about to leave this world, after his death and resurrection. But he knows his people will remain in this sin-infested world, and so He prays for them.

Unity

Continuing verse 10, he goes on

Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

The first thing Jesus prays for is unity. *"that they may be one, even as we are one."* (v11) Selfishness, pride, and sin lead to division and factions. He knows the best thing for us is unity. And He knows we need help to be unified.

We know we have much to grow and develop in the space of unity. We learn to get along. We try hard to overlook faults and offences. We strive for self-control to say what we must and refrain from saying what we must not. And in all of these efforts of unity, we must remember that Jesus is praying for us in these things.

Preservation

And he continues. V12

¹² While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

Next, Jesus prays for the preservation of his people. Notice the nature of the prayer. It is not a petition for a thing uncertain. It is not a begging the father to convince him to preserve his people to the end. No, it is the putting in place of a sure thing. *“I kept them” “I have guarded them”, “not one of them has been lost”.*

Judas is the one apparent exception, but He was never truly part of His People. He was a wolf in sheep's clothing.

Joy

In verse 13 Jesus continues to pray.

¹³ But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

Jesus prays that his people would have Joy. He does not want his people to be in gloom and misery.

And this joy is not a superficial façade of a brave smile. It is a deep joy. A joy that is there amidst the tears of

grief. A joy that is constant despite the highs and lows of life. Despite the uncertainties of tomorrow.

It is **His** joy fulfilled in us.

Joy applied

When your job is a grind, or all of your friends have left town, or nothing seems to satisfy or bring you joy remember Jesus' prayer.

Or maybe you are single, hoping for a spouse. Maybe you are childless hoping for a child. Maybe you are ill with no know cure.

How can you have joy in the midst of these things? Humanly speaking: impossible. Despair, anger, bitterness are the natural responses.

But Jesus is praying for your joy. He is interceding for your joy as you face these things.

He prays for you that you would receive his joy. A joy that cannot be shaken by circumstance or situation. A joy based on his finished work. A joy of knowing you are united with him.

He prays that His joy may be fulfilled in you.

Hatred

As Jesus prays, He is not oblivious of the world we are in and the reaction people around us give. As he continues his prayer, v14 He Says:

¹⁴ I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

Jesus knows, first hand, how those still dead in sin react to God's word.

He knows how people react when you tell them that living for their pleasures is wrong, that sex before marriage is wrong, that abortion is wrong, that homosexuality is wrong, and that gossip is wrong.

The world hates God's word and they will hate those who proclaim it too.

And so our Mediator, our great high priest prays for us in the face of that hatred.

Evil one

And our needs are many in this world. He goes on in verse 15

¹⁵ I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.

Until we die, God has a purpose for us here on earth. We have a purpose in the midst of this present evil age, in the midst of the world. Jesus knows that.

He has one will with the Father, and so he does not ask that we would miraculously be taken out of the world before our time, but he does pray that we would be kept from the evil one. Kept from the ploys and traps and snares and webs of Satan.

Satan is like a prowling lion, seeking whom he may devour, and Jesus is praying that we would be kept from him.

Sanctification

And finally, Jesus prays for our sanctification. In verse 16-19 he says:

¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them^[b] in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent

them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

We are in the middle of our sanctification. We are a new creation, but not yet perfected. We are being transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ our Mediator. Jesus knows this, he understands this and he is praying for us through this process. Again, we see him identify one of our great needs, and prays for us in that need. That we would be sanctified through the Word of God.

Maybe you struggle with the fear of man. You fear the opinion of man more than pleasing God. What your friends think of you rather than what God thinks of you dictates your actions.

You stay silent when you should speak, you laugh when you should remain silent.

You replay your conversations and interactions, wondering what that person thinks of you. Fear of man, not only cripples you but it is sin against God.

Jesus prays for you, that through his word you may turn away from the fear of man and fear God instead, who is truly worthy.

Summary

As we look, even at just a portion of Jesus' High Priestly prayer, we see him praying for the needs of his people. The pressing needs. The serious needs. The needs with eternal consequences and present realities.

He prays for unity in the face of our hostility.

He prays for preservation in the face of doubt.

He prays for joy in the face of our despair.

He prays for safety in the face of hatred.

He prays for deliverance in the face of Satan.

He prays for sanctification in the face of indwelling sin.

We have a high priest who knows what we need and is actively praying, interceding for us. We have a high priest who is applying the blessing of Care to his people.

Link

But his blessing of Care is not cold and heartless. It is not a mechanical dispensing of supplies.

He understands, he knows our plight, **He sympathises**. Which brings us to the third and final section. The Blessing of Sympathy.

Part 3 – Blessing of Sympathy

Exposition

Heb 2:17-18

Please turn with me to Hebrews 2. The author is discussing the humanity of the mediator. And in verse 17 he says

¹⁷ Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Jesus, as our high priest interceding for us, is merciful and faithful.

He himself suffered when tempted and so is able to help us as we are tempted; as we go through trials.

Heb 4:14-16

Look now to Hebrews 4:14-16

¹⁴ Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

He sympathizes with our weakness.

He was tempted as we are.

He knows how much we need mercy.

He knows how much we need grace.

Think of the life of Jesus

As you think of our great high priest sympathising with us, think of his life and notice how the pressures of life haven't really changed. Things are repackaged, nations rise and fall, but people are still people. Sin is still sin. And the pressures of this world are the same.

Jesus disappointed people, he did not do some people expected him to do.

He had to make tough decisions. For example, He chose to preach the gospel in the next town instead of staying to heal the sick in this town.

He was harassed, slandered and molested.

He had no place to call home.

He was wrongly accused and wrongly represented.

He had no financial security, no influence in the world.

He lost loved ones (father, Lazarus)

He experienced an oppressive government, unfair laws and a pagan society.

Does this all sound familiar?

Application

He knows

So as you face this life with it's trials and suffering, remember that he knows first hands the suffering of this world. He knows the seriousness of sin and the frailty of man.

He knows what it means to feel pain, heartache and despair.

He knows what it means to be wrongly accused and wrongly hated.

He knows the shock of grief and what it means to lose a loved one to death.

Turn to Him for comfort

There are many places we can turn to find comfort.

Let us turn to Christ. Let us turn to the one who sympathises with us and cares for us. To the one who is praying for us and is able and willing to give us mercy and grace in our times of need.

He alone can bring true comfort. He alone can rescue us from despair, unbelief, and bitterness.

When we turn to Him for comfort, we will find lasting and true peace.

We have the blessing of a Mediator who sympathises with his people.

Conclusion

As we bring our time to a close, just remember that Jesus never denies or hides that there will be

tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword

He does not hide from the realities of this sin-broken world that we will face.

But he does promise that He will be with us to the end of the earth.

He does let us know that He is active as our great high priest while in Heaven.

He is providing the blessing of our salvation by his intercession.

From our justification to our preservation, he is applying what he purchased. And so we can rely on him today, tomorrow and in the days to come. He will finish what he started.

But his Intercession is not just to get us to Heaven. It is full of care and comfort.

He prays for our Unity, for our Joy, for the hateful reactions we will face, for resisting temptation and for our sanctification, to name a few. He cares for us.

And his intercession is not without feeling or emotion. He sympathises with us. He knows what we go through because he went through it himself.

And so in the midst of the *tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword*

we remember,

we rely

and we rest in our Great High priest who is interceding for us.

Let us pray.