

Meeting God's Heart Need 5 of 8

John 17 Is For You

#0232

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—April 25, 1972

John 17. We are told by inspiration that this chapter comprehends more than any other chapter in the New Testament. The text we are going to look at this morning is John 17:24. And that which, with God's help, I want to share with you this morning strikes me this way, friends: If what I'm going to share with you isn't so, nothing matters. If it *is* so, nothing *else* matters. See if you agree with me as we proceed.

This, you remember, is Christ's prayer when He stood in the shadows of Gethsemane. He had eaten the last supper with His disciples in the upper room. He had passed with them across the brook. He had given them those wonderful teachings concerning the vine, recorded in John 15, and on into the work of the Holy Spirit, in the 16th chapter. Now He pauses at the edge of the garden and pours out His heart in prayer, as He is surrounded by that band of disciples.

Now, before I read the text, I want to read an interesting statement. The reason I want to read this is that we may see this text is very personal. Christ was thinking of you when He prayed this prayer:

"Jesus pleaded not for one only, but for all His disciples: 'Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.' His eye pierced the dark veil of the future and read the life history of every son and daughter of Adam" *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4*, page 529.

We have several sons and daughters of Adam here this morning, don't we? Your life history was read by the eye of Jesus that evening hour, as He knelt there.

You say, "Oh, that is impossible. Think of all the millions and billions that have lived in this world."

Yes friends, but to infinity that is not a problem. And Christ, though tabernacled in human flesh, was God, the Son of God.

"His eye pierced the dark veil of the future and read the life history of every son and daughter of Adam. He felt the burdens and sorrows of every tempest-tossed soul, and that earnest prayer included with His living disciples all His followers to the close of time" *Ibid.*, pages 529, 530.

You will find that here in the Bible, which you have open before you, in the 20th verse:

“Neither pray I for these alone...”
(that is, the little band that was around Him)

“... but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word.’ Yes, that prayer of Christ embraces even us”
Ibid., page 530.

Thank God, friends! So as we read our text this morning, I just want you to know you are included:

“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” John 17:24.

You notice that here, Christ reaches the climax of His prayer. If you study the whole chapter, you will see that. This is the great mountain peak, the outpouring of His greatest longing. What is it? That you and I shall be with Him. This is the object of the whole plan of salvation.

Man was created for fellowship with God. We were brought into existence because we were needed. There was a longing in the heart of God that only Adam and Eve, and the various ones down through the ages of the human family, could fill.

But this is not a mass proposition. This is an individual matter. This is why you and I were made individually. If it were simply a mass, God could turn out a lot of creatures, just like General Motors turns out Chevrolets, up in Michigan. But no, there was nobody ever made like you. And there never will be another person like you. And Jesus came for you:

“The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth” *Steps to Christ*, page 100.

Christ showed this when He gave the story of the lost sheep. How many lost sheep? One. Oh, I am so glad, friends, as I hear that story falling from the lips of Jesus, I know He was thinking about me. If I had been the only one for whom the Savior died, it would have been worth it to Him, friends, just to get me.

Well, somebody may say, “Brother Frazee, you think you are pretty important.”

Yes, friends, I do. Yes, I do because I read from the inspired pen that He desires me to value myself according to the price He has paid for me. I well know that without Him, I can do nothing. I well know that apart from Him, my value is zero, and less than nothing. But oh, because of what He made me, because of His ransom to bring me back, because of His transforming grace, because of His plans

for me through the infinite ages of eternity in the future—yes, friends, I am of value, infinite value, and I know it is for me. And I know it is just as much for you, personally, individually, for each one.

So He says:

“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am” John 17:24.

What was it He came for? To ransom us. Why? Because He loved us. What does love seek? Love seeks to be with the one it loves, doesn't it? Why, surely. And the more you love somebody, the more you want to be with that one.

I thank the Lord, friends, we human beings can learn a little about it through human experience. You know, a few years ago my wife and I were on an evangelistic trip here in the west. And when we were in California, it seemed wise for my wife to undergo a series of tests, medical examinations. And as the result of those tests and examinations, it was the doctor's decision that my wife should stay in California for a time, for a number of months.

Appointments that I had at camp meetings and otherwise took me East again. And so the morning came when we had to say goodbye. Well, my wife and I had been married nearly 40 years and had never been apart very many days at a time. And you know, as we separated, not knowing how long it might be, and as I drove across the continent all by myself, day after day, something happened in my soul, friends. I learned, better than I had ever known before, how much Jesus wanted me to be with Him. Do you see? Oh, yes. As I thought about how much I wanted to be with Helen, and I knew she wanted to be with me, and I didn't know how long it was going to be, I said in my soul, “Oh, dear Lord, do You really want me to be with You, as much as I want to be with Helen?” And, of course, back came the answer, “Yes, and a lot more.”

Is it really true, friends? Does Jesus want you to be with Him, more than you want to be with anybody in this world? Oh, yes. And as I said at the beginning, if this is not true, nothing matters. If this *is* true, nothing *e/se* matters. This is it. This is the purpose of the whole plan of salvation. And this is His prayer there in the shadows of Gethsemane: “Oh Father, the great longing of My heart is that My church may be with Me in glory, forever to share My throne, forever to be with Me.” So He went on into Gethsemane, and there agonized in that bloody, fierce struggle, and on through the judgment hall and out to Calvary, where they nailed Him to the tree and hung Him up between Heaven and earth, to suffer for my sake, that I might be redeemed.

You know, as He hung there, friends, an awful struggle went on. The heavens gathered blackness; the Father withdrew the beams of light and glory that had rested upon His Son. He was paying my penalty, dying my death, the second death, the awful death of separation from the Father—God's abandonment. As He went down into that pit of woe and separation, it wrung His soul. And Satan pressed his temptations hard upon Him. He said, “Jesus, if You take that plunge, You will

never live again. You will never see Your Father's face again." Bright hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the tomb. All was dark.

But oh, friends, there was something that wasn't dark. It was the light of love in His soul. He loved me. And He knew, friends, that if He took the plunge and died, whether He would ever live again, I could live and be in that glorious fellowship with God that He had enjoyed since the days of eternity. And He loved me so much that He was willing to give it all up, so I could have it. Do you agree with me, friends, that if this is not so, nothing matters, but if this *is* so, nothing *e/*se matters? Nothing else matters.

He finally bowed His head and died. They took Him down and put Him in the tomb. And early in the morning of the first day of the week, the mightiest of angels flew on rapid wings from the celestial courts. That stone was rolled away as if it were but a pebble, and Gabriel cried, "Son of God, come forth; Thy Father calls Thee." There was a stir in the tomb, and Jesus arose and came forth. The angels prostrated themselves before Him.

You remember as John tells the story in his Gospel, that Christ lingered to comfort a poor, dear soul, Mary, who had been known as a sinner. But she had been forgiven. And there, with her tears blinding her, she was wondering what had happened to the body of the Lord. And you remember how, as the moment of recognition came, when He said, "Mary," she sprang to fall at His feet, to embrace those feet that had been nailed to the wooden tree for her; those feet that she had bathed with her tears in Simon's house just a week before. But what did Jesus say? "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father, but go to My brethren and tell them I ascend to My Father and to your father, and to My God and your God."

Jesus going to Heaven that morning, the resurrection morning? Oh, yes. What for? Ah friends, there is something on His heart. May I read it to you, in some wonderful words penned by the Lord's messenger back in 1878, found in this old book which was just reprinted a few months ago? You can get it at the Book and Bible House, old *Spirit of Prophecy*. This is Volume 3. Listen to this. Oh, this is wonderful:

"Jesus refused to receive the homage of his people until he knew that his sacrifice had been accepted by the Father, and until he had received the assurance from God himself that his atonement for the sins of his people had been full and ample, that through his blood they might gain eternal life. Jesus immediately ascended to Heaven..."

This is the resurrection morning.

"... and presented himself before the throne of God, showing the marks of shame and cruelty upon his brow, his hands and feet. But he refused to receive the coronet of glory, and the royal robe, and he also refused the adoration of the angels as he had refused the homage of

Mary, until the Father signified that his offering was accepted.

Now, listen, see why He holds back:

“He also had a request to prefer concerning his chosen ones upon earth. He wished to have the relation clearly defined that his redeemed should hereafter sustain to Heaven, and to his father. His church must be justified and accepted before he could accept heavenly honor” *Spirit of Prophecy*, Volume 3, page 202.

Oh, think of it, friends. There is the Father. There are all the angels waiting to welcome Him. But no, He cannot accept the adoration of the angels. He cannot even run to receive the clasp of those arms of His Father, until it is settled that you and I can be there with Him and have everything He has. Listen:

“His church must be justified and accepted before he could accept heavenly honor. He declared it to be his will that where he was, there his church should be; if he was to have glory, his people must share it with him. They who suffer with him on earth must finally reign with him in his kingdom...

“God’s answer to this appeal goes forth in the proclamation: ‘Let all the angels of God worship him.’ Every angelic commander obeys the royal mandate... The request of Christ is granted; the church is justified through him, its representative and head” *Ibid.*, pages 202–203.

Friends, we are going to be there. He got that settled before He would accept the embrace of His Father. Oh, I think that is wonderful, don’t you, friends? And you know the Father loves us just as much as the Son. The Father was oh so glad to see that His dear Son wanted us there with Him, because that is the way that He feels, too.

Jesus came back that same day. And you remember later He allowed His disciples to worship Him, indicating that He had received this power and authority from His Father, and that everything was settled. He spent those 40 days with them in Galilee and Judea, talking with them and communing with them concerning the things of God. But the day came when He left this earth and returned to Heaven, to enter upon His priestly ministry. You remember the scripture says that with the 11 He went out to the Mount of Olives. There, as He reached the summit, He gave them His parting words of instruction. He stretched out His hands in blessing, and was slowly taken from them up into Heaven.

You remember as Luke tells the story in Acts 1, that as the disciples looking upward for the last glimpse of their ascending Lord heard voices, they turned. There were two angels saying:

“This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” Acts 1:11.

Oh, thank God that same Jesus that they knew, that loved them, has gone to Heaven, and He is coming back. But now, watch, listen, as I read to you what took place that day in Heaven, the ascension day. I am reading from *Desire of Ages*, pages 833 and 834. Here, you remember, are quoted those beautiful words from Psalm 24, as the angels at the gate raised the challenge, "Who is the King of glory?" And the escorting angels sang, "The Lord of hosts; He is the King of glory." And so Jesus, with that angelic escort, enters the gates of pearl and comes in before the Father. And here, friends, the representatives of the entire universe are gathered on this occasion:

“There is the throne and around it the rainbow of promise. There are cherubim and seraphim. The commanders of the angel hosts, the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds are assembled... All are there to welcome the Redeemer. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King.

“But He waves them back. Not yet; He cannot now receive the coronet of glory and the royal robe. He enters into the presence of His Father. He points to His wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet; He lifts His hands, bearing the print of nails... Now He declares: Father, it is finished. I have done Thy will, O My God. I have completed the work of redemption. If Thy justice is satisfied, ‘I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am’” *The Desire of Ages*, pages 833–834.

What is it that is in His heart? Once again, this longing desire that you and I shall be there with Him. And He must hear again, and the universe must hear, assembled through its representatives, the solemn pledge of the Father that the sacrifice of the Son is sufficient, and that Christ is guaranteed that He can bring with Him to that throne, every one of His children down here in this world. And Christ would not accept it until it was settled before all the universe, that you and I could be there with Him. That is love, isn't it? That is love.

Well, He entered upon His priestly work, and He has been there now 1900 years and more. The Bible tells us in Hebrews that He ever lives to make intercession for us. Have you ever wondered what Jesus prays up there in the sanctuary? Have you ever wondered what He says? Would you like to know? I will give you a little glimpse, friends. In the Spirit of Prophecy comments, as given us in the *SDA Bible Commentary*, is this wonderful statement:

“This chapter...”

This 17th of John. That is what we are studying this morning, John 17:24.

“... contains the intercessory prayer offered by Christ to His Father just before His trial and crucifixion. This prayer is a lesson regarding the intercession that the Savior would carry on within the veil when His great sacrifice in behalf of men, the offering of Himself, should have been completed” *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Volume 5, page 1145.

What is this prayer in John 17? This is a sample prayer of the intercession of Christ within the veil. If you want to hear what Christ is praying there at the mercy seat this morning, read this 17th chapter of John. You will hear. And oh, as we have seen, the climax of it all is what?

“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am” John 17:24.

He is still talking about that. This is still His desire every day. This is what He is praying for. Ah, this is love, friends. This is love. He wants us with Him. The heavenly Bridegroom is longing for His bride. From Heaven He came and sought her to be His holy bride. With His own life, with His own blood, He bought her, and for her life He died.

Now listen friends, you and I know that we are in the closing hour of human history. The sanctuary is about to close. He that is righteous will be righteous still, and he that is filthy will be filthy still. And then Jesus is going to come. But you and I know that in between that close of probation and His actual coming, there is going to be a little period known as the time of trouble. You know that we are to be tested. We are to go through Jacob's trouble. And then, right at the moment when it seems that the powers of earth, under the leadership of the dragon and the beast and the false prophet, try to kill all God's people in one night, God speaks from Heaven. We look up through the open space in Orion. We see the city of God, and Jesus standing there before the Father. And we hear Him. We are down here in this world, still in the flesh, but we look up through that glorious opening, and see Jesus and we hear Him. Do you know what we are going to hear Him say? Oh friends, listen while I read it to you from *Great Controversy*:

“By the people of God a voice, clear and melodious, is heard, saying, ‘Look up,’ and lifting their eyes to the heavens, they behold the bow of promise. The black, angry clouds that covered the firmament are parted, and like Stephen they look up steadfastly into heaven and see the glory of God and the Son of man seated upon His throne. In His divine form they discern the marks of His humiliation; and from His lips they hear the request presented before His Father and the holy angels: ‘[Father,] I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am’” *Great Controversy*, page 636.

Oh, yes. There it is, friends. He prayed for us in Gethsemane, that we might be with Him. He prayed for us on the resurrection morning that we might be with Him. He prayed for us on Ascension Day, as He was welcomed in Heaven, that we might be with Him. He has been praying that prayer all the time in this intercession within the veil. And now, with the sanctuary closed and the day of reunion so near, there in Jacob's trouble, as He prays to His Father for you and me, He says, "Oh Father, I want that reunion day. I want the hour to come when I can go and get My bride and bring her home. I want My people with Me." Ah, thank God, friends, that prayer will be answered. All this is why He came to earth. This is why He died. This is why He rose and went back to Heaven. And this is why He is coming again. You remember He said in John 14:2, 3:

"In my father's house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you" John 14:2.

The whole thing is for us, friends.

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also" John 14:3.

See what He wants? Oh, listen. While He is getting the place ready for us, He is getting us ready for the place. Aren't you glad? I would hate to go up there dirty, filthy, perverted, twisted, wouldn't you? Thank God for His glorious Gospel which washes from sin, changes the perverted, twisted character, and makes it like the original creation, only closer to Him in fellowship. Through eternal ages, we shall know the fellowship of One who joined the divine nature and the human nature in Himself, who died for us, and who could not be reconciled to life unless we could share it with Him.

This is how much He loves you, my friend. This is how much He loves you.

The choir is going to sing a message for us now.

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

See, from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet?
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Since I, who was undone and lost,
Have pardon thro' His name and word;
Forbid it, then, that I should boast,
Save in the cross of Christ, my Lord.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,

That were a tribute far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my life, my soul, my all.

Let all the congregation say, "Amen."

Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my life, my soul, my all.

Do you know, friends, what we can give Him this morning? We can give Him what He paid all this for, our love, our fellowship, our friendship. If we mean business on this, let's stand in full surrender just now.

And now, before we have our closing prayer of dedication and response to this wonderful love, I want to give an opportunity to somebody here that recognizes that this decision this morning is for you a special one. I mean this, friends. I cannot read your heart. I am sure there are many here this morning that your standing means that you're pressing on the upward way, surely with the determination to quicken your pace, to move faster. But there is somebody here this morning, friends, for whom this decision means, not merely to move more rapidly, but to turn clear around from the direction you have been going. There is a difference, you know? It is one thing to quicken our pace on the upward road. It is another thing to turn clear around, when we are on the downward road, and turn our faces heavenward.

Is there somebody here this morning, you may not be a member of the church, but you hear Christ's call to give your life fully to the One who has shown such love for you? Or you may be a member of the church. Your name may be on the books, but you realize that you have been walking apart from God, that the world has come between your soul and His. You realize this morning that to walk with Jesus means to turn clear around and start in a different direction.

If there is somebody like that here, would you just come forward right now? I want to pray for you in a special way as we close this service. Somebody that knows that, for you, life can never again be the same. You realize that a new direction must be given to your life, a new goal established, that your life must be different, entirely different, from what it has been. Church member or *non*-church member, come this morning if you know that this service has been for you, that Christ's call just now is for you. Oh, come. Put your hand in His, and make His heart glad with that joy—the joy of seeing with Him the one for whom He died.

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W. D. Frazee Sermons
435 Lifestyle Lane, Wildwood, GA 30757
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755
www.WDFsermons.org
support@WDFsermons.org