

1987 Hill Top 04 Kingdom Club Sandwich

by Dana Congdon

Dana Congdon explores the profound love of Jesus and its implications for believers through the metaphor of the Kingdom Club Sandwich.

Duration: 58:01

Scripture: John 13:1-17, John 17

Topics: "Christ's Love", "Christian Unity"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet at the Last Supper as a tangible expression of his love for humanity. The preacher emphasizes that this act of love is not limited to any particular spiritual state or condition, but is available to all. The sermon also highlights the unity that is experienced among believers when they encounter the glory of Jesus. The preacher encourages the congregation to demonstrate this same love towards others, even those who may not show evidence of being true Christians.

Transcript

Dean Martin and all those guys get roasted, but well I guess if Ed can turn the other cheek, I'll not be outdone. Hey listen, with the cornball jokes you told this weekend, don't give me any flack. We're looking at the Kingdom Club sandwich, delectable delicacies, sublime sandwich, heavenly manna, things we can't even describe.

How can you describe to people of the world what's contained in this sandwich? It's ridiculous, it's foolishness, it's a scandal to religious folks. It's our portion. What can we say? Call us fools, we'll be fools for Christ.

What fixings, what vittles, whatever you want to call it, it's our inheritance, it's our portion, it's our life, and the Lord ever opens up to us these tremendous truths and realities that we can taste of the Father's house, we can taste of the Son's vanship, we can taste of the Spirit's help at any time, night or day. It's our provision. We live in the house, we got privileges as kids, marvelous privileges.

Unity with the Godhead Himself in a relationship that buzzes around us. We have a new life source for ministry. We don't have to minister because we ought to or have to or want to, but we minister out of a new life source.

These things are so wonderful and so awesome. Who can understand these things? I'm sure some of you, when we went through dashing through John 14, 15 and 16, some of you must have said, oh my goodness, this is so mystical, so deep, so dense, so profound. How can we possibly ever grab hold of these things? Well, now that's just the point.

These things may be mysterious and a little bit difficult for us. After all, the Godhead still gives us problems. The Father, Son, Spirit all intermingled together in that sandwich, it still gives us problems, and it gives you and I problems.

I still hear people yelling up to God to get Him to hear us. We haven't caught on to something, you know, that He's right here as close as our heart, as close as our mouth. Well, anyway, these things are hard to understand, and so God understands these things, and so you know what He does? He gives us two slices of heavenly manna and puts all that great mystery between these two slices that you can get a hold of.

Deep, deep mysteries, so profound that Paul, I'm sure, went out and breathed his last breath saying, Jesus, show me more. His famous, for his last meal, the Roman soldiers came in and said, all right, Paul, we're going to kill you. What's your last meal? A kingdom club.

You don't mind my imagination running away with me at times? I can't help this. But anyway, so for those of you who are not given to mystical mysteries and deep and sublime fixings on a sandwich, some of you, your wives fix your sandwiches anyway, you just look at the bread. If it looks fresh, you munch.

In that same way, we want to look at the two great slices of heavenly manna that we have that encloses, surrounds this great mystery we looked at this morning. These two great slices, the love of Jesus and the keeping power of the Father. I tell you, that's two great slabs to have all your mysteries between.

And that's what we're going to look at tonight, John 13 and John 17, breezing by. Any minister, any servant of God or Bible teacher worth his salt would never speak on all of these chapters in two sessions. It takes a wild man, it takes somebody who's very shallow to glide over the whole thing and just point out a few spots, you see.

Then I say, oh, well, you dig the mysteries down yourself, you know what I mean? Then I fly out of here, you know, just in the nick of time, that's all I knew. We're looking at John 13 tonight, we're going to fly over that thing. See this great divine sandwich, this great slice.

John 13, what is this that becomes one of the parameters of our faith, that becomes one of the stack poles around which even in your deepest and darkest and most confusing states you can hang on to? What's that slice? Right here in John 13, the objective memorial and example of uttermost love. We begin reading in verse 1. Now, before the feast of the Passover, Jesus, knowing that his hour had come that he should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end, my margin, to the uttermost. And during supper, the devil, having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands and that he had come forth from God and was going back to God, rose from supper and laid aside his garments and taking a towel, girded himself about.

Then he poured water into the basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded. And he came to Simon Peter, and he said to him, and Simon said, Lord, do you

wash my feet? Jesus answered and said to him, What I do you do not realize now, but you shall understand hereafter. Peter said to him, Never shall you wash my feet.

Jesus answered, If I don't wash you, you have no part with me. Peter said, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. He's a lover, isn't he? Impulsive.

Jesus said, Now, now, calm down, Peter. He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean, and you are clean, but not all of you. Verse 12, So when he had washed their feet and taken his garments and reclined at the table again, he said to them, Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.

If I then, the Lord and Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet, for I gave you an example that you should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, neither the one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

Well, now we have this marvelous story. It's wrapped within this tremendous context of the Last Supper. Our Lord Jesus at the Last Supper.

I said that we have before us on this slice the objective, provable, tangible expression of the love of Jesus for us. And in that statement, I include not only the washing of the disciples' feet, but also the giving of himself at the Last Supper. It makes no difference what your spiritual state is, my brother, whether you're on top of the hill or whether you're down in the dumps, whether you're filled with doubts and confusion, whether you're mired in sin or whether you're flying like a spiritual bird.

We have an objective standard. We don't have to base our Christian faith just on feelings. It doesn't matter if you feel good or bad or close to God or far away.

We've got something staring at us that forever is an eternal memorial that Jesus loves us. He comes to us and he gives us his body. He says this, do this in remembrance of me.

You may feel spiritual today, but next week you won't. But this is the objective right here. I haven't left you.

I'm right here. I'm still giving myself to you. What does it mean, Jesus, to love to the uttermost? That first verse there in chapter 13, the last little phrase, he loved them to the uttermost.

He loved them to the end. What does that mean? It's hard to comprehend. What on earth could that mean? And how can Jesus love to the uttermost? Well, now here's just a little something that perhaps is a clue.

How can Jesus love to the end, right down to the last wire, to the last breath Jesus loved? Until he finally breathed his last on the cross, he loved. It was to the uttermost. It was to the end.

It was the nth degree. How could he do such a thing? Well, there's a little secret here that we just catch a little clue. He could love to the uttermost because he knew his origin.

Verse three, Jesus, knowing that the father had given all things into his hands and that he had come forth from God and was going to God. He knew both his origin, his purpose and his destiny. Again, we read in verse one.

Now, before the feast of the Passover, Jesus, knowing that his hour had come, that he should depart out of this world to the father. Jesus knew where he was going. I think this is a little clue for us brothers, because the Lord calls on us and gives us command, as we all know, to love one another.

How can we love? I dare not use the phrase to the uttermost, but surely one is only in a position to love when they realize who they are, when they realize who they were born to, when they realize what was given into their hands and when they realize where they're going. Then we have time to love people. It's only when we get cast in a framework that we're in this world and it's all existential and we got to work it out and we don't know what's going to happen.

We got both of our fingers crossed and we're praying like crazy, but we're not sure what's going to happen. People like that never have time to love. They're too busy being filled with existential angst.

But folks who know I am a child of God, I got forever. They have time to love kids. You know what I'm saying? And when you know that you're going to be with Jesus, your destiny is secure.

And when you know the things that are in your hands, it says Jesus in verse three, knowing that the father had given all things into his hands. That's incredible. Jesus to have that knowledge.

No wonder he could do things so well. And we have been given so much through the Lord Jesus and in the name of Jesus for us to utilize. Well, when we know that there's possibility for us loving, none of us are good lovers.

Some of us were courting, but it turned out we're like we are not very good lovers. But as we know who we are, whose kid we are and what we've been given in our hands and where we're going, well, then we start to find time, learn how to love to the uttermost. Well, that's just a little clue.

Well, let's go on. Let's see how Jesus loves to the end, to the uttermost. Why is that statement made there in John 13? How does that sit with you? And Jesus there at the Last Supper, love them to the end.

Now, brothers, I'd just like to say to you that to me at the simplest level, this means that Jesus had every right to be preoccupied otherwise. I mean, what a tough time to love people. Here he knew that his drinking of the cup of death at Calvary was imminent.

How do you push something like that aside and love people and care for people? It says there in these verses that Jesus knew that Judas was going to betray him. Boy, that would preoccupy and make it, that would fester in me. If I were hanging around with a couple of dudes and having lunch with them and I knew that one of them was going to betray me, boy, it'd be hard for me to love that guy.

Every time I'd look at him, he'll wear out. He knew Peter was going to deny him. Says so in the word.

Yet he loved Peter, washed Peter's feet. He knew that all the disciples would leave him. He says to you, leave me alone.

But I'm not alone. The Father's still with me. Knowing that he would be betrayed by one disciple, be denied by another disciple and be abandoned by the rest, he still loved them to the uttermost.

Boy, that's some kind of Jesus. I mean, that's some kind of testimony of love. And so what actually happened on this occasion, it'd just be interesting for us to rehearse.

How can we push aside preoccupations of impending death and knowing the state of the disciples around him, how did he love to the uttermost? There is a key here, which it would be helpful for us to jot down in our little notes. And the key is this. The reason Jesus could love to the uttermost and love to the end is this, that he was going to the cross and loving these disciples for the sake of his Father.

Jesus went to the cross for the sake of his Father. Jesus loved the unlovely and the betrayer for the sake of his Father. Now, this is necessary to keep in mind.

And I know there's a balance to it because it says for God so loved the world, he sent his only begotten son. And it says in different parts of the scriptures that Jesus loved people. And I'm not taking away in any way from the fact that Jesus loved you and I. Obviously, he died for that very reason.

But the first, I want to say the number one reason, the first reason that Jesus obeyed and loved to the uttermost is because he loved the Father. And he was doing it to please the Father. Jesus says somewhere in the Gospel of John, he says, I do all things to please my Father.

And when the heavenly voice broke through the heavens and said, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased, Jesus did all things for the Father. Father, what should I say now? Father, what should I do now? Father, how should I judge now? He would always ask the Father. For as he walked through this plane, he saw you and I, the way we really are.

Now, you see, you and I look at each other. We have trouble loving one another once you get to know us. I mean, I love some of you guys because I've never met you before this weekend.

Some of you I've seen five years. I don't love you guys so good. You know what I'm saying? Once you know, and especially if you're in a fellowship with some people.

I mean, now this is tough. Now, you know, we get the idea sometimes that Jesus went around and he was a great bleeding heart liberal. You know, I mean, he went around, he loved everybody.

Oh, lepers. I love the poor little lepers. Come here.

Let me touch you. As if there was something sentimental about loving lepers or loving blind people, Jesus had a thing for them. You know, there was nothing of that sort of strange and perverted loving of things that are nasty.

No, there was a volitional and deliberate caring for people who needed caring. It wasn't as if he had some kind of flood of emotional feeling. No, no, no.

He had a decisive will that said, I'm going to care for that person. And we have the misconception sometimes as Christians that, oh, I wish I could have compassion on the lost. I just don't have compassion.

I see nasty lepers. I see nasty blind people, as it were. I don't feel natural compassion.

My heart doesn't flood with emotions. Now, some people are given such an emotion and I don't discount that at all. But I tell you what the love of Jesus is.

The love of Jesus is a deliberate decision to help somebody who needs help. Sometimes it's quite devoid initially of emotion. You guys know when you first got married, you got married out of emotional, wonderful

love, hopefully.

I mean, but when you're married for a number of years, you know, you need to keep loving your wife, but sometimes you don't exactly have the pots for her. Now, how are you going to love somebody that you've been married to for 20 years? I mean, you know, you know, you know her inside and out, you know her good side or bad side, you know her moods, all that kind of stuff. Now here she is.

And now you've got an opportunity to love her, but it's not going to be as a result of this great outpouring of emotion. Ooh, my wife. You're going to say, well, there she is, Lord.

What do I do now? Flowers, that'd be the thing. And you make, you make deliberate decisions to care for your wife instead of being nasty to her, to pamper her when she's sick, even though, you know, she's sucking you for all your worth. You make deliberate decisions to care for her.

And when you do that, you find the emotions are there. But often, you know, you have to initiate love toward your wife. I mean, I'm not doing marriage counseling here, but I'm sure you all are aware of this.

You want to know how to love your wife after 20 years? Really care for her. Listen to her when she talks. Be nice to her, even when she carries on about things and you're watching the game.

Be nice to her. Turn off the TV. Can you imagine how your wife would probably pounce on your bones if she was talking to you and you turn off the TV and say, honey, you have my undivided attention.

What was that about shopping at the store? She'd say, the guy loves me. This is certain proof. Now, some of you may have to choose alternate ways, but brothers, I think, you know, the things I say are true.

Jesus loved to the uttermost mankind. Nasty blind lepers, rebellious, stubborn, sinful, darkened, proud man. And he loved them not for sentimental reasons, but because he loved the father.

I love that passage in Hebrews chapter 10, that quotes Psalm 40 or 41, Psalm 40, where Jesus comes on the scene of a great need for redemption, wherever the priests have been offering sacrifices and everybody still remembers their sins and keeps going back to offer more sacrifices. And then it says Jesus steps on the scene, steps into the place and says, a body you have prepared for me and I have come to do thy will. Quoting from Psalm 40, where it says, I delight to do thy will.

Said that to the father. Who delights to go to the cross? Jesus was no masochist. He wasn't into getting hurt, but he said, I delight to do thy will, father, even if it means going and drinking that cup.

That's it. I love you. Mark it.

Now, when Jesus came to his disciples, he wanted to leave this testimony behind, that he loved the father. And so how did he do this before the disciples? He deliberately gave himself to those disciples. Deliberately and volitionally.

Now here they are sitting around the table thinking they're just going to have another Passover meal, but sensing there's something strange about the particular events surrounding this one. And in the middle of the feast, Jesus stands up and says, now brothers, I'm starting something new here. I want you to know about it.

See this bread? Now this bread is my body, which is broken for you. See this bread? Remember this bread. Remember that, you know, the disciples always remembered that bread and the way Jesus held it, which is why the disciples on the Emmaus road recognized him as soon as he held it and broke the bread.

That's when he recognized us, Jesus. Only he broke it like that. And he said, this is my body broken for you.

Here, do this in remembrance of me. And they didn't take little Baptist chicklets. They took hunks of bread and chewed it.

They had to think about it. I'm sorry. Many of you here must be Baptist.

I just, uh, I, I, my background was Baptist and I was a Baptist minister. And we used to get these little pieces of things about this side and perfectly square. I call them Baptist chicklets.

I don't mean any offense, but anyway, Jesus gave them a hunk of bread. They chewed that bread and had to think about it the whole time they were chewing. Wow.

This is Jesus body. What's he about to do? And then he gives them the cups. It's a new covenant.

We're opening up a new door, a new spiritual dimension, swinging open here. You'll understand. You'll understand a little later.

Just take this in remembrance of me. Now we can appreciate the deliberateness of this act because we are on the post side of the resurrection and, and, and Calvary, but now listen to this. If Jesus hadn't done that, some of the disciples may have mistaken.

And in fact, they did think that Jesus was arrested by mistake and that Jesus was manhandled by the Romans and by the high priest and his squad by mistake. Oh, this is a terrible mistake. So Jesus, before it ever happened, he broke the bread and said, I am giving this to you.

I am laying down my life for you. Up to that time, the disciples heard that he was going to Jerusalem. He's going to be persecuted.

He was going to be killed, be raised again. But now Jesus makes it personal and say, you know why I'm breaking this bread and this is my body. It's for you.

And I want you to know this is a deliberate act. And just like he said to Pontius Pilate, you have not brought me into custody against my will. I have decided to come here.

This is my father's pleasure. Nobody one ups Jesus and does things against his will. No, sir.

He said, I'm going to take this cup and drink it. And that's why I'm here, Pilate. For this reason, I was born.

Jesus had such a deliberateness in these acts that he did on this last night that the guards of the high priest verily fell backwards when Jesus stood up and said, I am. When they said, where's Jesus? Jesus said, I am. And he fell over because he was so deliberate.

I mean, who, who, who was trying to hide from a certain arrest who would ever dare step forward, part company and say, I am. Jesus did the whole thing deliberately. He wanted his disciples to know when I go to the cross, I'm going for you.

Don't you ever think I made a mistake or, or the devil tricked us. I've gone for you and you're alone. You personally, Peter, you see it? There it is.

Thomas. It's a deliberate act. It's volitional act.

It's my love for you. It's not man. It's not sentimental love.

This is a life giving love. It's a model. It's a testimony.

It's a remembrance to Memorial. Do this in remembrance of me. Jesus loved to the uttermost and certainly manifested in this way, but it's interesting what came up at this time.

It seems at this very moment that Jesus gave himself in such a loving way. Would you believe it's recorded in Luke chapter 22. Keep your finger from John 13.

Let's just turn to Luke 22. It's recorded in Luke chapter 22 that an argument broke out among the disciples during the feast. Who's going to be the greatest.

Can you believe that such a bunch of insensitive guys, they were all deacons. They just want to know who's going to be elder first. And so they had a fight.

And so we find in verse 24 of Luke 22. You see, if you see up there, verse 14, et cetera, is the Lord's supper, last supper. And verse 24, immediately after the Lord's supper, and there arose a dispute among them as to which one of them should be regarded as the greatest.

My goodness. At the last supper of all places. These insensitive turkeys.

And so he instructed them about the greater way as recorded in Luke. But John fleshes it out just a little bit for us and gives us this insight. Why do you think Jesus rose from supper and took a towel and washed the disciples feet? It was while they were arguing who's going to be the greatest.

Jesus beats him again. Shows his love. I'm going to be the greatest.

I started first. Besides, Peter says, I said that thou art the Christ first. John says, yeah, but that's just because I gave you clues.

So they'd be having a run around and suddenly Jesus gets up and they say, where's he going? To get more food? I don't know. And next thing you know, he takes off his garments and he puts on a towel. What's he doing? What's he doing? Next thing you know, he takes a bath, water, and he starts going around to the disciples and washing their feet.

Jesus, what are you doing? Jesus, you're making us feel bad. What are you doing? We don't want to feel bad. And so they went to the disciples and they said, Jesus comes to Peter, washes Peter's feet.

Peter says, don't wash my feet. I should wash your feet. Don't wash my feet.

Jesus says, I have to wash your feet. You don't understand. I've got to teach you a lesson about this thing.

Oh, how many times Jesus gave us this new commandment? How many times he told us to love? We still think it's the way of wimps. In the kingdom of this world, to love is the way of wimps. In the kingdom of heaven, it's the way of power.

It's the way of power. Jesus went around and powerfully stilled the atmosphere by washing the disciples' feet and said, now I've left you an example. Now listen, I'm the master.

You guys should do what I do. You need to wash one another's feet and quit this business about who's the greatest. That doesn't wash in the kingdom.

Think about it. The disciples said, wow, what is this kind of love? It's the love of the kingdom. It's the most powerful force in this world.

You know how powerful this force was? It was at that very moment that Jesus turned this powerful force of love and you know where he directed it? As if it were a laser. He turned it on Judas Iscariot. Judas, the betrayer.

And you know what Jesus had done earlier? Jesus gave his body to Judas. Jesus passed the cup to Judas as well as to the other. Who's ever heard of greater love than that? And then Jesus washed Judas' feet.

I could imagine Judas' feet as absolutely brittle with tension. Jesus says, Judas, I'm washing your feet too. And they got around the table and Jesus got troubled as it says.

If we turn to John 13, it says in verse 21, at this time Jesus became troubled in spirit and he testified truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me. Peter, Peter bothered by this. Peter, who was the great, the guy who would check out whoever did anything wrong.

The great man who stands for righteousness. The man who would start the inquisition said, John. John, of course, the youngest, is leaning right over there by Jesus.

He says, John, over here. Find out who it is. When I find out, I'll deal with it.

John says, Jesus, who is this person who's going to betray you? Jesus says, it's the person that I give the best and biggest piece of bread to. He turns and gives the best and biggest hunk of bread. He goes, here Judas, take it.

Now that's love. That's the power of love. And you know what that did? It said when Judas took that piece of bread, Satan entered him, darkness filled his soul.

He ran out of that place. Because the power of love not only draws people to themselves, but those who prefer darkness are pushed, are forced away. They're repelled by love.

The Lord's Supper and Jesus' love exposes the haters of God as well as the lovers of God. People can hide under a veil like I love Jesus, but when Jesus' love bears down like with laser-like precision into the heart of somebody who actually prefers darkness rather than light, they're chased out of the place. The power of love.

Judas couldn't take it anymore. Jesus said, what you going to do? Do it quickly. Judas ran out so fast, the other disciples thought he went to get more food or to give money to the poor.

The disciples didn't understand what's going on, but you see Jesus was showing them this objective love. Don't let anybody say that love is a tool of wimps. That's the kind of stuff that breaks down barriers, that separates the men from the boys in the kingdom of God.

Separates the light from the darkness. I tell you, you got folks, you're not sure if they're in light or darkness in the fellowship you're in, love them in Jesus' name and give them agape love and see what happens. Some folks come around and say, I'm a Christian, don't show much fruit, don't show much evidence.

You know what you do? You join hands with them and say, praise God, it's good talking to you. Now let's pray to Jesus. Some folks pull their hands back, walk out of there so fast.

It's because they don't know Jesus, they've just been faking it, you see. But when it comes down to loving Jesus, it's hard to fake that. And you find them back away.

It's very strange, isn't it? It's just the power of love. So Jesus turns on Judas and then he turns his love, this kingdom love, this objective love, this unforgettable love, upon Peter. The one he knew would deny him, the one who he washed his feet under protest.

And it says there in John 13 and verse 37, Peter said to him, Lord, why can I not follow you right now? Lay down your life for me. Amen, amen. I say to you, a cock shall not crow until you deny me three times.

Now let not your heart be troubled. Again, if you'll hold your finger in John 13 and go back to Luke 22, we find a little augmentation to this story that adds just a touch of light. In chapter 22 and verse 31, immediately after this argument over who's the greatest, we find recorded Jesus saying, verse 31, I believe at the same time that John 13 records the statement of Peter, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat, that I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail.

And you, when once you've been turned again, strengthen your brothers. Let not your heart be troubled. That's the eventual power of love that made Peter weep bitterly when he realized he denied the Lord.

That's the loving power that restored Peter and gave him the grace of God to strengthen the other brothers. When the other brothers cowered in fear because of the Jews, Peter somehow could hold it together. He had a certain composure that came out of this experience that Jesus turned his love right on Peter very personally and said, Peter, I know you're going to deny me.

Satan wants to sift you like wheat, but you know something? I prayed for you. You're going to make it through. When you get on through there, you strengthen the other brothers.

I know you're going to deny me, but my love goes on anyway. Can you imagine? Just look at that one side of the sandwich. I mean, what can be... Jesus loves the betrayer.

Jesus loves the denier. Jesus loves a whole bunch of abandoners. Jesus loved them, gave them a testimony, that cup and that loaf.

It's a testimony forever until Jesus returns that he loves us and he will not let you go. Have you denied the Lord Jesus? I'm talking to you. Have you denied him in some way? He comes to you with that bread and that cup.

And he says, but I haven't denied you. The power of his love, it breaks us down, breaks our heart. There's nobody to compare with Jesus.

And listen, if you get all confused about Christian doctrine and where you belong and what the will of God is and everything like that, you hang on to that side of the sandwich. Jesus loves me. This I know the Bible tells me, so I'm hanging on to it until I get more light.

How often do God's children have to come back to that basic position? It's so basic. It's so simple. It's so profound.

It's the love of Jesus. Oh, the deep, deep love of Jesus. That's that side of the sandwich.

No matter what's in the middle, if you don't understand the portions and all, just hang on to that side of the sandwich. The love of Jesus, it's proven. It's a memorial.

It's there. It's imperishable. Always must have been on Peter's brain.

I can't believe Jesus washed my feet. I can't believe He comforted me just when He was the one who was going to die. And He comforted me because He knew I was going to deny Him.

Who is this man that He can love to the uttermost like that? It's Jesus. Well, of course, we have to fly over to John 17. For after Jesus told them these great mysteries of the Father's house and the Son's vine and the Spirit's help, then He turns and in the presence of His disciples, He prays this prayer.

And He prays it for their hearing to the Father. And actually, He makes two requests. Now, this chapter, for some people, is a very hard chapter to get through.

But if you'll read it and read it and read it, I think maybe the hundredth time you read it, you'll really get to see how basically simple it is. He only really makes, in one sense, two requests. And I think you could probably say three if you want to section up one of the major ones.

He makes two requests. He says, Father, first I want to pray to You in front of my disciples. I want to say, Father, glorify Thy name.

Glorify Thy Son that Thy Son may glorify You. That's what He prayed first. Father, now listen, whenever I pray, I always pray to You first and I pray for Your concerns first.

I love these disciples, but before I pray for them, Father, I want to pray to You. Oh, Father, glorify Thy Son that Thy Son may glorify Me. That's my big prayer.

Father, be pleased. Shine out Your pleasure in my life. Let me shine for You.

You shine for me. That's Jesus' real heart. You see what I'm saying? He loved the Father.

The basis of everything He did, He came and prayed to the Father and He said such things. Well, there's so much to say about the prayer, but it's interesting to notice that He just ticks off some things that He did while He was on earth. He says, Now I glorified You while I was here on earth.

Notice verse four. I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work Thou hast given Me to do. Jesus glorified the Father by accomplishing the work that God had given Him to do.

And what was that work? We must tick these things off and just simply mention them, each one so deep and profound. Verse one, He says, Father, the hour has come. Glorify Thy Son that Thy Son may glorify Thee, even as Thou gavest Him authority over all mankind, that to all whom Thou hast given Him, He may give eternal life.

He says, Father, I've glorified You on earth. I gave eternal life to everybody You gave to me. Isn't that precious? He gave eternal life.

He said it in the disciples' hearing. The disciples said, Peter said, I have eternal life. John said, I have eternal life.

Jesus said, I gave eternal life to everybody You gave me. Then in verse six, He accomplished work. He says, I manifested Thy name to the men Thou gave Me.

While I was here, I did my job. I manifested Thy name. You might have many questions about what this whole manifest Thy name is and Thy name and Thy name.

To me, in the Gospel of John, the way John thought of it, if I can say from the way he writes the Gospel of John, what he's trying to say is, Jesus says, while I was here on earth, I manifested, I am. I am the true vine. I am the bread from heaven.

I am the living water. I am the way, truth, and life. I am the good shepherd.

I am the door. I am. I manifested, I am.

They saw it. I did my job. In verse eight, for the words which Thou gavest Me, I have given to them.

Jesus said, I've done My work. I gave them the words that You gave Me. I gave them Thy word.

Precious Jesus. Verse seven, now they have come to know that everything Thou has given Me is from Thee. For the words which Thou gavest Me, I gave to them, and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me.

And so Jesus said, I've done that too, Father. I showed them that You and I are one. What You give Me, I give to You.

And You and I, and they've seen it, we're one. I've done the work. In verse 12, he says, while I was with them, I was keeping them in Thy name, which Thou has given Me, and I guarded them, and not one of them perished.

I wonder how many times those disciples would have just perished if Jesus hadn't guarded them, if Jesus hadn't kept them. He says, I've done My job. I've done My job.

And in verse 18, Jesus says, as Thou has sent Me into the world, I've sent them into the world. I've done that too, Father. I've sent them into the world.

Now, Father, on the basis of that, I have done My job. And now I'm asking You, Father, would You please do Your job? I'm asking You, not because I think You won't do it. I'm asking You so the disciples can hear Me say it, and know that when I pray, things happen.

Every time Jesus prayed, you know, in front of the disciples, things happened. Whether the sea stilled, or a man was raised from the dead, every time Jesus prayed, the one thing the disciples would always testify is when Jesus prays, things happen. Jesus says, okay, Father, now the disciples are listening, and I've done My job, and I've glorified Your name.

I've got one request, Jesus, one request, Father, I make to You, Father, He says in verse 11, I'm no more in the world, yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to Thee, Holy Father. Keep them in Thy name. Let Your keeping power be upon them.

Now, Jesus, after making His request to the Father to glorify Him, makes this second request, and basically this is the burden of His prayer. He just wanted the disciples to hear Him say, Father, keep them. I think in times, even when the disciples, one by one, were martyred for the faith, they stood there at their impending martyrdom and remembered the words of Jesus that said, Father, keep them.

I'm going away now, Father. Keep them. Father, keep them in Thy grace.

Keep them in Thy life. Keep them in Thy house. Keep them in the vine.

Keep them in Thy spirit. Father, keep them in the I AM. Help them fill in the end of the sentence.

Keep them in the I AM. Keep them in Thy name. Oh, Father, don't let them scatter.

Hold on to them. Now, Jesus had all confidence that the Father would listen, but boy, those disciples must have felt at that very moment some sort of unleashed spiritual power and dimension of the Father grabbing hold of their lives in anticipation of the shockwaves that were soon to take place. And through their ups and downs and mistakes and everything, you know something? The Father kept them.

Isn't that wonderful? The keeping power of the Father. When Jesus says, keep them, the Father says, let's keep them. Now this request breaks down, you might say, into different aspects.

He makes a few specific requests in the matter. He says in verse 15, I do not ask thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. Father, keep them from the evil one.

I know that evil one is out to get them and destroy them and sift them like wheat and do whatever he can to undo eternal things, but Father, keep them from the evil one. I think you and I have benefited more than a million times by the keeping power of the Father who's kept us from the evil one. And he says, keep them from the world.

In verses 16 and 17, they are not of the world even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them from the world. You know, sanctify is a big word to mean separate them from the world.

Separate them by thy truth. Thy word is truth. Oh, Father, give them the word and separate them from the world.

Keep them from the enemy. Keep them from the world. Wow, what a prayer.

Keeping power of God. That's why God's always whispering the word in your ear. Every time you hear it, it separates you from the world a little bit more.

That's the whisperer in the world. It's always whisper in verses you heard back two years ago. He's a keeper.

He's the saint keeper down here on earth. His job is to keep whispering the word to keep you separated from the world. And so he prays this prayer.

And I think that's basically the burden of his prayer. Keep them, Lord. Keep them, Lord.

Keep them. And I think the disciples felt loved and kept. There's a confidence in knowing that the Father keeps us.

It's hard to explain. I suppose you came to the same moment I came to in my life. I came to a moment, I wrote a little song called Hang On.

At a moment where I thought I had to hang on to God and found out he's hanging on to me. I mean, I was down to one fingertip, you know, ready to go off the cliff. And then I found out that God had me by both wrists.

If I could let go of my last finger, he'd just pull me right up. It's ridiculous trying to hold on to God. I've got to hold on to God.

I've got to be faithful to God. Just throw my hands up and say, Jesus, grab hold of me, will you? I need help. He's the keeper.

That's why Paul could say with such confidence, I know whom I believe that I'm persuaded he's able to keep that which I've committed unto him against that day. I'm persuaded. It ain't because I did such a hot job.

He's the keeper. Give it to the keeper. Don't worry about it anymore.

Of course, there's a magnificent result of the keeping and that is they will be one. You notice it says in verse 11. Now it's interesting.

This isn't actually a request of Jesus. I know it's usually spoken of that way is if Jesus prayed, Lord, make them one. But he doesn't ever say that.

In verse 11, if you'll notice again, it says, Father, Holy Father, keep them in thy name, the name which thou has given me, that they may be one, even as we are. You know, it's the keeping power of the Father that makes us one. Jesus doesn't really pray, Father, make them one.

He knows if the Father can keep us, we will be one. A lot of messages given about Christian unity, and they usually come down to verse 20 and 21 and say, oh, well, here's the request where Jesus says, make them one. But no, no, Jesus is only saying here, I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in me through their word.

In other words, I ask that you keep not only the ones here presently, but the ones who are to come, that they may all be one. That's not the prayer request. That's the result.

He says, now, Father, listen, I've asked you to keep these men, that they might be one, but I know there's going to be others coming along up in Hilltop in a few years from now. And Father, when they come along, would you include them into this oneness too, by your keeping power? You kept the early disciples who saw me face to face and were eyewitnesses of the things I did, but now a generation will come up who did not see me, but they believe in me. Keep them just as well and make them one, that we may all be one.

The early disciples and the later ones, that we may all be one. This great theme of oneness, Jesus begins to repeat and to repeat, is that we are made one by being kept in the name. And we're being made one by being included in the bunch.

And we're also made one as he, as we receive his glory. Notice there in verse 22, the glory which thou hast given me, I have given them, that they may be one. Every time we see the glory of Jesus, it sucks us into the body more.

How can you help it? When with veiled faces we see the glory of the Lord, we're changed from glory to glory. Every time we see that glory, we get sucked in. We're more one than we ever were before.

You know, this is like one of these things. If you try to get people to, as Ed was saying yesterday, if you try to get people to focus on their faith, they immediately stop exercising faith. When you get people to focus on their oneness, they immediately see their disunity.

Now you get people to sense the keeping power of the Father and the glory of Jesus, and suddenly, sucked together, we sense we're one. Tremendous, these powerful keeping hands of the Father to squish us into oneness. And in verse 23, in verse 23, and as the Christians live out their relationship in the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, they become one.

Wonderful verse. I am them, thou and me, that they may be perfected in unity. In other words, how do you get perfected in unity? I mean, I know all of you.

You guys have got saved. You love Jesus, don't you? You love the Father, right? You love the Holy Spirit, but you don't like the creeps who are around you. All right, so what happens is, Jesus starts working on you, and you start relating to Him pretty good.

And then the Father opens up. There's a whole new dimension of relating to the Father. And then the Holy Spirit takes over, and He begins to convict you, and you start to relate to Him.

And in the process, you start to realize that you're hopelessly interdependent and interwoven with other brothers and sisters in Christ. As you work out of your independence into that interrelatedness with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you also work out of your independence into the interrelatedness of the body of Christ. It's a coincidental happening.

So people who say they love God but hate people, well, they're just hopeless hermits that God will grab hold of and make them lovers of people and lovers of God. You cannot be a lover of God and hate people. John says that.

But it's in that interrelationship with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that you see the absolute perfection of their unity. And you see the absolute corresponding and complementary working of the body of Christ. It's imperfect.

I mean, how can you compare the working of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that work like a perfectly oiled machine? One of those machines where you get the instruction that says, never needs to be oiled or greased. Everything's been done internally. And then the old machine down here, the church.

Clunky, clunky, clunky, clunky, clunky, clunky, clunky, clunky. Always got to grease. A bearing's always popping out.

You got to grease it up. But there's an analogy there. The slick little whirl of heavens and triumvirate moving smoothly in the old clunky, clunky, clunky, clunky, clunky down here on earth.

Ah, but there's unity there. There's unity. And isn't it wonderful? We come to times like this where there's people from various different churches and backgrounds, but when we touch and see the glory of Jesus, we sense we're one.

Boy, we sing some songs and I'll tell you what, the roof's going to open up one night. We're going right out of here. Who knows? Maybe tonight.

Hopefully before the skirts. Now the, the result of the result, of course, is wonderful as well. The result of our being kept is that we're made one.

And the result of our unity is that the world sees oneness and they see Jesus in the body of Christ. Well, now we've all heard messages on that. And I just say to you ministers out there, preach a storm on that, but we'll pass on to other things.

Now he makes one more request again in his precious and undying love. He says, now, father, I have three things to say to you. First of all, glorify thy son that the son may glorify thee.

Second of all, keep them in thy name. And last of all, while the disciples are here gathered around me, could I just make one more request? I sure would like for them to be with me where I am so that they can see my glory. See the father.

I know they don't really know who I am. They don't know the glory I had since the foundation of the world. So would you put us in the same house now that the world may see? He's not talking about heaven again.

He's talking about something present here on earth. Just listen to this precious request. Verse 24 father, I desire that they also whom thou has given me be with me where I am in order that they may behold my glory, which thou has given me without its love me before the foundation of the world.

Oh, righteous father, all the world has not known me yet. I have known thee and these have known that thou did send me and I have made thy name known to them and will make it known that the love wherewith thou didst love me may be in them and I in them. Father, I'm going back to you, but I sure would like to take this bunch with me.

I want to be in them. I want them to be in me. I want us to love every day.

I want them to enjoy fellowship that's precious. I want you to keep them. I don't want any of them.

I love them all. I don't want any of them to lose out. Father, would you just squish them in a sandwich? Would you just take my proven love and take your keeping power and hold them there together? Whether they understand the mysteries of all those things in between, hold them by my love and hold them by your keeping power.

This is some of the greatest mystery that we can understand in the church. It's some of the simplest. Brothers, we should not talk about the inner ingredients of this Kingdom Club sandwich with the world.

They can't understand that anyway. Jesus says, I'm sending you the spirit which the world can't even understand. We Christians make, I think, a great mistake when we go about and talk to people who aren't Christians about the Trinity, about the providential keeping power of the Father, once saved, always saved.

He loves us and holds on to us and all that kind of stuff. That's a mystery. All of that chosenness and all of that.

It's too mysterious. It's deep in the sandwich. To talk about the Trinity, to talk about the way He works by grace, to talk about how when you deny Him, He doesn't deny you.

To talk about how when you sin, He wins you back by love. Those things get trodden upon by folks who hear that and who don't know Christ. I don't think we need to tell them all those kind of mysteries.

It's too late now. They've already heard it. It's gotten out and they're making fun of it.

I'll tell you what. If you show the world, those who don't know Jesus, just the outer sandwich, the love of Jesus and the Father's keeping power, they'll take a bite for themselves and find out what's inside. The mysteries are lifelong and profound.

I mean, those things in the sandwich, it's going to take us forever to dig them out. But just show them the sandwich, the love of Jesus. They don't have to know that Jesus is the Son of Man, the Son of God and all the twelve titles of Jesus.

They've got to know Jesus died for them. There's the testimonial of it. They've got to know that the Father loves them and wants them in the house.

Once they get in the house, they find all the stuff. I like the old saying, you know, when you're outside of the Father's house, there's a big sign on the door that says, Whosoever will may come. And immediately you go through the threshold of the door in the Father's house and you look back on the other side, it says, Chosen before the foundation of the world.

Who can understand all that kind of mysterious stuff until you get inside the house? Forget about predestination, chosenness with the world. Just tell them about Jesus' love and tell them about the God's keeping power and let them chew if they're hungry. Desire the light.

Oh, we have something precious here. Kingdom Club sandwich. Would you like one? You've already tasted.

You've already seen the Lord's good. Let's remember him. When we come tomorrow to worship, let's remember our Lord.

We've got something so delectable here and so sublime. Lord Jesus, we thank you for your love testimonial that only, and even in our compromised state, only passes us the biggest piece of bread. Lord, I pray for those men here tonight who are barely hanging on, who are almost ready to quit before they came up here.

Lord, let them bite the sandwich. Keep them by your power. When they've got no other reason to carry on, keep them by your power.

Sanctify them from the world. Cut the evil one from influencing them. Lord, those who are the neediest here tonight, those who have some problem with sin, those who sense that they're dry and filled with doubt, give them the biggest piece.

Right now, Jesus, by the Holy Spirit, send down the biggest piece of forgiveness and light and healing and love. Give them deep assurance within their soul that they are thine and it is well. Lord, we all need these things.

We're only disciples struggling and trying. Make us aware that we're enclosed and enclosed about by a huge sandwich that will not let us go. The Father's hand on either side, holding us, keeping us, convincing us that Jesus still loves us.

Make that real to your workers, Lord, who are strained and tired. Make it real to your deacons, Lord, who wonder why to go on. Make it real for the young men who are burning both ends of the candle and wonder what it's all about.

Oh, Lord, I have one thing. I'll put my money down at the track that you can keep us until that day and that your love has never turned anyone away. We rest in the wonder of the feast before us.

Precious Jesus.

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