

The Preciousness of Christ to His People

L. R. Shelton, Jr.

Part 1:

I have been led of the Holy Spirit to bring before our hearts as the next series of messages, THE PRECIOUSNESS OF CHRIST TO HIS PEOPLE. Yes, Christ is precious to His people for we read in I Peter 2:7 "Unto you therefore who believe Christ is PRECIOUS." Why? Because He is of great value to His people; for they have found in Him their all in all. Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ is to His people of great value, they hold Him in high esteem; they count Him to be greatly desired, far above rubies; for He is dear, very dear to them, because He is their life and their hope. All that we hold dear is wrapped up in Him because He has won our hearts and loosed us from our sins and set us free to follow Him daily in that living fellowship of love.

In fact all that Christ has done for His people is to us PRECIOUS. We agree with I Peter 1:9 that it is by His PRECIOUS blood that we have been cleansed. We agree with II Peter 1:1 that His faith, with which He enables us to trust Him, is PRECIOUS. We agree with II Peter 1:4 that His promises which He has given His people are indeed exceeding great and PRECIOUS promises. Surely we have tasted that He is gracious and having come to Him we find in Him the One most PRECIOUS to our souls.

Yes, unto us who know Christ to be PRECIOUS to our souls, we can say with the bride in the Song of Solomon, "Yea, He is altogether lovely and my friend." My prayer and cry to my living God is that by the power of the Holy Spirit each one of you will come to know how PRECIOUS the Lord Jesus is in all His preciousness to your never-dying soul; for unto you which believe He is PRECIOUS.

I do not believe we could present these messages on THE PRECIOUSNESS OF CHRIST TO HIS PEOPLE without starting at the beginning, by taking our hearts back into eternity where it all began, showing the all together lovely One in all of His work as the Mediator and Substitute for His people.

If we would go back to the beginning we would find our Precious Lord there in His original glory, the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. There He shared eternity with the Father as the all-perfect One. When there was none to admire, none to adore, no angels with golden harps, no seraphs to hymn praises, no cherubim to cry, Holy, Holy, Holy; He was one with the Father, the eternal One of God, the eternal Son of glory. Before all creatures were, He was One with the infinitely perfect, good and glorious God. He was then, all that He afterwards showed Himself to be; creation and redemption did not change Him, they only revealed what He was before.

Truly He was God of very God as described in these words in John 1:1-3, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made."

Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ was the PRECIOUS One of eternity and in eternity He will be the One we shall praise, that ever He revealed Himself at all to us poor sinful creatures and delivered our poor souls from going down to the pit. My dear friend, do you know Christ in His preciousness to the human soul in redemption?

I would say in the second place that our Lord Jesus was precious and wonderful in His birth. We read in John 1:14, "The Word was made flesh, and DWELT AMONG us, (and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Heb. 2 declares that He "Was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death" that He might bring many sons unto glory. My dear friend, read I Tim. 3:16 and praise the Lord that "without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh." And for this reason was He manifested, that He might put away the sins of His people by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 9:26). No wonder He is precious to His people in redemption.

Dear friend, I never read Luke 1:35 without my heart praising the Lord of glory for His condescension to become what I am, that I might by His grace become what He is, the perfect righteousness of God. The Virgin Mary had asked the angel, Gabriel when he had come to announce to her that she was to be the mother of the Messiah, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also THAT HOLY THING which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:34-35).

This is the reason He is precious to His people, because He was made a little lower than the angels and took upon Himself the form of man that He might die beneath man's sins. Oh how precious He is then to His people in His birth and His redemptive work.

Again I would declare that the Lord Jesus Christ is precious to His people in His life. Follow Him through the four gospels and see Him as He went about doing good. Hear the grace of God pouring forth from His lips as He spoke to the sinful woman in Luke 7 and said, "Go in peace thy sins are forgiven thee." Oh how precious to my heart He was the day I heard these words spoken to my heart from His Word and I could, by His faith, lay hold of Him. Hear Him say to the woman taken in adultery as recorded in John 8, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." How precious He was to that woman that day in the forgiveness of her sins. Hear Him say to the thief on the cross, "Today thou shalt be with me in paradise." Don't you know He was precious to that poor, repenting, believing sinner that day in His work of redemption. Hear Him and count His Words precious when He spoke to the leper, "Be thou

clean;" to the blind, "Receive thy sight;" to the deaf, "Hear;" to the dumb, "Speck;" and to the dead whom He called back to life, "Live." To all of these He was precious.

See our precious Lord as He wept over Jerusalem; behold those tears as He cried over sinners; and see Him as He shows compassion for His people, especially the family of Lazarus.

Behold Him as those legs and feet of mercy take Him to poor sinners. Behold those arms that reach down to lift up poor sinners. Behold those hands that blessed little children and touched the fevered brows and helped poor sinners. Surely He was precious in His life upon earth as He went about doing good.

I would say again that He was precious and altogether lovely in His suffering from the hands of men. First He was betrayed by His friend, Judas. Then it is recorded in the Gospels that he suffered much in the garden of Gethsemane. "He began to be sorrowful and very heavy" the Scriptures declare, as His soul was made an offering for sin. "Then he cried, my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" and He began to be sore amazed as He looked into the cup of sin. Oh hear these words, "Being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Oh how precious He is to His people to thus agonize in our place and become sin for us.

See how precious He was for His people as He stood before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin court and opened not His mouth because He was the sheep led to the slaughter for His people. See how they mocked Him, smote Him, blindfolded and struck Him on the face as He stood there in the place of His people. See Him before Herod and Pilate and watch as they scourged Him and sent Him away to be crucified.

Oh how precious and altogether lovely is our precious Lord in His suffering from the hands of His Father. Acts 2:33 tells us, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." They slew the Lord of glory. Isa. 53:10 tells us that "It pleased the Lord to bruise him" in behalf of His people. Wave after wave of God's righteous judgment upon sin fell upon my blessed Savior because He was the Scape Goat, the Lamb, God's offering for sin for me. I know He is precious when He would do all of this for me, even to be separated from God, His Father, so that I would not have to be separated from Him in that last day of judgment.

Hear those precious words of agony; let them grip your soul until you fall at His feet crying for mercy. Hear these words coming from the darkness of hell, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Me, the Son of your bosom; Me, Thine own Beloved Son; Me, Thy co-equal. Why? Because God had made Him sin for us who knew no sin, even when He found it on His only Son. I hear and weep for joy, hear and praise the name of the Lord. Yes, He alone is precious. Our Blessed Lord Jesus alone is precious because He was forsaken

of the Father so that we who believe on Him, trust Him, cling to Him as poor, repenting sinners, who find in Him a shelter and hiding place, would not be forsaken in the day of God's righteous wrath and judgment that is coming upon the earth.

Let me say again, the Lord Jesus Christ is indeed precious to His people, for He has taken their place and paid their sin-debt before God in full.

Again I would say that our Blessed Lord was precious in His resurrection. "Behold, he is not here: for he is risen...Come see the place where the Lord lay" said the angel to Mary Magdalene as she visited the empty tomb after His bodily resurrection.

He is precious to His people in His resurrection because this assures them that they too shall be raised from the dead and given new bodies like unto their precious Lord. This is surely our hope, my hope, given in I John 3:2, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when we shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

I would also declare my blessed Lord to be precious and altogether lovely in His ascension back to glory, there to appear in the presence of God for me (Heb. 9:24) as my Representative. Yes, the Scriptures declare that the God Man, the Son of man, the resurrected Christ is now sitting in His human resurrected body at the right hand of the throne of God as our Head, our representative, and as He is so are we in this world. Oh surely He is precious to the hearts of His people as He sits as their Head in the heavens.

But, not only that, He is also precious to my heart as my High Priest, the High Priest of His people, ever living to make intercession for us in the Most Holy Place in heaven. Read the 17th chapter of John and hear how He prays for His people now as our advocate with the Father. Yes we have One who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities because He knows all about our having passed through every change of our lives. Yes He is precious to His people for He is a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God.

Last, but yet the greatest of all, is that He shall be lovely and precious in the morning of the resurrection when He shall come to receive me unto Himself and I shall ever be with the Lord, and not for me only, but for all of those who love His appearing. We shall see the Father eternally in Him. We shall look in His face and in His human eye shall read the tender love of the Father to us forever. We shall hear from His holy human lips plainly of the Father. In that day, He said, "I shall no more speak to you in parables, but show you plainly of the Father" (John 16:25).

Yes, we shall look on His scars, healed, yet plain and open, on His hands and feet and side and brow; and shall read eternally there the hatred of God against sin and His love to us that made Him die in our place.

I say it again, unto those who have believed, He is precious. Do you know Him? Is He precious to you?

Then dear friend, if heaven is to be spent adoring Christ and seeing in Him the Father, what will you do who have never seen His glory and found in Him nothing for your soul?

My friend, does your soul love Him? Unto us who know Him, He is precious. Is He precious to you?

Part 2:

I desire, by the grace of God, to continue our messages in this present series which I have entitled, THE PRECIOUSNESS OF CHRIST TO HIS PEOPLE. To me this is a blessed theme, a most blessed subject, because I have found Him precious unto my soul these many years that I have been in Him. Yes, Christ is precious to His people for we read in I Pet. 2:7 "Unto you therefore which believe Christ is precious."

In this our second message on this subject it is my heart's desire to set before you the preciousness of Christ as seen in the position of all true believers and that is, leaning upon their Beloved as they come up out of the wilderness of sin.

In Song of Solomon 8:5 we read "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon our beloved?" We see in our text two characters: the one called THIS and the other her BELOVED. We see her coming up from the wilderness, the wilderness of sin, and see her leaning her full weight upon her Beloved, who is spoken of in other places of Scripture as being the Lord Jesus Christ. He is spoken of in Mat. 3:7 as the Beloved Son of the Father and in Eph. 1:6 as the Beloved in whom all of God's children have been accepted.

Let us look again at the question asked in our text, Song. of Sol. 8:5. "Who is THIS that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?" At once we would say that this is a startling question, an amazing position, an astonishing thing; to see this one who in chapter 1 verse 5 said, "I am black," black because of sin, coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon the beloved Bridegroom. Yes, leaning upon the beloved Shepherd, leaning upon the Beloved, HER HUSBAND, for He belonged to her and she belonged to Him.

The question is asked again, who is THIS? What is her pedigree? Where did she come from? What is she doing here? Let us see if we can answer these questions and, as we do, let us pray that we will find ourselves in this position of leaning upon the Beloved, accepted in the Beloved, as we come up out of the wilderness of sin and thereby see a preciousness in Him, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Who is THIS, is the question. I believe This is not named because she

represents all of the sinners who have ever been saved by God's grace.

Even though her name is not given, certainly her character and condition is described in the Word of God. She is spoken of in Rev. 3:17 as being "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." We see her condition given in Romans 3:10. She has no righteousness that God will accept; she has no spiritual understanding apart from the grace of God; she is unprofitable because of her sinful, cancerous condition; she possesses no goodness that would commend her to her Beloved. To add to the picture of the condition THIS, we read in Titus 3:3 that she is "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating others." And if that picture was not enough, she is described in Isa. 1:6 as being sick, faint, and "from the sole of her foot even to her head, there is no soundness in her, but wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores which have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment."

This is the picture of THIS, the one coming up out of the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved. And, my dear friend, this is the picture of every sinner who has ever found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and who has come up out of the wilderness leaning upon his Beloved. Yes, this is the condition in which the Great Shepherd, the Beloved Bridegroom, finds us when He comes by His Holy Spirit to bring us up out of the wilderness of sin.

This then is the reason why Christ is precious to His people, because He came down where we are, into the wilderness of sin, and brought us up by His almighty power to lean upon Him and to be accepted in Him. My friend, are you leaning upon Christ? Are you coming up out of the wilderness of sin?

The second question I would ask and seek to answer from our text is this, "Where is the one who answers to THIS coming from? Our text says that she is coming up from the wilderness. In Scripture, the world is always pictured as the wilderness of sin. We are told in I John 2:15 to "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Why? Because "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." The wilderness then is the dry, barren world of the Satanic world system shown to be the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. In this wilderness of sin there is nothing but death and hell. All is hot and dry, there is no satisfaction. There is no living water of spiritual life; there is no living water of spiritual nourishment; there is no healing streams for spiritual sickness; there is no fruit for the spiritual man to feed upon; all is burnt over, dead, barren and parched. Eccl. 2:11 says "All is vanity and vexation of Spirit!"

Yes, sin has wrecked and ruined all of us, every part of us, and left us without hope and without God, having shut us out from all that is good and blessed. Sin has robbed us and left us in the wilderness to die. Yes sin has left us nothing but the wages of death and that the second death in the lake of fire.

My dear friend, let me ask you a question, "have you ever come up out of this wilderness of sin leaning upon Christ and Him alone for your complete salvation? If you have then you know Him to be precious to your soul.

In the third place I see another character in our text and He is called the BELOVED. We have identified Him to be the Lord Jesus Christ, the Beloved of the Father, who came into this wilderness of sin and woe, as He said in Luke 19:10, "To seek and to save that which was lost." So we would understand from our text that He had gone after the one called THIS, the poor sinner; for surely she could not have gotten out of the wilderness by herself, for there are no paths that lead out of the wilderness, but by Him. He tells us in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." No one cometh up out of the wilderness of sin but by Christ.

I say then, praise His holy name, that He, the Beloved, is the one that goeth into the wilderness and seeks the lost sheep until He finds it. He says of Himself in Ezek. 34:16, "I will seek that which was lost on, because He loved us so much that He gave His life's blood to redeem us from all our sin. Yes, He is the Beloved of the Father and the Beloved of the sinner, because of what He has done according to the Father's will for the poor, black sinner in the wilderness of sin. Praise the Lord, this is the reason why Christ is precious to His people.

In the fourth place, let us notice from our text, the position of the one called THIS as she comes up out of the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved. The question is asked, "What does this leaning mean?" Well we know that there can be no leaning upon another unless we believe in, trust in, rely upon, and understand the other's presence and nearness. So the poor sinner whom the Lord Jesus Christ, the Beloved, finds in the wilderness and to whom He gives the power to believe and the strength to lean; that one finds the Lord Jesus to be with him, near him, and precious to him as he walks by faith, leaning upon Him.

I would say also that leaning implies nearness. We cannot lean on that which is far off and unapproachable. So TRUST and NEARNESS then are two things we must understand. To trust Him we must know Him and to be near Him means we have left all other lovers, and lean only upon Him for support.

Let us go into this further. I say that we depend upon Him and lean upon Him as the ALMIGHTY God, the all-powerful, the all sufficient One, incarnate in human form, by whom all things were created, and by whom all things consist and are upheld. We LEAN upon Him as the God-Man, the one who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. We LEAN upon Christ in all His offices of PROPHET, PRIEST and KING. We LEAN upon Him as Prophet, the one who teaches us by His Spirit of ourselves and of Himself. We sit at His feet to learn of Him; for He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We LEAN upon Him as Priest, the One who died in our place, the One who was raised from the dead in our place, and the One who has ascended into heaven to be our High Priest to accept our praise, prayer, thanksgiving, intercession,

confession, and petitions and present them to our Holy Father. Again we LEAN upon Him as our King to rule over us, to fight for us, to manage all of our affairs and to lead us through faith into heaven itself by His grace.

Again, we lean upon Christ in all of His ATTRIBUTES. Oh, my dear friend, I want you to hear this and know Him to be precious to your own soul. We LEAN upon Christ in His attribute of FAITHFULNESS. Why? Because in our strong temptations He abides the same. We LEAN upon His WISDOM, for in our dilemma He directs us and guides us from His Word. We LEAN upon His POWER, for in our weakness He makes us strong. We LEAN upon His attribute of LOVE, because when all around gives way we know that "Having loved His own, which were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (John 13:1). We LEAN upon His attribute of MERCY, for His COMPASSION fails not. We LEAN upon the attribute of His GRACE, because He giveth and giveth and giveth more grace again and again.

In the fifth place, we desire to state the reason why the one called THIS was leaning upon her Beloved. Remember our text reads, "Who is THIS that cometh up from the wilderness, LEANING upon her BELOVED?" Let us state six reasons why she was LEANING upon her Beloved and why all of God's children LEAN upon Christ. She LEANED on her Beloved because she was weak, for strength will not lean, only those who know themselves to be weak will lean completely upon the Lord. She LEANED on her Beloved because the way was long and she did not know the way. She LEANED on her beloved because the way was dangerous. She dared not trust herself in such a journey, for every wild beast of hell is along the way to snatch us from Christ; and also the allurements of the world are so strong that she would go back except for His keeping grace. She LEANED on her beloved, because her route was ascending. She was always going upward, therefore the journey required much patience and self-denial. Remember she was COMING UP out of the wilderness. Dear friend, the Christian's way is up. We are never content with past attainments, but our watchword is onward and upward as we lean on our Beloved.

Again she LEANED upon her beloved because her daily walk was separating her more and more from the world and worldly things, therefore she had ONLY HIM TO LEAN UPON.

Again she LEANED upon HIM because she knew He was strong enough to support her full weight. She must LEAN upon Him, for He was her all in all. For Him she had left country, family, friends, loved ones, yea, and her own way also, and this forever. She was satisfied with Him who had loosed her from all her sins and had accepted her in Himself.

These are the reasons why Christ is precious to His people, because they have found in Him a complete Savor, the One who has satisfied them completely.

Are you leaning upon the Beloved? Are you coming up out of the wilderness of sin headed toward the celestial city of God, leaning upon Christ? Do you know

anything of the preciousness of Christ to your soul? If you do I rejoice with you; if not then my prayer is that the Holy Spirit will awaken you and give you the cry of faith after Christ.

May God bless you.

Part 3:

It has been a blessing to my heart to share with you these messages on THE PRECIOUSNESS OF CHRIST TO HIS PEOPLE, because the Lord Jesus is all in all to the people whom He has bought with the price of His own precious blood and I can say personally that He is precious to my soul.

Yes, every one of God's children will declare that Christ is precious to their souls because they have found in Him everything suitable to meet their spiritual needs and He is made all things to them. But there are special ways in which He reveals Himself to His people, as they draw from Him by faith out of the Scriptures all things that are needful for this life and the one to come. Let us look at a few of these and then speak to one of them in particular.

He is the Author and Finisher of our faith, for in Him we live and move and have our being. He is the AUTHOR of our faith as it holds to Him within the veil in heaven. He is the ADVOCATE with the Father as He pleads for us in heaven. He is our BRIDEGROOM, for we are married by faith to Him and He is our Head, our Ruler, our King and our Lord. He is the BREAD OF LIFE on whom we feed spiritually, for He is that manna which came down from heaven. He is the CAPTAIN of our salvation, the one who leads us in every battle and makes us more than conquerors in Himself. He is our COUNSELOR, COMFORTER and CONSOLATION, for we find in Him rest and hope and peace as we by faith rest in Him on the merits of His shed blood.

Also God's people find in Christ a preciousness because He is the DELIVERER of our never-dying souls from the wrath of God and from hell and He delivers us in every battle and always causes us to triumph in Him.

Also He is our EXAMPLE to follow, our FRIEND to lean on, the FOUNDATION on which we stand and the FOUNTAIN of living waters to which we come and drink of Him who is the WATER OF LIFE.

Yes, praise His Holy Name He is our all in all. Christ is precious unto His people. Why? Because He is our GOD, our GLORY, our HEAD, our HIGH PRIEST and EMMANUEL who came to be the SAVIOUR of our never-dying souls. He is JEHOVAH JIREH, the One who provides all our needs and JEHOVAH-SHALOM, the One who keeps us in perfect peace.

But the one name, the one character, that stands out most to my heart and the one of which I would speak particularly today is that the Lord Jesus Christ is precious to His people because He is our KING. Yes, as our King, He is the One who has conquered us by His love, attained the thrones of our hearts by

conquest, rules over us in His kingdom, and shares with us the spoils of victory both in this life and the life to come. When we think of Christ in His Kingly office, our hearts are made to rejoice in the fact that all power has been given unto Him in heaven and in earth and that He has the power over all things. We rejoice that it is in His KINGLY office that He has conquered our hearts and made us willing in the day of His power to come out of Satan's kingdom and to follow Him as our king all the days of our lives. How precious this is to my heart!

In Col. 1:12-13 we read that we are to give thanks unto the Father, who has made it possible to be delivered from the power of darkness, from the power of Satan's kingdom and to be brought into the kingdom of His dear Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, by His kingly power.

Yes, Christ has this Kingly office both in name and in reality, for what He has revealed to us as Prophet, and what He has purchased for us as Priest, He applies to us as our King. You will surely ask, "How?" By FIRST subduing our souls by His Spirit; SECOND, in ruling over us as His subjects, and then, praise the Lord, THIRD, by ordering all things in the kingdom of His Providence for our good. "For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

So as we go into our message today in this series continuing on THE PRECIOUSNESS OF CHRIST TO HIS PEOPLE, let us look at the KINGLY OFFICE of Christ and how He is precious to His people as their King under two points; first, how Christ as King attains the throne of the hearts of His people and second how He rules in His kingdom and how He expresses His Kingly authority over His people who are the subjects of His kingdom.

First then, how does Christ as King attain the throne of the hearts of His people? He does this by conquest; for indeed Christ is King, not only in name, but in fact and reality. Each one of His elect finds this out in time as He comes to deliver them and bring them to Himself. Though the souls of His elect are His by personal gift from His Father and they are His by the shedding of His redeeming blood, yet Satan holds them and will not let them go. Therefore Christ, the stronger One, must enter into the house and bind Satan so that His people can be delivered. This is one of the reasons why Christ in His Kingly office is precious unto His people. We are in darkness, dead in trespasses and sins, blinded by the god of this world, Satan, taken captive by him at his will, and held in the prison house of sin and of wrath. Therefore Christ must come, and He does, to loose us and set us free by His conquest or we would never be saved.

Let us show this great truth to you from Scripture and may you rejoice with us and say that Christ is precious to your heart in His Kingly office. Will you listen! In Acts 26:17-18 we read that the apostle Paul was sent to preach the gospel that the eyes of the gentiles might be opened to see themselves captives of sin and Satan and that this Gospel might turn them from darkness

to light and that they might be turned from the power of Satan unto God. I ask, "for what reason?" That they might receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord said in Luke 4 that the Spirit of the Lord God was upon Him; that He was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor; to heal the brokenhearted; to preach deliverance to the captives; and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. This He did for His people while He was on earth and He is still doing this today by His Holy Spirit under the preaching of the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believeth.

Again it is spoken of our Lord and King in Rev. 1:5 that He loved us, and washed us, and loosed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to whom be glory and dominion forever and ever. Yes, this is what He has done for His people in the Gospel as their King. He has set us free. Again I ask, "How did He do this?" I would boldly declare, "By conquest."

I say, "by conquest," for our hearts were set against Him, but by His power He began to break down every barrier that was erected against Him in our hearts, casting down every imagination and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and by His power, praise His name, He brought us from captivity to obedience unto Himself. Under the convicting power of His Holy Spirit, He battered down all of our vain hopes, brought to naught all of our ambition and plans and made us willing in the day of His power to crown Him King.

Further, by His Spirit, He leveled all of our mountains of self-righteousness, bringing us down at His feet in repentance, and making us to cry after Him for mercy. He withered the grass of our pride; and every fair flower of our so called good merits and works He made to fade away. We stood before Him a naked sinner, crying after Him for His garment of righteousness to cover sin and following hard after Him by faith to be found in Him as our all in all.

He even, by His Spirit, put the cry in our hearts, "Mercy Lord mercy upon my never-dying soul. Oh that I knew where I might find You so that I could follow You all the days of my life." This is the reason Christ is precious to His people in His Kingly office, because He broke our stubborn, rebellious hearts at His feet.

How patiently the King of Glory, our Lord Jesus Christ waited as He slowly but surely conquered our will, won our affection and made us willing to give up to Him all of the keys to all the rooms of our hearts. This is the reason I love Him. This is the reason He is precious to my heart, because He so patiently waited to teach me of Himself and to free my will so that I would follow Him fully. Oh how my heart praises Him today for this because He did not have to do it; but only out of free grace and mercy did He make me His own, by drawing me on with His cords of love.

Let me say it again, this is the reason why Christ in His Kingly office is precious to His people, because He conquered them and drew them unto Himself through the Gospel.

In the second place, let us see how our King rules in His kingdom and how He acts to exercise His Kingly authority over His people and why He is so precious to them in this authority. First, He writes His law upon our hearts and gives us the spirit of obedience. We read in Heb. 10:16-17, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws in their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." This then is the way He exercises His kingly authority over us and this is why His people praise Him. He writes in our hearts His law and gives us a delight for it so that we desire to follow Him and keep His Commandments which, we as God's people, do not find to be grievous.

Again He shows this KINGLY authority over us by rebuking and chastening us. Heb. 12:6 tells us that those whom He loves He rebukes and chastens. And why does He do this? That we might be partakers of His holiness (Heb. 12:10). He desires that we should be sanctified in spirit, soul and body; so He is faithful to chasten us, to keep us in line as His dear children so that we might be more and more made in His image (II Cor. 3:18).

Again He shows His Kingly power and authority and His people say He is precious for doing this by restraining and keeping back His children from sin. Yes, He keeps His subjects from iniquity by withholding them from paths which their own hearts would lead them into. Oh how precious He is in doing this! For we know that left to ourselves we would wander like sheep away from the fold and get caught in all kinds of sins and trouble. How many times has my Lord delivered me from my way, hedging me about, preventing me from sin, removing the occasion to sin, and graciously giving help to bear up under every trial. I believe all of God's children can vouch for this: that His goodness has been manifested toward them again and again to keep them from falling.

Also our Lord in His Kingly office shows His power and authority over us and His people know Him to be precious in this by protecting us in our ways and does not suffer us to relapse into a state of sin and bondage any more. Praise be to His Holy Name; our King does not only save us, but He keeps us by His power. In His High Priestly prayer of John 17:11-12 He prays, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost." How precious this is to my heart! Again we read in I Peter 1:5 that we are "Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last day." And as Jude 1 puts it, "Sanctified by God the Father, and PRESERVED in Christ Jesus." Oh how precious this is to my heart!

I say again that this is precious to God's people: that it is not our grace, or our strength, or our wisdom that preserves us; but Christ, our King, who will keep us from falling and present us faultless before the Father in that last great day (Jude 24).

He does this because He loves us. He rules NOT by compulsion, but with love. His law is a law of love, written upon our hearts. He rules children, not slaves, for it is written of Him, "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench" (Mt. 12:20), but in meekness and gentleness He draws us, saves us, chastens us, writes His law upon our hearts and keeps us by His omnipotent power day by day. Oh what a King! What a Lord and Savior is given unto poor sinners in the Lord Jesus Christ! May you be drawn unto Him by His Spirit is my prayer.

Part 4:

We have been speaking to you in the past weeks on the subject of THE PRECIOUSNESS OF CHRIST TO HIS PEOPLE for we read in I Peter 2:7, "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." Yes, Christ is precious to His people, for they hold Him in high esteem, the One greatly to be desired, the Beloved of their lives, and very dear to their hearts and souls; because He has bought them with the price of His own precious, costly blood.

In this fourth message today on this subject, I desire to set before you the preciousness of Christ to His people in His office of intercession as our High Priest in heaven. Will you listen?

The Scriptures abound with references to our Blessed Lord Jesus being our High Priest, our Intercessor, our Mediator, our Advocate with the heavenly Father. Heb. 7:25 reads, "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Again we find in Heb. 4:14-16 these words, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in time of need."

These indeed are precious Scriptures, precious encouragement to God's people: to know that our precious Lord is our High Priest, our Intercessor before God the Father right now in the heavenlies. This is precious to know, that He continuously presents His finished work of redemption in our behalf and offers up prayers continuously for us.

You see, dear friend this great truth of Christ as our Intercessor and the reason why Christ in this office is precious to my heart and to the hearts of His people in John Chapter 17. Here we find laid out before us an example of how our Lord uses this office for us.

This chapter to me is one of the greatest in the Bible for here we find our Blessed Lord pleading for His people. Eight times in this prayer He pleads to the Father for those whom the Father had given Him as His love-gift. In verse 11 our Lord prays that the Father would keep all those whom He had given to Him. In verse 13 He prays that His joy would be fulfilled in them. In verse 15 He prays that the Father would keep them from the evil one. In verse 17 our Lord requests the Father to sanctify them through His truth, that is, to set them apart from sin and unto Himself by His precious Word. In verse 20 He prays directly for us who belong unto Him now for He said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word," through the disciples' word the writings of the New Testament.

How precious is verse 21 where He prays that each one of His blood-bought, ransomed people would be one with Him and the Father. Then to read such an expression as found in verse 24 just makes my heart praise Him and praise Him for Himself and the position He occupies as my Head and my Redeemer. Listen to this verse! "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."

Then in verse 26 our Lord asks of the Father His last petition. He said, "Father, may the love wherewith thou hast loved me be in them and I in them." Oh what a blessed example is this whole 17th of John as it describes in brief detail the intercessory work of our Blessed High Priest in the heavenlies for us now. This, my dear friend, is the reason why Christ in this office is so precious to His people.

Listen further! The 10th verse of the 17th chapter of John has been precious to my heart as our Blessed Lord unfolds to my heart and to the hearts of His people the secret He shared with His heavenly Father. Listen to it! "All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them." Listen to it again and rejoice with me in what our Intercessor is saying. "All mine are thine, and thine are mine." Isn't that precious! This I believe is what He is saying to the Father in our behalf right now. "Father, it was Thy love that gave them to Me, and gives Me to them; Our mutual love to them secures that the Holy Spirit shall dwell within them; Our interest in them brought Me down to be their Savior, to take upon Mine own Self their sin-debt and die in their place; Our interest in them leads Me to give My life to be their life, and Myself to be their portion, and the glory Thou gavest Me to be their crown."

Oh this is precious to my soul that my heavenly High Priest is thus praying for me now, presenting His finished work to the Father in my behalf, showing the Father His wounds that He received when He died in my place upon the accursed tree (Isa. 49:13-16). How precious is that portion in Rom. 8:33-34 which reads, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also make intercession for us." Oh what a great fourfold foundation on which our salvation in Christ rests. Yes this is precious because my Blessed Redeemer

and Friend, my heavenly High Priest brings no accusation against me to the Father, but presents me faultless and spotless before His eternal throne. Should not I then follow Him with all I have? (Luke 9:23)

Listen again as we hear our High Priest pleading for us in John 17:10. He says to the Father, "Thine they were eternally and by election, purpose and grace; Mine they are by creation, for I have made them; Mine they are by Thy gift, for thou gavest them to me; Mine they are by purchase, for I laid down my life for them; Mine they are by conquest of my grace, for I have manifested to them Thy name and the power of Thy gospel; Mine they are by the voluntary surrender of themselves to me, for they have believed Thy Word and have come to Me as their Refuge, their Savior, their Hiding Place and their Friend." Oh how precious this is to the hearts of God's people that they belong to Christ and that He pleads for them like this within the veil in heaven at this very moment.

Again we hear our Blessed Intercessor say, "Mine they are, My portion: the members of My body, of My flesh and My bones. Mine they are, My bride; whom I shall present unto Thee, Father, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, adorned with heavenly jewelry, clothed in the garments of My salvation. Mine they are, My body and My fulness. What would My kingdom be without them? or my throne? They are My glory. I am glorified in them." Oh what wonderful, wonderful words the exalted High Priest pours into the ears of our Heavenly Father for His people!

My dear friend, is not this precious to know that our heavenly Bridegroom and High Priest loves us like this to so intercede for us before the Father? Do you not say yes in your souls? I know you do if you know Him.

Listen to these precious words again and take hope, weak child of God, take hope ye of little faith, take hope ye who are down hearted, persecuted and tried; remember your heavenly Intercessor is now pleading for you in this manner.

Yet there is more in this 10th verse of John 17. Our Lord's words were the result and the expression of God's commended love. Listen! "All mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them." Again this is what He is saying, "Father, they are your children; they are my church; they are the Holy Spirit's habitation; they are Your beloved ones; they are My bride; they are the Holy Spirit's charge, and the Holy Spirit shall educate them for the positions that My love and Your love, Father, has appointed for them. They are your portion, therefore they are My purchase and the Holy Spirit dwells in them as the earnest of their inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. They are Your people, Father, the people of God; formed for Yourself, created for Your glory, the glory of the Son. Father, I came to be glorified in them; and meanwhile, even in their tribulation the Spirit of glory rests upon them till God be all in all." Should not Psalm 27:4 then be our desire? It reads, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the

beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.”

Oh how precious this should be to every born again child of God listening to me today: to know that we belong to God the Father by election; to God the Son by redemption, and God the Holy Spirit by possession. Praise His holy name for such a salvation that is given poor sinners by the Eternal, Triune God! This is what He says to our hearts in this 10th verse. “We, the Triune God, are mutually engaged in choosing, redeeming, saving, sanctifying, keeping and glorifying each poor, repenting, believing sinner. We are mutually interested in their person, wants, troubles, difficulties, temptations, and warfare; in the formation of their character and the consummation of their happiness.”

Therefore, fellow believers, therefore, dear child of God; I would say that God Himself in Christ is our PORTION. God in Christ is our ROCK; God in Christ is our REFUGE; God in Christ is our HIGH POWER; God in Christ is our REDEEMER; God in Christ is our SANCTIFICATION; God in Christ is our PRESERVER; God in Christ is our FATHER; God in Christ is our HUSBAND; God in Christ is our SALVATION AND OUR GOD forever and ever.

Oh how I say to each one of our hearts who know this precious Triune God in reality: how secure must we be who have believed on His name and have cast all of our sins upon Him by faith!

Yes, we are taught in Scripture that our security flows from three great truths, all of which are brought out in this 10th verse. The Father has loved us with an everlasting love, a love that changes not. Christ, who died for our sins, is now at God’s right hand in resurrection glory and ever lives to make intercession for us, pleading His finished, accepted work; and God the Holy Spirit dwells in us to make all of this real and precious to our souls.

Then I ask the question in Romans 8:30, “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” The answer is, no one; for our Blessed Lord is our salvation in heaven. I ask again, “Will God lose those whom He has loved with an everlasting love? Will Christ forget those for whom He ever lives to make intercession? Will God cast off those to whom He has sent the Holy Spirit to indwell?” The answer to these questions is NO, a thousand times NO, for those for whom Christ died are safe and saved forever as they are sheltered beneath His precious blood.

This, my friend, is the reason why Christ is precious to His people, because He is their interceding High Priest, yes their all in all.

In closing, I ask each one of you, “Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ in reality; is He precious to your soul? Do you walk with Him in that living, loving reality of Life?

If not, I pray that the Holy Spirit will right now place a hunger in your soul for such a precious Lord and Savior.

APPLICATION OF THESE MESSAGES:

Should we not then follow the Lamb wheresoever He goes? Should we not leave the world in all its forms and follow Christ fully? Should we not then fall upon our knees and confess what sinners we are in not following Him after all He has done to show His love for sinners?

Should we not love Him supremely above all else? Should we not cry from the depths of our souls, "Here am I Lord, take me and make me your very own. Here are all the keys to all the rooms of my heart. I desire Thee to rule and reign in my life?"

Should we not then cry unto Him for mercy, asking Him to break our stubborn and rebellious hearts and to make us His very own?

Because of this intercession of our Lord, what should we do? Be strong in the Lord; Trust Him in all our ways; stand fast in the Truth, though all hell be against us; walk in the pathway of holiness knowing He is praying for us; "In all our ways acknowledge Him, and he shall direct our paths." He cannot and will not forsake us therefore preach and teach His Truth and Word; undertake great things for the Lord.

The above article is available from Chapel Library in print and e-book formats at www.chapellibrary.org
