

Last week, in considering Christ's intercession for His people, we learned that Christ prays for four things—their preservation, sanctification, unification, and glorification—thus we come this morning, to the first of these—Christ prays for our preservation.

Now, before we consider this, let me remind you that from vv6-19, our Savior specifically prays for the apostles, but in v20 He clarifies, that He also prays for those who believe in Him through their word—thus, what He prays for the apostles specially, He in some sense, prays for all Christians generally—and the first of these prayers concerns their preservation.

Thus, we come to our theme this morning—Divine Preservation—and I want to consider it under three main headings.

- I. Its Meaning
- II. Its Necessity
- III. Its Purpose or Goal

I. Its Meaning

1. Our Savior is physically leaving this world—while He was in the world, He kept His disciples in His Father's name...
2. V12—"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept..."
3. He then mentions Judas as someone He did not keep, not because He failed, but because He was never His...
4. V12—"and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled"—that is, OT texts such as Ps.69:25 and Ps.109:8...
5. The reason Judas was lost was because he was never chosen by the Father, given to the Son, and thus kept by God...
6. Our Savior prays that His Father would keep those given Him "through Your name"—that is "by or in Your name..."
7. Let me remind you that by "name" is meant God Himself—the sum total of His divine perfections (all that He is as God)...
8. There some differences of opinion with regards to the phrase "keep them through Your name"—the preposition can mean either BY or IN...
9. Thus, the question becomes—does our Savior mean, "keep them BY Your name" or "keep them IN Your name..."
10. Well, because the preposition can be rendered either way, and both are theologically true, I suggest the Father keeps us IN His name BY His name...
11. [1] He keeps us BY His name—that is, He keeps us by the goodness, wisdom, faithfulness, and power of His name...
12. Ps.20:1—"May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble; may the name of the God of Jacob defend you" Ps.54:1—"Save me, O God, by Your name..."
13. Thus, in this sense, our Savior is praying that His Father would keep His people BY or THROUGH His name...
14. [2] He keeps us IN His name—by this I mean, He keeps us believing and faithful to that name as found in Scripture...
15. Prov.18:10—"The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe"—they trust IN His name...
16. To run into the name of the LORD, is simply another way of saying, they trust in that name as a strong tower...
17. Christians run to that name as a strong tower—they trust in God and in His many attributes—they trust in His name...

18. Thus, our Savior prays that His Father would keep His people trusting or relying in His powerful and loving name...
19. 1Pet.1:5—"who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time..."
20. [a] We are kept BY the name of God—"who are kept by the power of God"—that is, by the powerful name of God...
21. [b] We are kept IN the name of God—"who are kept by the power of God through faith"—that is, He keeps us believing...
22. The way in which God keeps us, is that He keeps us believing—He continually works faith within our hearts...
23. Notice also, this keeping or preserving is "for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time"—He keeps us to the end...
24. Now before I leave this first heading, let me briefly remind you of a very helpful distinction between God's preservation and our perseverance...
25. These two necessarily go together—they basically say the same thing only from two different angles or perspectives...
26. God preserves us by enabling us to persevere—Christians endure to the end, because God endures in keeping them...
27. Most of you will know about the Five Points of Calvinism—TULIP—Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints...
28. Christians persevere to the end because Christ perseveres in praying for them—we continue because He continues...
29. Thus, while it is right to speak of Christians persevering, it's best to speak of the Savior's persevering in His intercession...
30. The reason every Christian will persevere to the end in the faith, is because Christ prays and the Father keeps...

II. Its Necessity

1. V11—"Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world"—that is, this evil, hateful, and devil-controlled world...
2. V14—"I have given them Your word; and the world has hate them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one..."
3. It's at the end of v15, that we find the ultimate necessity for preservation—we are in this world ruled by Satan...
4. "Keep them from the evil one"—that is, keep them from a death blow from Satan, the god or ruler of this world...
5. Thus, our savior is not asking His Father to keep them from every temptation or scheme of the evil one—we remain the target of his fiery darts...
6. But, what our Savior is praying for is, that His Father would keep them from been deceived or destroyed by Satan...
7. Or else, put another way—though Satan attacks us and at times wounds us, he is unable to eternally destroy us...
8. Why—because Christ is praying that the Father would keep us from the evil one, or from a death blow shoot...
9. Now, I want to suggest, from this passage, that Satan primarily levels three attacks at the militant church in the world...
10. [1] Persecution, v14—"I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world..."
11. The world hated the apostles because they were taken out from it—they became followers of Christ and His word...
12. The world will always hate Christians because the world hates Christ, and the world hates the word of Christ...

13. The world doesn't hate nice people and even religious people—but it does hate Christian people who believe the truth...
14. Now, the Father does not always keep His people from persecution, in fact, oftentimes it's His will they suffer...
15. But our Father keeps us from persecution, in that, He does not allow the persecution, to drive us back into the world...
16. Our Savior once told a parable about four kinds of hearers, each of them likened to different kinds of ground (hardened path, stony ground, thorny ground, and good ground)...
17. Matt.13:20-21—(stony ground hearer)—"He who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulations or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles..."
18. Here is a person who professes to become Christian—he believes the word—but it never gets down into his heart...
19. And so when tribulations or persecutions arises because of the word—that is, because he believes the word (he stumbles or falls away)...
20. My friends, tribulations and persecutions will arise because of the word—people will hate us because of what we believe...
21. When we begin to tell people what Scripture says about God, salvation, eternity, and morality, we will be hated...
22. And because we all remain weak and cowardly in ourselves, left to ourselves, we would all be ashamed of the word...
23. But our Savior prays for us—and in response to those prayers our Father keeps us from being ashamed of His word...
24. In this sense, He keeps us from persecutions—He give us grace and strength to endure through persecutions...
25. [2] Temptation, v15—"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one (from his temptations)..."
26. Now, again, this does not mean, Christ prays that we would be kept from Satan's enticements and temptations...
27. Our Savior Himself was not free from these, as He was directly tempted by Satan for forty days in the wilderness...
28. But, our Savior does pray that every Christian would be kept from Satan's seductions so as to return to this world...
29. Christians are no longer of this world—v16—"They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world"—they have been changed...
30. This world with all of its promised pleasure and glory no longer dominates our minds—its true nature has been exposed...
31. And yet, there remains within the best Christians, a principle of remaining sin that hears the call of this world...
32. In the book of Proverbs, this world is often described as an immoral women, who calls out to foolish people...
33. Even the best Christian at times is tempted to hear her voice—but our Father keeps us from returning to her...
34. He reminds us of the emptiness of her promises and pleasures—He enables us to turn a deaf ear to her enticements...
35. He reminds us that this is not our ultimate home, that our citizenship is in heaven—"from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ..."
36. Ps.121:7-8—"The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore..."
37. By "going out and coming in" is meant everyday life in this world—He keeps our souls from all evil in this world...
38. Again, this does not mean we at times (perhaps even oftentimes), given into evil, but He keeps us from returning to it as a way of life...

39. And again, notice the duration of this preservation—"from this time forth, and even forevermore"—that is, from the beginning of our Christian life for all eternity...
40. Oh brethren, what a tremendous truth—though Satan, through this world, would entice us to return, our Father keeps us...
41. [3] Deception, v15—"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one (from his deceptions)..."
42. Again, this does not mean, that the Father keeps every Christian from every error—all Christians see only in part...
43. But what our Savior prays for is this—that the Father would keep every Christian from believing a heresy (a heresy being an error so serious it leads a person into hell)...
44. 1Jn.2:18-20—"Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things..."
45. Many professing Christians were being lead astray by false teachers—they were believing heretical teachings...
46. Perhaps I can put it like this—they were not being kept by God, because our Savior was not praying for them...
47. V20—"But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things"—that is, you have the Spirit of Christ...
48. Christ gives every Christian the Spirit to teach or instruct us in the major truths of the gospel—"we know all things"—that is, all things necessary to become and continue as Christians...
49. No Christian can ever believe a lie so serious, what we call a heresy, so as to lead him into eternal damnation...
50. And so here we learn that the saint's preservation is a work of the entire Trinity—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit...

III. Its Purpose or Goal

1. V11a—"Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are..."
2. This is the purpose or reason why the Father keeps His people—He preserves them that they would be ONE...
3. This unity between believers is similar to that unity that exists within the God—"that they may be one as WE are..."
4. Though there is only one God, God exists as three distinct, co-equal persons—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit...
5. Thus, Christ describes the unity that exists between believers, as similar to the unity that exists between Him and as Father...
6. The Father and Son are one love and purpose—all that the Father wills or purposes, the Son wills or purposes...
7. [1] One in belief—this means, Christians are united by the word—they all believe the same fundamental things...
8. This of course does not deny there are differences between us, but all true Christians are united in the truth...
9. Must Christians strive for unity—YES—but it is a unity in truth—in the fundamentals of the Christian faith...
10. All Christians, regardless what denomination or church they attend, if they belong to Christ, are one in belief...
11. [2] One in love—this means, Christians are united with love for God and for each other—love united them...
12. Love of the brethren is a mark of true religion—if anyone says he believes, and does not love his brother, he is deceived...

13. Just as every Christian believes the same basic things about God, so every Christian loves God and His people...
14. [3] One in purpose—this means, Christians are united in a common purpose—they live for God and His glory...
15. This is WHY the Father keeps His people in the midst of this wicked world—that they may be unified in work...
16. Thus, we learn that the Father preserves His people, not merely as individuals, but as a unified nation or family...
17. Our beloved Savior prays that His Father would keep every member of His body, connected to the rest of the body...
18. Thus, as we bring out study to a close, I want to summarise this passage into three simple and important lessons...
19. Lesson 1—The Father preserves us in believing—that is, He keeps us believing—He ensures our faith never goes out...
20. Unfortunately, I have heard the doctrine of the saints preservation taught in ways that is misleading and unbiblical...
21. The implication is given, that every person who claims or professes to be Christian, will go to heaven regardless...
22. Regardless what they believe or how they live—but this is not true—Christians are preserved in faith and obedience...
23. The Father does not keep or preserve every person who claims to be Christian, even if they live like a Christian...
24. This of course is graphically illustrated in Judas, who viewed externally, gave every indication he was Christian...
25. But my point here is this—the Father preserves every Christian, to the end, in the way of faith and obedience...
26. Now, this does not deny that our faith and obedience may grow very dim and weak, but they will never go out...
Lk.22:31-32—"Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail..."
27. Now, if you remember, Peter's faith did grow very weak for a time, so much that he denied he knew Christ, three times...
28. But his faith did not FAIL—that is, it was soon revived—perhaps I can say—it remained at least as a spark...
29. And then soon afterwards, Christ, by His Spirit, blew upon that spark, and turned it back into a strong flame...
30. Lesson 2—The Father preserves us in community—this means, He preserves us as a unified front or force...
31. By this I mean, the Father keeps or preserves His people through various means, and these largely take place in community...
32. That is—they take place within the assembly of God's people—in the church—He keeps His people in community...
33. And it is for this reason, John describes those who fell away from the faith as those who departed from the church...
34. 1Jn.2:19—"They went out FROM US, but they were not OF US; for if they had been OF US, they would have continued WITH US; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were OF US..."
35. They left the community of believers—they left the church—and it's because they were never truly of the church...
36. Thus, here is my point—the Father preserves His people through various means as experienced in the church...
37. The preaching and teaching of the word of God, the participation of the sacraments, and Christian fellowship...

38. Lesson 3—The Father preserves us in this evil world—it's Christ's perfect will, that His people be left in this world...
39. Have you ever been asked the question—Why doesn't Christ take us to heave after He saves us—why leave us here...
40. V15—"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one..."
41. It's the express will or desire of Christ that His people stay in this world—He intentionally leaves them here...
42. Why—because He and His Father are glorified in them, as they preserve them in this world, as a unified force...