

Lean Back... It will be ok

Part 9: Jesus our **Intercessor** - John 17:11-17

PREPARE

Take a moment as a group to reflect on this past Sunday. What was one thing that you remember being impacted by? (It could be a worship song lyric, Eleanor's visual prayer reflection, Donn's prayer for our nation, something from the sermon, a scripture, image, insight, or simply the beautiful weather)

Read Hebrews 7:23-27

²³ Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; ²⁴ but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. ²⁵ Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. ²⁶ Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. ²⁷ Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.

REFLECT

In your core group, briefly share your response to one of these three questions.

1. When you hear the phrase, "*he[Jesus] is able to save completely those who come to God,*" what feelings surface for you?
2. Verse 26 says, "*Such a high priest truly meets our need.*" What needs do you have this week? How do you need Jesus to intercede on your behalf this week?
3. Have you given much thought to the idea that Jesus is praying for you right now? How does this truth impact how we enter into difficult situations, hard conversations, and unknown seasons?

STUDY

Read John 17:11-17

In John 17, Jesus prays for many things. On Sunday, three specific ideas were highlighted: unity, protection, and joy. Jesus prays that His church would experience the same kind of unity that exists in the trinity. Unity is not to be confused with uniformity. Unity allows for diversity and differences to exist, while uniformity requires everyone to be exactly the same.

Have someone read this quote from Pastor Rich Villodas: "*We can have different opinions but have the same mindset as Jesus Christ. Although we are not able to agree on many things, we can still be working towards unity. We are a divided people – everywhere you look you see division and polarization – in our country, in our families and in our churches. The problem is not that we don't see eye to eye, the problem is that we don't have the mindset of Jesus Christ.*"

- How would you describe the mindset of Jesus Christ in your own words? (if you need ideas, Philippians 2 is great place to start)
- When it comes to pursuing unity, what character trait of Jesus would you say that you need to practice more?

Jesus also prays for protection from the evil one. It's fascinating that he specifically prays, "*My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you **protect them from the evil one.***"

- Why do you think Jesus prays this way? Why does Jesus want his disciples to remain in the world?
- How have you experienced the Lord's protection this past year?

Jesus prays that we would experience a "full measure of *his* joy."

- Is there any significance of this being "*his* joy" and not just "joy" in general?
- What's an example of when you have experienced joy in a moment or season that wouldn't make any sense based on the world's standards?

RESPONSE

Because Jesus is our intercessor, he is advocating for us, pleading our case to the father, protecting us, and laboring in prayer on our behalf. James Bryan Smith comments on this idea and say this: "*This doesn't mean that Jesus is on his knees begging the father to be good to us. Remember the trinity is never divided. Rather Jesus is taking our feeble prayers and sanctifying them.*" John Calvin adds, "*Jesus Christ is our spokesman. Our prayers and intercessions are sanctified by Him.*"

The reality is that our prayers come from unclean lips. Thankfully, Jesus sanctifies our prayers. He makes them holy, set apart, acceptable to the Father. That means that the pressure is off. We don't have to be mighty prayer warriors. We don't have to pray eloquently or get our words just right. Jesus takes our feeble efforts and makes them holy. Jesus offers our prayers perfectly on our behalf.

- How does this idea change the way you think about prayer?
- Some of us gravitate towards telling someone else, "I'll be praying for you," rather than praying for them right then and there in that moment. Why do you think that is?
- Does this idea of Jesus sanctifying our prayers make it easier for you to think about corporate prayer or praying for another person?

Ideas for further practice

- Pay attention to the moments when people come to mind. As a person comes to mind, offer him or her up to the Lord. If you have a minute, ask God, "What is your prayer for this person?" Listen and pray.
- When you start to worry about something or sense anxiety is bubbling up, turn it into prayer. Sometimes it's as simple as saying, "Lord, I'm worried about (fill in the blank). Lord, have mercy." Take a risk, share your concern with someone else, and ask him or her to join you in prayer.
- Join Baseline's Thursday morning prayer gathering at 7:00am on Zoom. If you long to experience more intimacy with God through prayer, this is a wonderful way to do that.

Close in prayer. List prayer requests here.