

Authority to Give Eternal Life

Series: Ten Messages from John 17

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The so-called Lord's Prayer is the most well-known prayer Jesus prayed, but John 17 is arguably the most detailed prayer Jesus ever prayed (which is recorded). My plan is to share ten messages from John 17 to flesh out the content. Last week we talked about the Glorification of the Son.

Today we will look at the Authority Jesus had to give eternal life. Here are some general thoughts:

- God is a God of Order
 - 1 Cor.14:33, 40, "For God is not a God of disorder but of peace-as in all the congregations of the Lord's people." "But, everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way."
- God delegates authority to His Son
 - John 5:19-23, 26-27, 19 Jesus gave them this answer: "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do **only what he sees** his Father doing, because whatever the Father does **the Son also does**. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed. 21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the **Son gives life** to whom he is pleased to give it. 22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has **entrusted all judgment to the Son**, 23 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. 26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he **has granted the Son also to have life in himself**. 27 And he **has given him authority** to judge because he is the Son of Man.
 - Matt.28:20, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and in earth."
- Jesus delegates authority to others
 - Mark 3:13-15, 13 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. 14 He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach 15 and to have authority to drive out demons.
 - Acts 9:15-16, 15 But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. 16 I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

Our text: "For you have granted him (the Son) authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him." (17:2) More on eternal life next message.

- Authority means what is possible, permissible, and lawful.
 - Conveyance of eternal life to men is made possible by Jesus' death on a cross
 - Conveyance of eternal life to men is made permissible by God who desires all men to be saved.
 - Conveyance of eternal life to men becomes lawful when it meets the requirements of the instructions governing eternal life.
- The ability to convey eternal life to men is exclusively under the authority of Jesus.
 - Jesus could forgive sins, even on earth.
 - Jesus alone could give a person the right to become a child of God. John 1:12, "Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."
 - Jesus alone could voluntarily lay down his life (not taken from him)
 - This means that no one else has the authority to give eternal life, and by extension no one else has the right to condemn someone to eternal death.
- Even Jesus is limited to giving eternal life to those given to Jesus.
 - Who is the person God gives to Jesus?
 - Many are called (invited) but few are chosen. Matt.22:14
 - Seekers: "To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life." (Rom.2:7)
 - Obedient people
 - Faith-filled people John 3:36, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them."
 - Holy Spirit filled people Rom.8:9, "If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ."
 - God is not randomly selecting people to be given to Jesus.

It is true that we have eternal life now, but are restricted from the full enjoyment of it by our physical earthly bodies. I often try to imagine exactly when and how eternal life will be fully activated in me. Here is what I envision:

- At my baptism I receive the Holy Spirit identifying me as belonging to Christ. At that point I have a guaranteed promise of eternal life and a full array of spiritual blessings and gifts that I can access now in order to live the Christian life.
- Then when I die, at some point I will receive the full version of eternal life that when activated will cause me to become spiritually aware unlike anything I have

yet experienced. When Jesus fully conveys to me eternal life, I am going to have the greatest experience of my life.