

Series: John
Title: Heard Always
Text: Jn 11:41-42
Date: Feb 4, 2022
Place: SGBC, NJ

John 11: 41: Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up *his* eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. 42: And I knew that thou hearest me ALWAYS: but because of the people which stand by I said *it*, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

The Lord Jesus is the Intercessor between God and his people. Here we have an example. Here the Lord Jesus stands between God the Father and Lazarus and Mary and Martha and the other elect Jews there that day. He prayed to the Father on their behalf for their benefit.

He *“lifted up his eyes, and said, “Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me ALWAYS.”* This is the word that caught my attention—“always.” The word *“hearest me always”*—means the Father hears him always and gives him his petition always. Of course, our Lord Jesus never used hyperbole or exaggeration. In John 8, the Lord said,

John 8:29...he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do ALWAYS those things that please him.

Christ Jesus the GodMan is the only one who could say “I do ALWAYS those things that please him.” And in our text he says, *“I knew that thou hearest me ALWAYS.”* David wrote the following but these are the words of Christ when he walked this earth.

Acts 2: 25: For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord ALWAYS before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: 26: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: 27: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [the grave], neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

The Lord Jesus always did that which pleased the Father. He always beheld the Father before his face. The Father always heard his prayer and gave him his petition. The same is true right now in heaven. Christ is at God’s right hand. He always beholds the Father’s face and the Father always beholds him. The Father is always pleased with Christ’s person and finished work. The Father always hears our great High Priest as he intercedes on behalf of his people. “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25).

Our text declares why he prayed aloud. He said, *“because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.”* If there are any standing by? Any who have never believed on our Lord Jesus? Any who need our faith strengthened by Christ? I pray you might believe on him now. For you who believe on him, I pray this might be a comfort and encouragement to always pray to the Lord.

Title: Heard Always

Proposition: Christ our High Priest intercedes for his people to the Father and the Father always hears and gives him his petition.

Divisions: 1) A few words about Christ being the intercessor of his people 2) A few observations from our text 3) A few words for us to remember

THE INTERCESSOR

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Intercessor between God and his people. That is what Christ is doing in our text. He is interceding with the Father for Lazarus, Mary, Martha and those standing by who were his elect.

The High Priest under the old covenant typified Christ our High Priest. He entered into the holiest of holies once a year, not without blood, interceding for the children of Israel. Christ was called to the office of high

priest in the council and covenant of grace from eternity. God the Father set his King on his holy hill from eternity. He said this when Christ rose to the right hand of the Father, but from eternity, the Father said to Christ,

Psalm 2:8: Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession.

They were the Father's elect. His people were chosen of God the Father by free and sovereign grace because the Father loved us. The Father said to his Son, "*ask of me and I shall give them to you.*" The Father always hears our great High Priest. Christ said the Father gave us to him. The Father heard the Son from eternity. Christ said,

John 17: 6: I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me;

Our great High Priest has been interceding with the Father on behalf of his people from eternity. He did so when he walked this earth and he still does at God's right hand. It is for the children given him of the Father that he prays. Christ said,

John 17:9: I pray for them; I pray not for the world: but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. 10: And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

Is there any who thinks they are too great a sinner to come to Christ? Consider, there were some of his elect at the foot of the cross, partaking in his crucifixion. But Christ interceded for them, as he does for all his sinful people and the Father hears him always. God the Father said,

Isaiah 53:12: Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and MADE INTERCESSION FOR THE TRANSGRESSORS.

Every blessing his people have is due to Christ laying down his life on our behalf, interceding with the Father on our behalf. We see it in Melchizedek. He was a king and priest. Christ is King and High Priest of his people. Melchizedek met Abraham and prayed for Abraham that he might be blessed of the most High God. So God blessed Abraham, both with temporal and spiritual blessings (Genesis 14:19). Christ intercedes for his people and for his sake we are blessed of God.

God always hears and gives to Christ his petition because he is pleased with his Son. Christ is the Righteousness of his people before God's face always. We are risen in Christ. Christ represents his people to the Father. He is our Advocate with the Father who intercedes for us. Christ has been interceding for his people before we ever knew him. He always has. He shall continue as long as time exists. And God always hears him. This is why God gives his people every blessing we have.

OBSERVATIONS

John 11: 40: And Jesus lifted up *his* eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

Now, we will make a few observations from the text.

One, notice the Lord Jesus thanked the Father. He raised Lazarus by his own will and power. He is the Son of God in our human nature. He had authority and power and life in himself to quicken whom he will. He said, "I go, that I may awake him." But our Lord shows by this, that his will and power is one with his Father. It is the oneness of Father and Son that he declared in John 5:

Joh 5:19: Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

Also, the Lord is showing he is the servant of God, sent of the Father. He prayed aloud that those standing by might believe he is sent of God. Behold by this miracle that the Lord Jesus truly is the Christ. He is the Savior. Christ is the High Priest, the King, the Intercessor, the Advocate for his people. He is THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE! Believe on him and live!

Then, notice, even before he raised Lazarus he thanked the Father. For you and me who believe, we should continually be thanking our Lord for everything because everything comes by him interceding on our behalf. Let us thank God even before he answers our petition. Thank him in everything. It is his will we thank him for whatever is coming to pass in our life—good or bad—because it is his will for us.

1 Thessalonian 5:18: In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Furthermore, notice how that Christ said the Father had heard him, "*Father, I thank thee that thou HAST heard me.*" We do not read in this passage that Christ prayed aloud until this point. Obviously, he had been interceding the whole time. More than once we are told the Lord "*groaned within himself.*" This is a good example of Romans 8. Now understand, Christ needed no intercessor as we do. He was doing the interceding. But we see in our Lord and example of Romans 8. You can put our Lord Jesus in place of the Spirit here because the Son and the Spirit are one. This is what Christ was doing that day

Romans 8: 26:...the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit [himself] maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27: And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God.*

In our text, Christ *groaned within himself.* He needed no intercessor. But he troubled himself over their trouble. He was interceding with the Father for Lazarus, Mary, Martha and his other elect there. He was groaning with groanings that could not be uttered.

Christ helps our infirmities. "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities." They were overcome by their infirmities. Mary and Martha and the other elect Jews were weeping. They were wavering between faith and unbelief. None had strength. But Christ interceded for them.

"We know not what we should pray for as we ought." Mary and Martha, and no one else there, knew God's will and what Christ would do. They did not know what to pray for as they ought. Combine that with their infirmities being so great and we see why we need Christ our Intercessor. Christ knew the Father's will. He knew what he would do. His will is one with the Father. So in Christ's groaning and intercession on their behalf we see an example of Romans 8 and why we need Christ our Intercessor. This is why we need the Spirit to make intercession for us.

Also, note, Lazarus could not raise himself from the dead. But Christ interceded for him. Thereby the Father and our Lord Jesus raised Lazarus to life. So it is with every child he saves. We were born spiritually dead. It is through Christ's intercession with the Father on our behalf that he raises us in regeneration. Like Mary and Martha, so many times since God called us, we find ourselves weak and cast down. It is Christ's intercession for us by whom the Father and the Spirit strengthen us. So it shall be when he raises our bodies from the grave.

Another thing we see here is that it is Christ's intercession by whom our faith is sustained. Mary and Martha are believers. But they are overcome with unbelief. The Lord said, "*If thou shalt believe, thou shalt see the glory of God!*" But how were they strengthened in faith to believe him and see his glory when overcome with such grief and unbelief and perplexity? The same way Peter's faith was strengthened when he was in his trial. Christ told Peter, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not" (Lu 22:32).

Brethren, we owe all to Christ our Intercessor. He prayed the Father who sent the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Christ's intercession preserved us while dead in sins. His intercession sent the Spirit to quicken us to life. The Spirit dwells in us and helps us to pray. And Christ makes intercession for us at God's right hand right now. And the Father always hears and answers Christ's petition. Father, Son and Spirit are one in their will for the salvation of each chosen child. How much we owe to Christ our Intercessor!

A FEW THINGS TO APPLY TO OURSELVES

Knowing the Father always hears and answers Christ should make us heed Christ's word to pray always. It makes us persistent in prayer. Importunate! It makes us never give up praying. Pray always. Christ told us to enter into our close and pray and to pray always.

Luke 18:1: And he spake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; 2: Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: 3: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. 4: And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; 5: Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. 6: And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. 7: And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? 8: I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

For what should we pray? In our Lord's prayer in John 17, we see some things Christ asked of the Father. These are things that our Redeemer intercedes with the Father on our behalf. This is Christ's will. So, surely, these are things for which we should pray.

One, Christ asked the Father that his people be kept.

John 17: 11: And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we *are*.

Two, he asked the Father that Christ joy be in us.

John 17: 13: And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

It is the joy of knowing him. The joy of knowing he is our Salvation, our Prophet, Priest, King, Father, Husband, Brother, Friend. It is to know the joy Christ has by beholding us robed in his righteousness. It is the joy that comes from Christ. It is joy rather than sadness and a morose spirit.

Three, again, Christ intercedes that we be kept from the evil.

John 17: 15: I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

Four, our great High Priest asks the Father that we be sanctified through the gospel.

John 17: 17: Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. 18: As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. 19: And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

He is the Truth. He set himself apart to live and die on behalf of his people that we might be set apart and made holy by him through the gospel of his accomplished redemption. Such is the love of Christ to the spiritual Israel of God, that he has died for them; and pleads his death that we might live and be kept separated unto him. He is our Sanctification. This is what we should pray for one another.

Five, he prayed for the calling out of his lost sheep. It is by Christ's intercession that we, here today, were called. This, too, is what Christ interceded for—the calling out of his lost sheep. This is what we ought to ask for.

John 17: 20: Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.

That includes every believer through the ages that God has called. They were called because Christ intercedes for those he redeemed to be called to life and faith in him.

Six, Christ intercedes for our oneness in him, that we may know that the love of God for us is the same as the Father's love for Christ. Meditate on that.

John 17: 21: That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22: And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 23: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

The Spirit says, "the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Ja 5:16). The prayer of THE Righteous Man is always fervent and always effectual because as Christ says in our text, "*Thou hearest me always.*" God the Father hears Christ and gives Christ the desires of his heart always. This is why the prayer of those Christ has made righteous is effectual. It is because Christ hears his people always and the Father hears him always.

In our text the Lord said he prayed this for them that were standing by. So "*for you who are standing by*" hear Christ thank the Father then behold him work this miracle. He did it "*that they might believe the Father sent him.*" Behold Christ and believe on him. Go to him asking mercy and you shall receive mercy! He is Life and he gives eternal life to all who come to him for mercy.

And you who already believe that the Father sent him, what better encouragement to pray always than knowing Christ is our Intercessor who the Father hears ALWAYS. Pray always. Give thanks always for all things. Give thanks even before the petition is granted as Christ did before he raised Lazarus from the grave. Every blessing we have is due to Christ interceding with the Father on behalf of his people.

Amen!