

“I Gave; The Ground of Comfort”

John 17:6–12

⁶“I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. ⁷Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; ⁸for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me. ⁹I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; ¹⁰and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are. ¹²While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.” [NASB]

HOPE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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I. Hearing

The happiest people on earth are those who know they are slaves... those who know they are wholly owned by the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Jesus has lifted His eyes to heaven and is praying to His Father. But He is doing so in the hearing of His disciples whom He owns. Not only does this allow them to enter in to Jesus' prayer, but it affords them great comfort as they hear their Owner intensely pouring out to His Father His care and compassion for them.

As we heard last week from vv1-5, Jesus has glorified the Father. Jesus has put the Father's glory back where it belongs—on the Father. He has done so by using the authority God vested in His Son to give eternal life to those whom God had chosen. *God glorifies Himself by giving you eternal life.* Then Jesus appealed to the Father to put the Son's honor and glory back where it belongs—upon the Son. In these verses, Jesus shows how the Father will glorify the Son.

In short, Jesus declares God's ownership of His disciples. He shows how the disciples received God's owning them, through faith in His Word. Jesus narrows His request to those His Father gave to Him. He specifically applies His request to the eternally elect rather than to the whole world. Jesus reminds the Father of His own interest, since the Father owns them as much as Jesus owns them.

Finally, Jesus arranges to transfer their safekeeping back to the Father. Jesus kept and protected those the Father gave to Him while He was on the earth; now Jesus returns their safekeeping into the hands of God.

A. Doctrine

God who owns you gave you to His Son. If you believe in Him, the Son has given eternal life to you, and the Son has given you to His Father for safekeeping.

II. Examining

Are you happy? Are you owned, or are you “your own man”? Is it okay with you if God owns you? Does it bother you that you get bounced back and forth between the Father and the Son as your owner? Do you think things would be a lot more reasonable if you just had a say in the matter? Do you wish Jesus would just let you pray for yourself rather than intervening for you by His prayer to the Father? Do you believe that the very honor of the name of Jesus and of God depends upon God keeping you united with the Church?

Do you ever stop and thank Jesus for taking you captive and making you His wholly-owned slave? Are you aware of the price Jesus paid to own you? Do you trust His Father to keep you even when you feel like Jesus is nowhere to be found in the universe? God who owns you gave you to His Son. If you believe in Him the Son has given eternal life to you, and the Son has given you to His Father for safekeeping.

III. Investigating

Let's take a look at what Jesus reveals about God's ownership of you. There are six things. God's ownership of you is entrusted, exclusive, eternal, exalted, embodied, and expected.

A. Entrusted Ownership

1. Entrusted to Son

First, this ownership is *entrusted*. Entrusted to God the Son, then entrusted to God the Father. Jesus says to the Father, ⁶“I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.” Out

of all the people in the world, God gave *some* to His Son. We saw last week that God did this from all eternity. From all eternity, Jesus had the glory of being your owner and the One who would give you eternal life.

Didn't happen yesterday. Didn't happen the day you first believed. Didn't happen when God made you, and didn't even happen when God made the world. It happened before the world was. So don't even think about going back and undoing it. You'll never get far enough back... and neither will the worst sin you ever commit. Neither will the deepest depression you experience. Won't get back to the time when God entrusted you to His Son for salvation. So you see, your salvation can't be undone.

Fathers, how do you feel when you entrust something to your child? How about the Mont Blanc Pen? How about the computer? How about the car keys? How about the house, when you go out for the evening or overnight? Worst of all, how about the snowblower? Any hesitation? Any trepidation? Of course, because the probability is not altogether low, that your child might break, lose, or not be able to handle the valuable item.

Those God has chosen are immeasurably more important to Him than fancy pens, powerful computers, sleek cars, orderly houses, and even orange snowblowers. And yet they are much more fragile, much more breakable than pens, computers, cars, houses, and snowblowers.

The smallest sense of condemnation sends us into a ballistic trajectory of self-justification from which we invariably crash and burn. Yet Jesus would never break a bruised reed by hanging a single letter of the Law upon our backs. The smallest sense of rejection envelops our egos in a dark cloud of melancholy. Yet Jesus would never let a dim spark die out for want of warmth from His embrace.

God entrusted His ownership of you and of me into Jesus' hands. And rather than let go of us, Jesus let His hands be nailed to the cross.

2. Entrusted to Father

Now, Jesus is going back to the Father but His disciples remain in the world. ^{11a}“I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You.” Jesus is about to lay His life down to crucifixion on the cross. Jesus is about to suffer being forsaken by the Father which you and I deserve for our sins... so that we might never be forsaken by God. Jesus is about to die, and there is great danger that His disciples will despair when He is in the tomb. Then Jesus will arise from the dead... but after forty days He will ascend into Heaven. He will no longer be here on earth to keep His disciples.

So Jesus makes provision for you and for me. ^{11b}“Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are.” Okay, stop right there. I ask again, are you willing to have Jesus and the Father talking about you behind your back? Do you insist on being right in the middle of this conversation? Do you think you need to be the arbiter of this exchange? Is it okay with you if Jesus secures your security in God... without even asking your permission? Do you mind if Jesus turns you over to God for safe-keeping?

God who owns you gave you to His Son. If you believe in Him the Son has given eternal life to you. Now while the Son is in heaven and you are still on earth, He has given you to His Father for safekeeping. He'll never cast you out, ^{Jn6.37} and no one is able to snatch you out of His hand. ^{10.28}

B. Exclusive Ownership

1. God owns them exclusively

This ownership is entrusted. Second, this ownership is *exclusive*. God owns those He gave to His Son, and only them, in this special way. He gave them to His Son *out of the world*. Of course God owns everything in all creation. He made it; He owns it. Every hill and every cattle on the hill. Every flower and every person. But God has taken particular ownership of those whom He was pleased to give to His Son. Those whom He chose *out of the world*. Those whom He chose not because of anything in them, but according to His own good pleasure. He has had compassion on whom He has had compassion.^{ro9.15}

These ones have known that everything they have seen in Jesus was given to Him by God. *These* ones received the words God gave to Jesus and Jesus gave to them. In v8 the “they” in “they received” is emphasized. Other people did *not* receive His word. Others *heard* the words Jesus spoke, but others refused to *receive* the words. *These* ones believed that Jesus came from God and that God sent Jesus to save them. Did you hear that? God sent Jesus to save you!

2. God exclusively owns them (nothing else owns them)

This ownership is exclusive. God owns these in a special, particular way, which He does not say about the rest of the world. But not only does God own them exclusively; God *exclusively owns them*. That is, *nothing else owns them*. They belong to God and God alone. They were willing to give up their fishing boats, their nets, their tax collecting. Their boats, their income, their power no longer owned them. God alone owned them and they were happy with that arrangement.

Maybe you’d be happy with that arrangement too. But I’m guessing that they would also have given up their Mont Blanc Pens, their computers, their car keys, and their houses, and would have been happy with that arrangement if that’s what it meant for God exclusively to own them. What about you? What besides God owns you?

Oh, all right... you caught me. They would have given up their snowblowers too.

C. Eternal Ownership

Ownership: entrusted, exclusive... and *eternal*. I’ve already touched on this, as Jesus had the glory from all eternity of being the One who would give you eternal life. So just to restate, in v6 Jesus says to the Father, “They were yours.” There is no time when we began to be His. We were His *intentionally* from all eternity when He chose to us captive to be His and His alone. When Jesus purchased us by paying His life for ours on the cross, we became His *virtually*. When the Holy Spirit caused us to receive His words and believe in Him, we became His *actually*. And when He returns in the great Judgment day, we shall be His *publicly*. He owns us from all eternity to all eternity.

D. Exalted Ownership

Entrusted, exclusive, eternal... and *exalted*. Jesus prays,⁹“I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; ¹⁰and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; *and I have been glorified in them.*” Exalted ownership. Jesus has been glorified, exalted, in His disciples... in you and in me.

That is to say, the glory that is His because He is the One who gives eternal life, has been put back where it belongs: on Him alone. We’ve seen how the Son glorifies the Father: by giving eternal life to those whom God had chosen. Now the Father glorifies the Son by confirming that all things that belong to the Father also belong to the Son. That includes you and me. We belong to the Father. He owns us. And since all things the Father owns the Son owns too, the Son owns you and me. Jesus gets the glory of entrusted, exclusive, and eternal ownership. If you (legitimately) own a red Ferrari Berlinetta GT, you get the glory of being the owner of such a

sleek car. If Jesus owns you—and He does, most legitimately—He gets the glory of being your owner.

That’s why Peter says to set Christ apart as Lord in your hearts.^{1Pe3.15} Jesus owns you. So let Jesus own you. Are you letting Jesus own your decisions? Are you letting Jesus own the friendships you build and foster? Are you letting Jesus own the responsibility for giving you the money you need for your daily bread? Are you letting Jesus own the pain and suffering He is letting you experience? Are you letting Jesus own the spiritual gifts He has given into your custody to use with gusto?

Are you letting Jesus own the purifying of your soul that resists employing the gifts He’s given you? When your soul is lazy, distracted, self-focused, and given to pity parties for yourself, does Jesus own the work of turning your mourning into dancing? He does, doesn’t He? Yes, His ownership of you is truly exalted. So enjoy being owned! It really takes away a lot of the burden.

E. Embodied Ownership

Entrusted, exclusive, eternal, exalted... and *embodied*.¹¹“I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are.” Embodied ownership. When Jesus entrusts us into His Father’s hands, He does so not as a bunch of mere individuals. He entrusts us as *one*, as a *body*. There are many different parts of this body, yet He asks the Holy Father to keep us as *one*.

If you see someone else’s gifts and strengths and you think you should be able to do everything they can do and just as well, then you are saying you don’t really care about reflecting the glory of the triune God. You may think there is one God, O Israel, but you are forgetting that our One God is three Persons. It was not the Son’s nor the Spirit’s role to elect you. It was not the Father’s nor the Spirit’s role to suffer and die to redeem you. It was not the Father’s nor the Son’s role to move into your heart so you would be born again with spiritual life.

It may or may not be your part to be an elder, or a deacon, or a pastor, or an agent of regular hospitality. It may or may not be your part to start new businesses with an environment of overt gospel witness. It may or may not be your part to honor God with the way you ride a horse or become a veterinarian. It may or may not be your part to be married, or to bear children. But it *is* your part to encourage those around you whose parts these are. It *is* your part to receive encouragement from them in living *your* part. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit own you as *one*, as a *body* that is one even as Father, Son, and Spirit are one.

F. Expected Ownership (Scripture fulfilled)

Entrusted, exclusive, eternal, exalted, embodied... and finally, *expected*.¹²“While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.” Expected ownership. God’s owning of you comes as no surprise. His owning you has been revealed throughout redemption history, throughout the pages of Scripture. At the same time, His *not* owning even of His close friend in whom He trusted, who ate His bread, who lifted up his heel against Him,^{Ps41.9} was expected.

It was entirely expected, however, that there would remain “seven thousand whose knees had not bowed to Baal.”^{1Ki19.18} That is, a remnant who gave themselves over to no other ownership than that of the Lord Jesus Christ. A seed of Abraham, united to the Seed of the Woman^{Gen3.15} by the same faith as Abraham had. A people who believed that Jesus Christ came

from the Father and was sent by Him; a people who would remain at enmity with the children of the serpent, the reprobate, the children of perdition like Judas Iscariot.

Yes, all this has been expected from all eternity, for God decreed it would be so, and revealed this truth in His Word the Holy Scriptures.

IV. Receiving

God who owns you gave you to His Son and if you believe in Him, the Son has given eternal life to you, and the Son has given you to His Father for safekeeping. God’s ownership of you is entrusted, exclusive, eternal, exalted, embodied, and expected. The Lord Jesus Christ, into whose hands the Father gave you, has given you to His Father to keep you safely in Him.

God owns you. God owns your time. God owns your money. God owns your husband or your wife. God owns your children. God owns your friends. God owns your hobbies. God owns your future.

Let Him. It is the only safe, honorable, and enjoyable thing for you to do.