

7th Sunday of Easter B/Mother's Day 12 May 2024

John 17

St Peter's Lutheran Church, Elizabeth

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Grace and peace to you from God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Jesus prays, so let us pray: ...

John 17 has captivated my heart from the first time I ever read it. I believe it contains the greatest prayer ever prayed on earth and the greatest prayer ever recorded in Holy Scripture. So, for fear of doing it a great injustice this morning, I want us to focus primarily on the words of the prayer as they're spoken by our Lord, and I'll provide a few words of commentary and encouragement along the way. Jesus' prayer is delivered in 3 parts, which point to him being the Overcomer:

1. Jesus prays to be glorified.
2. Jesus prays for his disciples.
3. Jesus prays for all believers.

Before I read verses 1-5, I want to point out Jesus' posture of prayer, which we'll hear about in verse 1. Our heart's posture is what's most important, but I want to highlight the posture of Jesus looking toward heaven. As we prepare to listen to the words of Jesus, take a moment to prepare your heart to hear. Relax and let the words wash over you as Jesus speaks to his heavenly Father, and be aware that the Holy Spirit will speak them into your heart as you listen.

Jesus Prays to be Glorified

1 'After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said,

"Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, 2 since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all

whom you have given him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. 4 I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. 5 So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.”

- This prayer was for Jesus himself, who was nearing the cross and obediently heading toward excruciating suffering. This is a beautiful reminder that the prayer for oneself isn't a selfish one.
- Hear the clarity Jesus provides about the definition of eternal life: “That they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” We tend to focus on the mansions, streets of gold, seeing our family and friends who died before us, and so on. Jesus surpasses all of our deeply cherished longings. Eternal life is to know God through Christ Jesus. That's the power of the gospel, friends, and we should never be ashamed of it, as St Paul says in [Romans 1:16].

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

6 “I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7 Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; 8 for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. 9 I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. 10 All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. 11 And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. 12 While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. 13 But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. 14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 15 I am not asking you to take

them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. 16 They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.”

- The principle focus of this section is about security and safety in Jesus himself. In verse 15 Jesus prays, “I ask you to protect them from the evil one.” At our core, we crave safety. “Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one” [:11]. We are secure in Christ. Though the world may crash against us, we can trust that our anchor, Jesus, will hold us and that he continues to intercede for us [Romans 8:34].
- Trust is the beginning, but how do we become an overcomer like Jesus? Joy. Joy is the secret and it’s a 3-letter-word that packs an eternal punch [:13]. I encourage you to set aside some time from the clamour of daily life; a quiet time, to focus on what it means to live in the joy of your salvation. When you do, I believe your perspective of this world will change. If you don’t know the full measure of joy that comes from Jesus, ask God to restore to you the joy of your salvation [Psalm 51:2]! That’s Jesus’ nature and his desire for you, so you can trust that he will be faithful in answering [Matthew 21:22].

Jesus Prays for All Believers

20 “I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. 24 Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

25 'Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. 26 I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.'

- God desires unity and holiness in his believers. He wants the world to know him, and our role; just like Jesus', is to glorify our heavenly Father. It's incomprehensible to think that a perfect God chooses imperfect people like us to carry the message of the gospel. But he does, and God will continue to love you, pray for you, and energise you to his glory, forever. Amen.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds safe in Christ Jesus. Amen.