

SERMON FOR MAY 16, 2021

TEXT: JOHN 17: 11-19

THEME: JESUS PRAYS FOR YOU!

And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. **12** While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. **13** **But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.** **14** I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **15** I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. **16** They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **17** Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. **18** As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. **19** And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

In the name of Jesus:

Last week I went on a trip to Cleveland to help Drew move into his new apartment. While I was away, Luann went with Emily to see our son Mark and his wife, Abby, for Mother's Day weekend. As you can imagine, leaving the house for even a short period of time took quite a lot of planning. Luann set aside medication for one of the dogs, and had arranged with Rachel for the dogs to be fed and let out while we were both away. Whenever you leave the house and ask someone to watch the place or its contents for you, you will

often leave detailed instructions as to what needs to be done and when to do it.

Jesus prays this prayer in our text today the night when He was betrayed. He is in the Garden of Gethsemane and this prayer is called His High Priestly Prayer. We have been given this wonderful opportunity given to us by the Holy Spirit to eavesdrop or to listen in on the contents of Jesus' prayer. And what is Jesus praying for and about? JESUS PRAYS FOR YOU!

This is quite stunning, actually, when you think about it. Jesus could have prayed for anything. He knew that He was going to be betrayed by Judas in a matter of moments. He understood God's plan to save the world necessitated that He, Jesus, would not only be betrayed, but also to be whipped, mocked, led out to a place called Golgotha to be crucified, and that He would die. Jesus knew that His time on earth was short. And so what does He do? He prays for His disciples, those whom He chose, that they would be kept in the faith and that they would be strengthened by the Father for this moment. He prayed for their ongoing witness after His resurrection, that they would be faithful in word and deed. And Jesus even prays for us, He prays for you!

What does Jesus pray for? He prays for your protection. He knows the Evil One, the one who roams the earth seeking those whom he can devour. He

knows that the world in which we live hates God and the children of God. And so Jesus prays, He prays for His followers, He prays for you, that you will not be led astray from Jesus and that you will remain faithful to Jesus.

Jesus doesn't pray that we would be removed from the world. Far from it! He prays that we will be kept in the faith, be firm in the faith. That is why Jesus prays: "I don't ask that you take them out of the world but that you will keep them from the evil one." (v 15). What Jesus does here is that He intercedes for us. This is why this prayer is called the High Priestly Prayer. Just as the priests in the Old Testament intercede or were representatives of the people before God the Father, so now Jesus in this prayer is not only God's representative in that He is the Sacrifice for our sins, but He also stands in our place and prays for us and our needs before the Father.

And God the Father answered the prayer of Jesus. That is why He sent Jesus to be our Savior, that He who knew no sin became sin for us so that we would become the children of God. Jesus is our sacrificial representative on the cross, paying the price for our sins and earning our salvation. And because of Jesus' death and resurrection, the Father not only listens to His Son's prayer for us, He listens to our very own prayers as well, because He loves us.

To that end, God the Father sends the Holy Spirit to us to lead us to faith in Jesus and to comfort us in our times of trial. Jesus says: " **16** And I will ask

the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, **17** even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. **18** “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. **26** But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. **27** Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” (John 14).

Jesus sends to us His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit not only has given you faith, but the job of the Holy Spirit is to keep you in the one true faith. Jesus prays that you and I would be made holy in God’s truth, for His Word is truth. Faith in Jesus, and a stronger faith in Jesus, comes by hearing God’s Word, for faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ. The Holy Spirit uses God’s Word, that is why it is called a living and active Word, and this Word does and accomplishes what God has set out for it to do, namely to bring salvation to all who believe in Jesus.

You see, Jesus not only prayed for you in the Garden, He continues to pray for you! Listen to what John writes in his first Epistle: “We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ.” (1 John 2). Jesus’ prayer is an ongoing prayer, a prayer that you might become holy and set apart for God and His

purposes, a prayer that you would not only be God's child but remain God's child forever.

And so Jesus speaks to you today in His Word to create in your heart and life a stronger faith. He comes to you today in Holy Communion to give Himself to you, in, with, and under the bread and wine for the forgiveness of your sins and the strengthening of your faith. And He is at work today, continuing to build His Church so that the Gates of Hell will not be able to overcome it.

Every year in our preschool, when new students are enrolled in our preschool, some will go through a separation phase with his or her parents. What that means is that the child will usually cry for a few days, until they realize that they are not left all alone, but that they are now in the presence of a loving teacher and fellow classmates. They were not left alone but they were left in good hands.

When Jesus ascended into heaven, He left us in good hands. He has not left us alone. Just as He promised, He will not leave us as orphans. That means He will never leave us all alone. He is with us now, He is with us forever, so that we do not need to be afraid of what the future holds, for He holds us in His hands, and His prayer continues to strengthen us so that we

might live as His children with the peace that surpasses all understanding.

Amen