

Seventh Sunday of Easter
May 16, 2021

Prelude

Christopher A. McCroskey

Centering Words:

May we all be one. To worship, pray, and meditate on God's teachings, we have come to this day. Gathered as one family in Christ, we come together in love.

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Call To Worship:

Lord, Be Glorified

Dan Greshel

In our lives, Lord, be glorified, be glorified.
In our lives, Lord, be glorified today.

From *The Faith We Sing* Copyright 2000 by Abingdon Press, 2150.

Opening Prayer:

Holy Spirit, be with us in our worship this day. Draw us ever closer to you, that we may become one. Draw us ever closer to your word, that we may be wise. Draw us ever closer to your world, that we may serve and love as you guide us to do. In your holy name we pray the prayer Jesus taught:

From *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2020*. Copyright 2019 by Abingdon Press, Used by permission, 119.

The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Affirmation of Faith: The Apostles' Creed.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth.

And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayer of Illumination:

Open our ears that we may hear and our hearts and minds that we may receive your word O Lord our rock and redeemer.

New Testament Reading

Acts 1: 15-17, 21-26

Psalm 1

Epistle Reading

1 John 5:9-13

Special Music

His Eye Is on the Sparrow

Rhett Hook, Guitar

Gospel Reading

John 17: 6-19

Sermon

Jesus' Intercession for Us

John D. Jordan

Hymn:

Take Time to Be Holy

1. Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;
abide in him always, and feed on his word.
Make friends of God's children, help those who are weak,
forgetting in nothing his blessing to seek.
2. Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;
spend much time in secret with Jesus alone.
By looking to Jesus, like him thou shalt be;
thy friends in thy conduct his likeness shall see.
3. Take time to be holy, let him be thy guide,
and run not before him, whatever betide.
In joy or in sorrow, still follow the Lord,
and, looking to Jesus, still trust in his word.
4. Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul,
each thought and each motive beneath his control.
Thus led by his spirit to fountains of love,
thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.

From *The United Methodist Hymnal* Copyright 1989 The
United Methodist Publishing House, 395.

Benediction:

We are set apart to serve the Lord in the world even though we are not of the world. As we go out into the world to serve we are protected in God's name. Amen.

Response:

God Be with You till We Meet Again

God be with you till we meet again;
by his counsels guide, uphold you,
with his sheep securely fold you;
God be with you till we meet again.

From *The United Methodist Hymnal* Copyright 1989, The United
Methodist Publishing House, 673.

A Gift to Trinity is given in honor of their **45th Wedding Anniversary on May 15**, by **Jim and Marie Stiles**

Leading in Worship Today

Pastor: John D. Jordan
Choir Director: Christopher A. McCroskey
Church Musician: AV Assistant: K. C. Warble
Soloist: Dan Greshel
Time Together: Gale Frady; Ruth Frady

“AS MEMBERS OF THIS CONGREGATION, WE WILL FAITHFULLY PARTICIPATE IN ITS MINISTRIES BY OUR PRAYERS...”

Tom Lloyd Patsy Shuler Dean Frye Lynn Martin Kathy Aiello George Taylor
Ted Frady Oren Edwards Latson Lewis Steve Aiello Steve White

Shut-Ins: Shirley Butler; Esther Carter; Carolyn Hardee; Francis & Gillett Hipp; June Hutto; Georgeann Pace; Shirley Padgett; Jean Raynor; Claudia Sineath; Wayne Tallon; Irvin Wells

Family and Friends: Mitch Kelly (*Dale Wells' nephew*); Lisa Baghdady (*a friend of Edwa Meek*); Chip Hooker (*Wayne Hooker's father*); Robert Bradley (*Business Associate of Simon Ross*); Dave Burrell (*Business Associate of Tommy Gleaton*); Gene Odom (*grandfather of Mark Branham*); Gary Becton (*friend of Mark Branham*); Audrey Cassady (*sister-in-law of Mary Louise Robinson*); Rusty Browning (*friend of Erin Derrick*); Monnie Tiller, Mrs. Miles (*friends of Chris Derrick*); Donna Walker (*coworker of Jack Stevens*); Paul Kidney (*son-in-law of Charles & Jackie McNeill*); Ruby Pennington (*friend of Laurie Knapp*); Rick Baldwin (*nephew of Tommy Johnson*); Judy Bauer (*cousin of Marty Johnson*); Iris Turlington (*aunt of John Zeigler*); Betty Jean Newton (*sister-in-law of Mary Kamoroff*); Hagrín & Linda Hargett (*stepfather and stepmom of Christopher McCroskey*); Brenlee Carnes; Danielle Spotts (*co-worker of Kathy White*); Vickie Edwards (*neighbor of Kathy White*); George Duke, Brenda Grier (*friends of Lynn Martin*); Heather Stevens, Ty Moore, George Dorn (*friends of Kay Jordan*); Teddy Derrick (*uncle of Arvan Derrick*); Haidee Baehr (*friends of Ruth Frady*); Dianne Schmotzer (*sister-in-law of Gale Frady*); Denise Paul (*cousin of Gale Frady*); Dan Conner, Max Johnson (*friends of Gale Frady*); Ray Culbreth's Group House; Nellie Gantt (*mother of friend of Ray Culbreth*); Amelia Zinski (*great-niece of Linda Maloch*); Wayne Blair (*son of Dot Johnson*); Xavier Crane (*grandnephew of John Ballentine*); Janet Beck (*friend of Jo Ann Heiting*); Adam Lavender (*son of Phil Lavender*)

If you have a friend or family member on the Prayer List, we ask you to please keep us updated. If no word is received, we will trust that our prayers have been answered and remove the name. To update us, please call the office or e-mail us at trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com.

OUR PRESENCE ...

In-Person Attendance 05/09 Worship: 33

OUR GIFTS ...

General Fund 05/09 \$ 2,606.00 Epworth 05/09 \$ 285.00

OUR SERVICE ...

OUR WITNESS.”

Upcoming Events

5/17 Exercise, 10:30 a.m.
5/20 Exercise, 10:30 a.m.
5/21 GLIA Articles Due



Ministers
Pastor
Resident Bishop
District Superintendent

The Congregation
John D. Jordan
Jonathan Holston
Rev. Dr. Cathy Jamieson

Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Our vision is to Connect, Nurture, Inspire and Transform



Now they know that
everything you have
given me is from you;
for the words that
you gave to me
I have given to them.

John 17:7, NRSV

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John 17: 6-19

This passage narrated in Chapter 17 is part of Jesus' prayer for the disciples. It is an intimate, heartfelt plea of Jesus to the Father. If I were a director staging this scene as a play, I would have a spotlight on Jesus with the disciples in the shadows, there but not really a part of the scene.

Jesus prays this prayer for those disciples who have been with him, some for as many as three years. They are the ones that had walked with him in the journeys between Galilee and Jerusalem. They had seen the miracles, heard his teachings, and remained with him as he confronted the religious and political establishment. Jesus prays for them knowing that soon he would be glorified and no longer be with them physically. He knew that the hour had come when he would be taken to the Father. So now he prays to the Father for them.

This prayer is not only for those disciples gathered in the room that evening. It is also a prayer for the disciples to whom the Gospel of John was written. John was written roughly 90 CE. This was after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. Therefore, Judaism was in a major crisis and until this point Christianity had been a sect within Judaism. The Pharisaic or Rabbinical sect, which had its locus in the synagogue, became the predominate sect. Other sects, including Christians, began to be expelled from the synagogues. Thus, the community to whom the Gospel was written was experiencing social trauma as they lost their connection to their Jewish roots. Also, there may have been increased social isolation as the community may have begun to turn inward to protect themselves. Jesus' prayer was for those disciples in the community of faith to which the Gospel was written.

Also, this prayer was not just for those early disciples but for all disciples throughout the course of time. As the prayer continues, Jesus prays for all who will believe. Jesus' prayer is for all disciples and for all Christian communities. This is Jesus' prayer for us as disciples and as a church. This is Jesus' prayer for Trinity UMC, West Columbia, SC.

In the prayer, Jesus makes two intercessions to the Father on behalf of the disciples. These intercessions were for the disciples in the room that evening, the disciples in John's community and for disciples today. These are Jesus' intercessions for each one of us and for Trinity UMC today. So, as we go through these intercessions remember that they are Jesus' intercessions for all disciples, including us.

The first intercession is found in verse 11, "Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so they may be one as we are one," This intercession for protection is repeated in verse 15. "I am not asking you to take them out of the world but I am asking that you protect them from the evil one."

Now at first glance this seems to be saying that since they are in the world, wrap them in a bubble so the evil one cannot get to them. Make it where Satan can poke all he wants with his pitchfork but he won't be able to burst the bubble of goodness God puts around them. Even though they are in the world, God, give them their own little protected world within the world. Don't let any of the dirt and muck of the world get on them. But Jesus is not asking God to put them in a bubble and keep them clean.

First of all, Jesus does not ask that they be taken out of the world. In fact, it is crucial that the disciples stay in the world, for how could the Good News be spread if there were not people in the world to spread it? Being a Christian does not remove us from the world but we are not to be of the world. When Jesus asks that the Father protect them “in your name” he is referring not only to the name of God but also the character of God as revealed to Moses in Exodus 34: 6-9. Jesus is asking for this protection because they have seen the character and power of the Father through him.

Now, according to most translations, Jesus is asking the Father to protect the disciples from the evil one. This gives us the image of a personified evil, so we may think Jesus is asking God to protect us from evil people. That would be the case if the word evil was used as an adjective, but in the Greek there is no object, so evil could be interpreted as a noun, meaning evil in general. Jesus is asking God to protect disciples from all evil.

Now, what does Jesus mean when he asks the Father to protect disciples from evil? Does he mean to coat disciples with Teflon so all the evil, dirt, and nastiness in the world does not stick to disciples or bounces off like bullets to Superman? No, the protection that Jesus asks the Father to give disciples is much greater than that.

Before we get to that we must examine why Jesus asks for the Father’s protection for disciples. Then we can better understand the protection the Father gives.

Jesus asks to protect disciples “so they may be one as we are one.” Jesus is asking the Father to protect disciples so they may be in unity with each other as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are in union with each other. Also, as disciples are one with Jesus, they become one with the Father. Disciples become one with each other and one with God. Disciples become united with God and therefore take on the character and identity, the essence, of God. Disciples become one with the essence from which disciples are created. Disciples become one in love.

So, when Jesus asks the Father to protect disciples, he is asking to keep the character and power of the Father exercised over and within disciples. He is asking the Father to give disciples the power, the strength, and courage to resist and overcome all evil. Give disciples power to stand up for the weak and oppressed. Give disciples courage to change when they may have attitudes that need to change. Give disciples strength to continue battling evil in whatever form it takes, every day. Give disciples power, strength and courage to live in unity with God and all people as God wishes; not divided, as the world wishes. Thus, disciples can be in the world but not of the world.

The second intercession of Jesus is for the Father to sanctify disciples in truth. What truth does that mean? Then Jesus says “your word is truth.” Huh? Remember that in John’s Gospel the divine word was personified in Jesus. Jesus was the revelation of God to the world. To be sanctified in truth means to be sanctified by the revelation of God in Jesus.

We generally think of sanctification as being made holy and pure. In our Wesleyan tradition, sanctification is the process of coming to know the full love of and for God and neighbor. In John’s Gospel sanctification carries more the Old Testament meaning. To be sanctified was to be set apart for the service of God. This included people like the priests and singers but also objects (Examples of sanctified objects may be found in Exodus Chapters 35-39).

Jesus is asking the Father to set disciples aside for God's service. All disciples, those in the room, those in John's community, the church today, and each one of us in this sanctuary and watching online, are set aside for the service of God.

Now you may well be saying, "Who Me? Sure, John, you can say that. You are working to be ordained so you are set apart. Christopher is set apart because of his musical talents. Some who are doctors, counselors, teachers, or have other special skills may be set apart for God's service, but me?"

I say, "Yes, you." Every one of us who claim to be disciples of Jesus is set apart for God's service. We are not set apart because we are doing church work, but because we are in the world but not of the world. It is not what we do that sanctifies us but whose we are that sanctifies us. We belong to God as we are disciples of Jesus.

Jesus says he sanctified himself, meaning that as the Son he set himself apart from the world in order to serve the Father. Jesus is asking that we be sanctified, set apart from the rule of the world even though we are in the world, to serve God's purposes.

It is not what we do in church on Sunday morning, but what we do in the world Monday through Saturday that serves God's purposes. We are set apart to live according to God's rule, for our character to be aligned with God's character and for us to be united with others and God in the same way Jesus is united with the Father.

We serve God as we present the image, the essence, of God to the world every day and in everything we do. We spread the Good News of God's love and God's purpose to unite all people to God, restoring creation.

We are set apart for God's service as Jesus asks. We are given the power, strength and courage to live according to God's love to unify creation in a world that seems so divided. We are sanctified! We are empowered! We are in the world but we are not of the world. We are sanctified and empowered.

This is Jesus' intercessions for us; we are able to serve the Father as he served the Father.