

Grace Lutheran Church and School
400 Hempstead Avenue
Malverne, New York 11565
Pastor A. David Anglada's Message Outline
7th Sunday of Easter
May 24th, 2020
"A Purpose Driven Prayer," John 17:1-11



John 17:1-11: 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, 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. 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.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION:

Spirit of Glory, Spirit of God, bless us with a word of life this day to restore, support, and strengthen us as we seek to be one with you. Amen.

My grandmother Amparo Anglada was the matriarch of our family; when she reach the age of ninety two, she became terminally ill; it was a challenging situation for my family to know that our beloved grandmother was approaching the end of life. My family members went through great lengths to hide her terminal diagnosis of cancer and prognosis of four to six months to live. My immediate family tried to avoid the reality that we would lose our advisor, confidant, and leader of the Anglada family. We were instructed not to tell no one, especially grandma.

Till this day I can hear my uncle Miguel say, "It's our family secret." "Don't tell mother or grandma, that she is dying."

In John's gospel story today the 7th Sunday of Easter, Jesus takes the **opposite approach**. Throughout the story, Jesus speaks with clarity to his disciples, no secrets, he tells them of his imminent death.

In our text, Jesus's final prayer for his disciples also known as "**The Highly Priestly Prayer**" for two reasons: **First**, Jesus is preparing to offer himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. **Secondly**, he intercedes for his disciples as well as his followers, in the same way that the high priest intercedes for the people of Israel.

By the way, many New Testament teachers claim that this prayer is similar to the Lord's Prayer, so they call Jesus' prayer the Johannine Lord's Prayer.

Jesus' prayer was very similar to a farewell address or discourse; it a lengthy address taking up chapters 14-17 in John's Good News story. What stands out in our gospel text today is the following:

First, Jesus is asking God to protect his disciples or to protect his children, verse 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."** Jesus has been the protector of his followers; he is giving God an account of his stewardship. He is preparing to depart, so he is asking God to assume the role of protector to these disciples who are in the world the KOSMOS but not of the KOSMOS. They belong to God, not the world. Jesus wants to make sure his disciples are going for the goal.

Jesus understood that his disciples or followers would face challenging times. The disciples will be facing a hostile world. Jesus asking God to protect them, to put a shield around them, not to keep them from the world but to protect them. Protect them in your name, by which he means to keep them in loyalty to you or keep them in full adherence to your character, Holy Father.

We all know very well that the early followers of Jesus faced persecution under the Roman empire. He pleads with the Father that they will not drop out of the race. Jesus knew that they will be knocked down by their own pride and passions now and again, sometimes by the storms of others. But our Blessed Lord Jesus begs for the power of God to get them up running again.

Secondly, there is an emphasis on unity or oneness. Jesus emphasizes the unity shared between himself and God. Jesus prays that his disciples would be "ONE" just as he is one with God, Jesus says the following in verse 11 **"so that they may be one, as we are one."**

Our blessed Lord Jesus is asking God that his disciples have an intimate relationship with God, just as he has a divine connection with God. That God may live in them. So that his disciples can enjoy their interconnectedness with God; furthermore, Jesus is asking God that his children live in them along with them in him.

Last year I accompanied our sixth graders here at Grace School on their senior trip to see "**The Lion King**;" Broadway, on 46th street in Manhattan. Rafiki tells the adult Simba, who is grieving the death of his father, Mufasa, that he knows where his father is. He takes Simba to a pool of water and tells Simba to look down. Simba complains, "that's not my father; that's just my reflection." "No look harder," Rafiki says. As he looks, Simba begins to recognize his father in his own reflection. "You see?" Rafiki hums, "**He lives in you.**"

When life can become a burden and difficult, always remember that **God lives in you, God lives in us!** When we embrace love towards each other as Christ did for us, we have the oneness of God in us. Over and above that, Jesus is praying that his disciples or followers, which eventually becomes the holy catholic Church, or the universal Church be united not divided. It is a prayer for unity, a prayer that binds people together.

Dear saints of God, it is complicated, as well as challenging, being together with each other. It is not easy because we all have our ideas, besides, we are different for each other. It precisely what Christ is calling us to do, to live in unity with each other. Our unity breaks through the walls that separate us. For clarity of thought, unity does not mean uniformity, "In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity" (Rupertus Meldenius).

Yes, there are walls that separated us because of our race, color of our skin, creed, and whom you love in life, can be eradicated when we embrace unity. We are better when we are together; we draw energy from each other. When I am down, you are up, you can help me get back on my feet, or the reverse. When you are down, and I am up, I give you a hand plus I lift you up.

We are better when we need each other's synergy or symbiosis; here this best way I can communicate this idea. The cow needs a milker, moreover a milker needs a cow for milk. They both need each other's, both are important, both the cow and milker have a mutually beneficial relationship. Moreover, both need to appreciate each other.

Jesus's prayer was **Purpose Driven**. His prayer was focused on a goal: unity among the disciples, oneness with God. What is more, Jesus is asking God to protect his children from a difficult, demanding, harsh world.

People of God, I would also like to share with you this morning, that the prayer Jesus prayed to God, was in conjunction to keep our connectedness with God. It was Jesus's desire to keep his children/disciples connected to God.

Today, we are being called to stop our ecumenical fights with each other. We are called to be one Church regardless if you are: African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, American Baptist, Amish, Anabaptist, Anglican, Armenian Evangelical, Armenian Orthodox, Assemblies of God, Associated Gospel Churches, Association of Vineyard Churches, on top of that, those are just some of the A's. Brothers and sisters, it is not the multiplication of denominations that is bad. It is the hostility of Christians to other Christians. I end my message with the word of popular church hymn: "In Christ there is no East or West, In him no South or North; But one great fellowship of love. Through-out the whole wide earth."

We sing it. Jesus prayed for **unity** plus **oneness**; may we learn to live it here with each other. May, we grasp Jesus' prayer as a model to live by. Amen.

BLESSING:

May the abundance of God bless you; the strength of Christ keeps you, and the Spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, shine upon you forever. Amen.