

Rev. Timothy M. Crummitt

Seventh Sunday of Easter - Year B

Mother's Day

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26

Psalm 1

1 John 5:9-13

John 17:6-19

05/13/2018

### **Gospel**

The Holy Gospel according to St. John:

[Jesus prayed:] 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. 7Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; 8for 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. 9I 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. 10All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. 11And 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. 12While 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. 13But 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. 14I 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. 15I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. 16They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 17Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.”

The Gospel of our Lord.

### **Prayer**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

### **Praying**

Good morning! Have you ever had someone pray for you? I don't mean small group prayer that happens after a bible study or the type of prayer that happens during our prayers of intercession during worship. No, I'm talking about just you and another person, praying intimately for one another. Maybe the other person is holding onto your hands, or maybe you're hugging. Regardless of the context, the first couple times are always uncomfortable. (and to give you a little insider baseball, the first couple times are pretty uncomfortable for the person doing the praying too.)

There are all kinds of different ways to pray, we have things like the Lord's Prayer, the traditional closing of every Lutheran meeting since probably the 1500's. We have prayers like the ones Mary Ann will read here in a minute, we have popcorn type prayer like the prayer we do in our Mutual Ministry Team meetings where we just sit in silence and pray when something speaks to us. There's silent prayer, meditation, and prayers like the Rosary. But prayer between two people is often the most powerful of experiences.

The first time I really remember someone praying for me like that was in High School. Dave Etling, my Younglife leader, had a powerful prayer life. So there I stood, a lifelong Lutheran completely unfamiliar with this type of experience, as Dave prayed for me. It had a profound impact on my faith life. My group of school friends became comfortable praying at the drop of a hat. Before we drove down to Myrtle Beach, SC, for senior week, a time notorious for its less than Christian behavior, we gathered together outside my 8 passenger Chevy 1500 and prayed for safe traveling. Dave left a mark on our lives, and it's still common to get a phone call and prayer from him.

And prayer is what we get when we look at today's text. The entire 17th chapter of the Gospel of John is a strange and intimate look as Jesus prays to God, for the disciples. The words seem strange, the whole text feels odd, and I'm curious if the disciples felt as uncomfortable as I did the first time someone prayed for me.

To put today's story, and most of the Gospel lessons this Easter season, into context, we're near the end of the Gospel of John. The 13th chapter should be familiar, we hear it every Maundy-Thursday when we read the story of Jesus washing the disciples feet. It continues with Jesus calling on the disciples to love one another. It's a story I hold close to my heart and

ministry. But directly after the washing of the feet and the meal with the disciples we are given three chapters that function as the final lesson, the last chance for Jesus to teach the disciples. They ask questions and learn one last time before chapter 17 begins. The entire chapter functions as one long prayer between Jesus, the Father, and the disciples. Most scholars break the text into three sections; verses 1-8, 9-19, and 20-26. After the prayer Jesus heads to the garden to pray and is arrested. What we have here are literally his last words to his closest friends. It's a fitting text the week before Pentecost and the last Sunday of the Season of Easter.

If I could I would preach on this text again in two weeks for Trinity Sunday, because it offers us a look at the intimate relationship between God the Father and God made flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. And it's this relationship that speaks to us today. We see in verse six that Jesus has "*made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world.*" And one scholar explains this detail perfectly. "*Jesus does not use 'name' (onoma) in a narrow sense to refer to a particular name of God (e.g., 'Father' or 'I AM');* rather, he uses it more broadly to stand for the character and identity of God."<sup>1</sup> It isn't about the physical name for God but about WHO God is. It's the difference between knowing someone's name and calling them your best friend, the relationship is much richer and more real.

And it's that relationship that invites us into the community, that actually FORMS the community. And remember that phrase in two weeks on Trinity Sunday. Once again, scholars say it better than I can: "*The formation of a community based in the mutuality and intimacy of the relationship of God and Jesus belongs to Jesus' completion of God's work... For Jesus to be*

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<sup>1</sup>Keck, Leander E. *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary Volume 8*. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 2015. Pg. 675-676

*glorified in the community means that the identity of Jesus is made visible in them.*"<sup>2</sup> Whenever someone says that Jesus isn't present in the world give them a good shake and make them look in the mirror! As a community of believers WE make Christ known in our words and deeds!

And what is Jesus' prayer for this community? That we be made holy. Which is interesting because the word "*hagios*", which we translate as "holy" only occurs four times in the entire book.<sup>3</sup> Now the church throws that word around all the time and so it often has so many meanings we end up confused. But in the Greek to be holy means to be set apart and its verb means to be set apart for sacred work or duty. The Merriam Webster dictionary gets pretty close too, defining it as "*devoted entirely to the... work of the deity.*"<sup>4</sup> We have a tendency to associate holy with things like bibles or relics, but holy is a state of oneness with God, of being set apart for God's work in the world. You were all made holy in your baptisms, marked with the cross of Christ and sealed with the Holy Spirit for God's holy work in the world.

We are called together, we have been prayed for and in the person of Jesus Christ we have seen the love that characterizes God. That glimpse of the divine has called us to walk wet, to realize that being holy is a gift that God gives and calls us towards. We have been chosen for holy work, set apart for sacred work, and I give God thanks for that prayer. Amen.

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<sup>22</sup>Keck, Leander E. *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary Volume 8*. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 2015. Pg. 677

<sup>33</sup>Keck, Leander E. *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary Volume 8*. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 2015. Pg. 677

<sup>4</sup><https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/holy>