

Easter 7 6/2/19
John 17 C

THAT THEY MAY BE ONE, JUST AS YOU, FATHER, ARE IN ME, AND I IN YOU, THAT THEY ALSO MAY BE IN US, SO THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE SENT ME.

As Jesus prays His High Priestly prayer, He prays for the apostles. That makes perfect sense. They are the ones who will preach the forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name, in "Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8)." So, He prays for them.

But, they're not the only ones for whom Jesus prays. Jesus also prays for all those who will come to believe in Him through the word of the apostles. In other words, Jesus prays for you, because you have come to believe that Jesus died and rose and ascended for you. So, Jesus prays for you.

And this is His prayer: Jesus prays that we may be one just as He and the Father are one. When you stop and think about that, when you think about God and the Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that that is one -- one uncreated, one infinite, one Almighty, one Lord -- you start to see that Jesus is praying for a whole lot of one.

He wants us to be one and the oneness for which He prays has a purpose – "so that the world may believe that you have sent Me (v. 21)." So that the world may see this oneness that the Father has sent Jesus and that the Father loves Jesus and that the Father loves the world as much as He loves Jesus.

This is a pretty big prayer that Jesus prays – that we may be one. The unfortunate, sad thing is this – the oneness that we so often show is not the oneness in Christ Jesus, but the oneness that we have in Adam. The hymn writer said it so well,

All mankind fell in Adam's fall;
One common sin infect us all,
From one to all the curse descends,
And over all God's wrath impends {LSB 562:1}.

The oneness that we are born into is our oneness in Adam. It causes us to go about and do our own thing, go our own way with little, if any, regard for anyone else.

Now, to be sure, we do think about other people from time to time, and we think of them something like this, "Who is in my way? Who is this person standing in my way of getting what I desire, that which I believe I have a right to? Who do I have to get rid of to get what I want and have my way?"

Sometimes, you have these thoughts about your neighbor, "What does that person have that I want? What do they have that I need more than they need?" Maybe it's their job, or their home, or their spouse, or their sexuality. And when we have that kind of regard for others, when we think these kinds of thoughts, then we are going to put those thoughts into action. Action like murder, lust, and adultery; action like stealing, theft, lying, and gossip. With our oneness in Adam, what we truly show is our sin.

So, while Jesus is praying for oneness, our sins are dividing us and separating us, one from another, giving witness to the world such that the world looks at Christians, "I don't know about this Jesus. I don't know if I want anything to do with Him."

But, here's the Good News: Jesus does more than just simply pray for us. Jesus also does something else for us. Listen to this part of His prayer,

The glory that you have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know what you sent Me and loved them even as you loved Me (vv. 22-23).

Jesus prays, but in addition to prayer, He also gives. And what He gives is the glory that the Father has given to Him.

When we first hear that, we think, “That sounds pretty good,” because we like glory. We like the sound of that because we often equate glory with things like angel choirs, crowns of gold, robes of white, and resting from our labor; and indeed, that is all very glorious. But, that’s not what we need to be thinking about when Jesus says “they glory that you have given Me.” He’s talking about something else. The glory that Jesus is talking about is the glory that comes about as He empties Himself to take on the form of a servant. It’s the glory Jesus has as He is incarnate of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. It’s the glory Jesus has as He goes around healing and teaching, only to be rejected by His own people. It’s the glory Jesus experiences as His own apostles betray and abandon and deny Him; the glory that comes when He is convicted in a mockery of a trial; the glory that comes when He is stripped and His face is bloodied from the blows and the crown of thorns; the glory as He is marched out to Golgotha, nailed to the cross and hangs there for six hours, a sign proclaiming “This is the king of the Jews,” and He dies.

That’s the glory of the only Son of the Father. That’s the glory that the Father has given to Jesus, for it is the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ to do all that for you. To live His life in perfect obedience to God the Father’s will. It is His glory to take upon Himself all of your sins of thought, word, and deed, and then suffer the punishment that you deserve for those sins by being abandoned by the Father, put to death on the cross, and buried in

a borrowed tomb. That is the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ as He gives His life for you. And because He did, all of your sins are forgiven. And, He rises the 3rd day to give that glory to you.

The glory of the Lord Jesus Christ comes to you at the font. Through the water and the Word, you are joined to Jesus. You are joined to Him in His crucifixion, His death, His burial, His resurrection, His ascension; in other words, you are joined to His glory, such that the glory that He was given by the Father, He gives to you and you have the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

And something else marvelous and wonderful takes place. You become one in Jesus Christ, just as He and the Father are one. But, you also become one with your brothers and sisters in Christ. The purpose of that oneness is for the Church's witness to the world, so that the world would understand that God sent His Son into this world, and He loves the world as much as He loves His Son.

This is what happens when you are baptized into Christ. You come one with Christ and one with each other in Christ. St. Paul writes about this oneness in His letter to the Ephesians,

There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call – one Lord, one faith, on baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all (4:4-6).

In His High Priestly prayer, Jesus prays for you. He prays that you may be one. He prays that the sin which divides us may be done away with and that we would be one Him for the purpose that the world knows that God sent His Son into the world, and that God loves them as much as He loves His Son.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.