

Exaudi - 7th Sunday of Easter

May 14, 2018

Matthew Ude

John 17:11-19 ^{11b} "Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as *We are*. ¹² "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³ "But now I come 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 pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁸ "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

LORD, KEEP OUR HEARTS IN YOUR NAME

^{11b} **"Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as *We are*.**

What is the name of God? Jesus says keep them through Your name, what is the name of God? It is everything that identifies or describes him

If you are talking about me, you could say Matthew Ude, or the Pastor of Faith Lutheran Church, or that bald guy who gets up and prattles on every Sunday. Any of those will work, people will know who you are talking about.

The same thing is true about God. We can say the Lord, the Almighty, our Savior, our Creator, etc. Everything that God has revealed about Himself, it all counts as His name. In other words His name is all of His word.

Jesus makes this clear just a few verses later "sanctify them by your truth, your word is truth." The word "sanctify" means to keep us separate. That is exactly what He is praying for in the first verse, that God would keep us separate from the world. How is this accomplished? Through His name, through His word, they are the same thing.

Jesus wants us to be ONE just as He and the Father are one. This is only possible through His word. It's only possible by the power of the Holy Father acting through the Word.

This of course means studying His word, and knowing what it says. Only on the basis of His word can there ever be unity. IF we try to make anything other than God's word the basis of unity than it is just one man's opinion and another man will always have a different opinion and there will be no unity. But "God's word is truth," therein is unity.

But also keep them in Your name, means far more than memorizing points of doctrine and writing theological statements. The unity that Christ speaks of here is not just a unity of words but a unity of heart and will and love. That takes more than a simple confession of faith, that takes the word of God living within us. That takes living in forgiveness. So that instead of seeking our opportunities to complain and criticize, we seek out opportunities to forgive and love.

¹² "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

Jesus is the good shepherd, who never lost a single sheep, not of all the ones that Father had given to him. And this was far more than the 12. Our first reading of the day puts the disciples numbers at about 120.

None, except of course "the son of perdition." With these words Jesus shows us that Judas was never really his sheep, that he always belonged to the evil one.

What a thing for Jesus to say there. We can easily sympathize with Judas. I mean Judas clearly thought that he wasn't hurting anyone. When he found out that Jesus was really going to die, he was shocked and very remorseful. We might think he's not such a bad guy he just gave in to a little temptation. No doubt Judas thought something along the lines of, "I'll just take this money. Jesus will do a miracle and walk away. No one will get hurt then all of us can use this money."

But Jesus calls him the "son of perdition," one whose heart now and always belongs firmly to the evil one. The thing that Judas loved was money, not the word of the Lord.

What a dire warning for us, how easily we can get trapped and have our hearts pulled away from Christ and become focused on money, or pride, or fame, etc.

But that is the whole point here isn't it. Jesus knows how easily we fall. Therefore He was diligent while He was on this earth to keep the hearts of his disciples from the evil one. Now that He is leaving He prays that the Father would continue to preserve them and us THROUGH HIS WORD.

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.

For this reason Jesus gave us His word the Word of the Father, so that the Father might keep us through that Word. But the problem is that word makes us a target.

Have any of you ever seen the movie, "Pentagon Wars?" In that movie, one guy is trying to build a troop transport for the army. A transport needs to be light and fast, and have lots of room inside for troops. So the designer puts a little gun on top for some basic protection. Well the army general says, you can't shoot anyone with that gun we need a real gun. Well if you put a really big gun on top you can shoot more people but then you also become a far more tempting target for the enemy.

That is Jesus point here, a gave them your word and because I gave them your word the world now hates them. I gave them your word to keep them safe, but because they are no longer of the world, because they have your word, therefore they are the favorite target of the world and the evil one.

And we see that all around us. So many in the world their favorite thing is to make fun of conservative Christians. And even if it's not so much the world, it certainly is Satan's favorite target. Where God's word is strongest Satan will attack with all His strength to bring in every kind of sin and temptation, so that all the more we need to live in His word. All the more we need this prayer of Christ that the Father would keep us in His word.

¹⁵ "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

And yet despite this hatred and this danger all around us, Christ does not ask the Father to remove us from this danger, or to remove us from this world. In fact he says **"I have sent them into the world."** Just as the Father sent Him so He sends us.

Why are we here? Why are we enduring the hostility and sufferings of this world?

The answer is very simple so that we can share that same word of God with others, so that we can share the love and forgiveness of Christ with others. So that they may be sanctified through it as we have been sanctified through it.

¹⁷ "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁹ "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

Jesus sanctified himself, that is He kept himself holy and undefiled from the sin of this world. He kept himself apart from this world, even unto death. He did that because He knew that we could not. He did that for us.

He did that so that we could be sanctified through Him. Now we are no longer of the World, we are still in the world for a short time so that we can share that word with others, and so that we can share and encourage one another with the love of Christ. But we are no longer of the World.

Through the blood of the lamb the Father has cleansed us from all sin, and through the Word of the lamb He has kept us in the one true faith.

AMEN

THE PEACE OF GOD THAT SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN CHRIST JESUS.