

Gospel and Sermon Transcript -7th Sunday Easter - May 17, 2026

00:06

The Holy Gospel according to Saint John, the 17th chapter. Glory to you, O Lord. After Jesus

00:15

had spoken these words to his disciples, he looked up into heaven and he said, "Father,

00:24

hour has come, glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have

00:31

given Him authority over all people to give eternal life to all whom you have

00:37

given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God and

00:45

Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the

00:51

work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory

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that I had in your presence before the world existed. I have made known your name to those

01:09

whom you gave to me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have

01:16

kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you. For the words

01:23

that you gave me I have given to them and they have received them and know in truth

01:29

that I came from you and that they have believed that you sent me. I'm asking on

their behalf,

01:38

I'm not asking on behalf of the world but on behalf of those whom you gave me because

01:44

they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I have been glorified in them.

01:55

And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you.

02:02

Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one,

02:09

we are one. The Gospel of our Lord.

The Sermon

02:29

Grace and peace to you from the one who was, who is, and who is to come.

02:38

What is it like for you when somebody says, "I'm praying for you"?

02:51

Maybe your reaction is typical to those reported in the journal Spirituality and Health some

02:58

thirty years ago now.

03:01

Just knowing that somebody prays for you, according to some studies done in hospital

03:06

settings, just knowing that, hopes your outcome of treatment, surgery, or even the length

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of physio that you go through.

03:16

Just knowing.

03:21

Frequently as a pastor, I pray for people and they know that.

03:25

I hope they know that.

03:27

But it's an amazing thing, and I've heard colleagues say the same when somebody says,

03:33

"I'm praying for you, Pastor."

03:36

Every day.

03:40

That's powerful.

03:44

But not all experience is created equal.

03:49

Some of you know that my younger brother is a flight attendant for a major U.S. airline

03:58

He is learning a bit about the culture in that part of the United States.

04:04

There are some code words that don't mean what you might think they mean.

04:10

For example, "Well, bless your heart."

04:15

It's kind of like saying, "Don't be a dork."

04:19

For this one, "I will pray for you."

04:24

That means you are in a fix, you are in a mess, good luck with that.

04:32

And the aspersions, bop.

04:36

Or maybe you've had this experience where you've had the TV news on in the aftermath

04:42

of a school shooting or an act of gun violence and an official says our thoughts and our

04:49

prayers are with the families.

04:52

I hope they are.

04:57

Now you might expect that pastors, every time that that is said, we cheer and write on.

05:04

Maybe some do.

05:06

I have to confess that there's a certain amount of cynicism that I harbor when I hear public

05:11

officials speak this way.

05:14

It almost feels performative to say our thoughts and our prayers are with you.

05:21

especially when nothing changes in terms of policies about especially assault rifles.

05:28

I can speak directly to that.

05:34

I think about friends of mine in Minnesota who, many of them, inherited what was called a "pietistic tradition."

05:40

Very Scandinavian. Very quiet people.

05:45

But they would say, "You know, sometimes prayers need our feet, too."

05:56

So when we pray, what do we pray for?

06:03

And imagine Jesus praying on our behalf.

06:09

What's that like to know that Jesus is doing more than the thoughts and prayers

06:14

performative thing or casting aspersions on us because maybe we're not

06:18

quite there yet. Jesus is praying for us in ways that as the scripture says even

06:30

as the Spirit prays the words aren't always there but the passion and the

06:35

The hope and the comfort are there.

06:42

This prayer that we heard only part of today, reads a lot like a sermon.

06:50

I think if we step back just a little bit, we know, okay, Jesus did not have voice to

06:55

speech technology, so that this was a real time verbatim account of the prayer that he

07:00

actually prayed. That might disturb you, I don't know. I'm going to say that's okay.

07:12

Because these are things that reflect the spirit of who Jesus is, and what He

07:17

is about, and what He continues to be about, and to do in the world.

07:24

It's also significant. Not only his first followers needed this prayer, but so do

07:31

those people who receive John's gospel first. A small community, estranged from

07:38

their larger faith community, perplexed, wondering if this is the right path for

07:45

them, but also living under the subjugation of a Roman Empire. If we were

07:51

to look at some of the words before Jesus' prayer. In fact, when he says after these

07:56

words Jesus prayed, these words are hard times are coming. Hard times are coming. And so,

08:12

Dear Church, Jesus prays for us.

08:18

And hard times, as real as they are--

08:20

and I think we all get that--

08:24

that's not the full story.

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Even those newscasts 24/7 that are just

08:32

salvo after salvo of heartbreaking accounts,

08:39

Even they, as real as they are, aren't the whole story.

08:48

And so Jesus prays things like God entrusts care of all creation

08:56

in the world and us.

09:00

To this Jesus, the word made flesh.

09:06

And this living, breathing, incarnate Word has words to say to us, teaching us.

09:16

And this same Jesus as risen Christ imparts the Spirit of God, of Christ, to the Church,

09:26

saying yeah, hard times are coming, they are inevitable, they are unfortunately part of

09:34

the deal of being human. But the rest of the story is that we all are entrusted to God's care.

09:46

And that God has something to say to us and with those disciples,

09:51

entrusts us with carrying on that work. A work that began from the foundation of the world.

09:59

The mending of all creation, if you like.

10:06

I noticed in some devotions just now, we're reading and rereading the first chapter of

10:12

Ephesians, that letter that is written to remind us of God's audacious end game,

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which really is the restoration of all things.

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You may have heard that world language.

10:35

Some are tempted to cordon off the frozen chosen with the rest of the world.

10:43

Well, dear friends, we're dealing with a gospel of multiple meanings.

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has multiple meetings and world has multiple meetings as well. And so when

10:59

Jesus prays it's not for the sake of the world system of governance one meaning

11:05

of world but I think we can reasonably say based on Jesus own witness that the

11:14

world as in all of us in it and the creative world. God never gives up on.

11:23

Oh my Sunday school teachers, will I be able to quote this verse properly? For

11:29

God so loved the world, Jesus says to Nicodemus, that God gave the only begotten

11:38

Son, that whoever would believe would not perish would have eternal life, and that

11:43

God did not send the sun into the world to condemn the world, but that through the sun the world might be saved.

11:57

So yes, Jesus prays for the disciples, for the communities of disciples that follow,

and prays for the world.

12:10

Some people like to identify this as lineage, and I don't know.

12:15

I find it confusing, but maybe you will find it helpful.

12:19

And we can bracket my confusion and deal with that later.

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But the lineage goes something like God giving the world

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to Jesus, Jesus entrusting that same world to spirit,

12:37

and trusting that word to disciples who then take it out into the wider world.

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Now most of that works for me, but I get a little tripped up in some of the details occasionally.

12:53

But in this prayer/sermon, I think the unambiguous message among maybe multiple meanings and other twists and turns

13:07

Hard times are coming and that is real, but there is something that is even more real.

13:13

That is the eternal love and care of a God whose unwavering, steadfast love,

13:22

ultimately, is the most real of all.

13:29

Amen.