

## May We Be One

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Seventh Sunday of Easter: Year A: **John 17:1-11**  
May 20-21, 2023

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, <sup>2</sup>since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. <sup>3</sup>And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. <sup>4</sup>I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. <sup>5</sup>So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

<sup>6</sup>“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. <sup>7</sup>Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; <sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.

<sup>11</sup>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.

*Jesus prays this last prayer for His disciples. He is worried about them and asks God to protect them, the ones He has loved. He desires them to be one as He and His Father are one. We have a hard time living as One people. May we learn from Jesus.*

Beloved of God, may we be one in God, from God, to God and for God. Amen.

If any of you have read the book or seen the movie, *The Shack*, written in 2007, you know that God in three persons is truly One God. The main character, Mack, has experienced great pain, a real tragedy. He returns to the place where it all happened, the shack, and there meets the Triune God. One is a large black woman, the other a slight of frame Asian woman, and the third, a Hebrew man. His thoughts are tumbling through his mind.

“Since there were three of them, maybe this was a Trinity sort of thing. But two women and a man and none of them white? Then again, why had he naturally assumed that God would be white?....(Mack) focused on the one question he most wanted answered.

“Then, which one of you is God?”

“I am,” said all three in unison. Mack looked from one to the next, and even though he couldn’t begin to grasp what he was seeing and hearing, he somehow believed them. (The Shack. Wm. Paul Young. Windblown Media. Los Angeles, CA. 2007. Pg. 87.)

When Mack is in the garden with the Spirit, Papa and Jesus know what they’ve been talking about. Or while in the carpenter’s shop with Jesus, the other two know what is going on. This Triune God is only One.

In our text for today, Jesus knows He is about to die and return to God the Father. He asks God to glorify Him and put Him in His rightful place again where He was in the Father’s presence, as Jesus was, before the world existed. They are One.

In this most intimate prayer imaginable, Jesus makes a final request of His own Father. A prayer for protection for the disciples. “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.” (Vs. 11)

Jesus knows the world is not a safe place for His disciples currently. Their lives, actions and words will be scrutinized. Thus, He prays for their protection, in order that, they may be one. “Protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.”

They they, may be one. As God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit are One.

This last week, Kathy Cisar, myself and all the participants at Synod Assembly heard story after story directly from refugees. We heard that travelling by oneself is incredibly dangerous. But to travel in numbers – as one group – is much safer.

Jesus prayed to His own Father, that the disciples travel as one in life, action, and words...to the glory of God. We say it about our own church, don’t we? Church Better Together. King of Glory is a stronger congregation because of the partnership with Zion Lutheran and Trinity Lutheran. We are better together. Do you know how this partnership began? It began through our differences. Prs Joel and Sonja Pancoast came to me, a year or so after I arrived.

“You have senior programming we don’t. We have youth programming you don’t. Shall we try this together?”

Church better together came to life through our differences. We are stronger and more resilient for the partnership.

From the beginning of creation, God intentionally put diversity of life together! Brown fish, blue fish, green fish. Little birds, large birds and 'birds' that don't even fly! Cattle, pigs, snails, and beetles graciously allow we humans to live alongside of them. There are flowers called daisies, pansies, geraniums and dandelions. Without one of them, creation isn't complete. God created all of this majesty to live together as one.

Even our beloved country came to life through diversity. The original thirteen colonies which had rebelled against Great Britain's rule, became one new nation. E Pluribus Unum. Out of many, one. Or also translated, 'one from many.'  
([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E\\_pluribus\\_unum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E_pluribus_unum))

So when did diversity and differences become so negative? When did diversity and difference become so polarizing? More to the point, who made up the rule that says, a multiplicity of religions and denominations, races and peoples, are bad? We decided that when we trusted fear more than we trust God.

Isn't it interesting that when tragedy comes in the form of hurricanes or tornadoes or earthquakes or mass shootings, how quickly our barriers fall and we search for any survivors. Fear runs the other way as we rise to the occasion of remembering we are but one of many. We listen for the human cries under the rubble, no matter if they come from white people or people of color. Whether they are gay or straight. We are unified in our prayers that all might survive. Rescuers are joined as one to search and rescue...human beings.

Life returns to normalcy once more and we fall into the pattern of thinking about me, myself and I. One. Instead of all. We decide to trust fear more than God.

Fear is easier than trust, I believe. To choose not to encounter the other is simpler than finding courage to learn and engage. To listen only to one source of information rather than read and hear from many sources is more comfortable. Life doesn't demand much when we just stay in our lane.

Yet the life of the Christ demonstrates just the opposite! Jesus went to the outcasts! He went to the dying. He found the hungry. He crossed the border to

speak to the woman at the well. He didn't chose the easy route. Jesus wanted His followers to be one with Him and in Him and for Him.

Jesus prayed for His disciples, which means Jesus prays for us! Jesus prays for us. We are constantly on the lips and heart of Jesus, the Son of God, who prays for our well-being, for our protection, for our courage to share the Good News, for our joy as we live in Him, for our unity as believers.

At this time, we need the Good News that Jesus loves all people more than ever. We need to share this story so that unity and love and be realized. As St. Paul wrote to the church in Galatia, 'There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.' (Ch 3: 28)

During our evening prayer service on Wednesday night in El Paso, the worship leaders invited the refugees staying at Igelsia Luterana Christo Rey (Christo Rey Lutheran Church <https://iglesiacrstorey.wixsite.com/luterana>) to come forward. Then we, the assembly were invited to come forward as well and lay hands on them in prayer as we sang, "Here I Am Lord."

There were not many dry eyes in the convention hall as we saw God's children crying. Tears streaming down their faces as we sang God's love over them. We sang, "Send me. Send me." I prayed a prayer of forgiveness, that God would forgive all the bad things and poor choices we've made about our brothers and sisters at the border." I will never forget that moment. May we be one. Amen.