

The Seventh Sunday of Easter
May 24, 2020

“The hour has come” (John 17:1)
By Rev. Ed Weber

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior the risen and ascended Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,
Our text for this seventh Sunday in Easter is from our Gospel reading, John 17:1.

“Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You”.

Here ends our text.

What a prayer we are privileged to once again hear this day. These are the very thoughts and words of our Savior Jesus, true God and true man, that He speaks to His Father. Often called the high priestly prayer, Jesus, the High Priest, prays for the believers. He intercedes for them. His whole reason for giving up His glory in His state of humiliation is for our benefit, for you and me. And now He prays to His Father that He would glorify His Son and that the Son would glorify the Father. There is mutual glorification in the saving of lost sinners. On the eve before Jesus crucifixion Jesus willingly accepts His work that the Father gives to Him.

- I. The time has come for Jesus to glorify the Father and be glorified by the Father

This little baby born to Mary, in a humble manger, would be glorified by His Heavenly Father. Jesus was born a true man, and yet He also was glorified by His Father to have all authority and the power to give eternal life. Scripture shows glimpses of Jesus’ authority over demons and power over sickness, power over death. Jesus is true God in the flesh. And yet, He didn’t use His power always. He hid it and humbled Himself. Especially, He did this when the hour had come.

It was the hour of all hours, the 9th hour, when darkness covered the land, yet only 3pm in the afternoon. There on the cross, Jesus completed the work of salvation for all of mankind. Jesus glorified His Father by obeying His will and taking the

punishment for all the world's sins. The earth shook at that hour. The veil was torn and it was finished. Jesus paid for the world's sins with His precious blood.

So we sang...

*How vast Your mercy to accept the burden of our sin
And bow Your head in cruel death
to make us clean within.*

*But now the bonds of death are burst,
The ransom has been paid;
You now ascend the
Father's throne
In robes of light arrayed.*

Oh, how the world had waited for this hour. Ever since man lost the image of God in the fall, ever since Adam and Eve lost the holiness and glory that the Father had given to them, all mankind had awaited this moment in time. Sinful man, you and I waited for the restoration of our time. Instead of eternal punishment for our sins, Jesus prays to His Father and speaks of the believers that the Father has given to His Son to give them eternal life!

Count how many times the word "give" is used in this chapter 17. It's used 17 times. For everything that we have and our new relationship to God is a gift from Him. It is a free gift. God receives all the glory for making this possible by the sacrifice of Jesus! There is no man's part and God's part working together to get to heaven. No! Jesus did it all! He did it all when the hour came, the 9th hour, and said "It is finished". What glory Jesus gave to His Father by loving the sinful world by even laying down His life for it.

And the Father glorifies His Son. Jesus is raised from the dead! His human nature is no longer humbled but glorified! This is what we've been hearing about these past 40 days since Easter. Jesus passes through locked doors to suddenly appear to His disciples. In one moment, He is breaking bread with the Emmaus disciples and in the next moment, He disappears and instantaneously reappears to other disciples.

And then, Jesus is glorified by His ascension to heaven where He is seated at the right hand of God. That means He is using all His power for the good of His believers. Before Jesus left, He said to His disciples in Matthew 28.

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Yes, Jesus is glorified with all authority. He has triumphed over all His enemies who rejected Him. He judged them when He descended to hell before He rose from the dead.

But, Jesus is glorified especially by the believers that the Father has given Him.

“I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. 10 And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them.

II. The hour has come so that believers would also be one with God

11 Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.

What an amazing discovery this is for the believer. He or she is united with other believers by the same grace that has saved his or her lost soul. The same gift of eternal life is received by all believers. And they are united with God through faith and in unity with each other in the body of Christ.

The unity between the Father and the Son is a unity by its very nature of the divine essence. But, the unity that the believer has is not by nature, for our nature is a sinful nature. The unity that we enjoy with God and with other believers is a gift. It is 100% a gift and not by any work that sinful man does.

The hour of salvation comes to believers through faith. And this hour of the creation of faith is a gift from God, given in baptism. It is His work alone to bestow on a sinner the new life that Jesus won by His death on the cross.

How is this done? Jesus talks to His Father in prayer about how this unity happened.

It is done by His word.

“I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world.

To know God's name is to know salvation, Redeemer, Savior, Prince of Peace, Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Immanuel, the Bread of Life, the Door, the Good Shepherd, the Light of the world...

Jesus told His disciples the words of eternal life. Jesus told them that He came forth from the Father and the disciples believed.

7 Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. 8 For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

So also, in John 20 we read,

“These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing you may have life in His name.” (John 20:31)

And now, with all authority, Jesus gives His church the command to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

It is through baptism itself that God claims a sinner as His own in the name of the Triune God. The Holy Spirit makes His temple in the believer's heart. What unity the believer in Jesus enjoys! So before Jesus ascends, He tells how unity with God happens, baptism, and commands His church to use the means through which He makes people His children.

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

This unity is forever. Jesus promises that He will be with His disciples to the end of the age. Jesus, our High priest who intercedes for us continually!

What a prayer the believer hears from the lips of Jesus that Jesus prays for you and me! All this is possible because, and only because, Jesus glorified His Father when the hour of suffering and death came. The hour came and Jesus did not flee.

III. Now, Jesus calls on His people to use time given to them to glorify God

God's word tells us in 1 Peter 4:11, the verse right before our epistle begins...

11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

And if in using our time to serve God, we suffer, our epistle tells us...

Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

So we just sang in stanza 5...

Christ Jesus, be our present joy, Our future great reward; Our only glory, may it be to glory in the Lord!

All that we are and all that we have is a gift from God, the God of grace. It is our great joy and privilege to serve our God with our entire lives. God will help us by His forgiveness and mercy. So our epistle concludes with these words of comfort from our God who will also glorify us.

But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. 11 To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen

"The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Amen. (Galatians 4:7)