

7th Sunday of Easter
“Sent into the world with the Word of Truth” John 17:14-20
May 12, 2024
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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 7th Sunday of Easter is from our Gospel reading, John 17:14-20.

“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. 20 “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;”

So far the text...

If you went to your local grocery store, HEB, this week, you probably noticed that there was something special going on. Here in Mercedes, the first thing that you saw when you entered the store was a big display of...chocolate covered strawberries. They were nicely packaged with a ribbon on them. And, then if you looked to your right, there in the corner was a lot of activity going on at the flower and balloon department. HEB, like other stores, recognizes that people want to give something special to their moms – a gift showing their love to them.

Indeed, we give thanks to God for our moms especially this weekend and dads too. For Christian children receive from their Christian moms not only care and nurture, but they also receive love in a way that only Christian moms can give – the love of Christ.

Jesus, in His high priestly prayer, prays for His church, those who have been given to Him by His Father...those who have received the Word of truth and have believed. Jesus prays for Christian moms who have believed in Him and through their most honored role of motherhood have given the most precious gift to their children, that they themselves have received – the Word of truth.

Throughout this Gospel reading, we have heard Jesus refer to the “world” quite a few times. Jesus is not speaking of the physical planet earth or even the population of the whole world. He is speaking specifically about the unbelieving people in this world – those who do not have faith in Him. Jesus draws a clear distinction between His church of believers and the sinful unbelieving world.

Christian mothers, fathers, and their believing children live in and among unbelievers, “the world”. Jesus says that they are not of the world, just as Jesus is not of the world. How is this possible? Jesus clearly tells us.

“14 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world,”

Christians have been given a gift. We’re not special in ourselves. We’re born sinful just like all the world. But God the Father, in His mercy, gives those whom He has chosen to Jesus to hear His word and receive the gift of eternal life! Listen to the opening verses of John 17:

“Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, 2 as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

The believer comes to the Father, knows the Father, is one with the Father, only because the Son has made this possible by His redeeming work on the cross. In Jesus’ high priestly prayer, Jesus knows that the hour is upon Him to give His life for the sins of the world and so glorify His Father. By Jesus’ death on the cross, He has been given authority over all flesh. He has won the victory over the world, the devil and our sinful flesh. And His resurrection proves that He has the gift of eternal life to give to His church of believers.

This gift of knowing the Triune God by faith is something you can’t buy in HEB or any store. It is given through the hearing of His word of truth – the Gospel, the truth of what Jesus accomplished. And when a person hears this truth, whether you are a mom, dad or child, Jew or Gentile as we heard last week, the Holy Spirit gives faith to believe and the gift of eternal life.

How can you receive this gift? It comes to you from another believer who was sent to you.

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. 20 “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;”

And we give thanks to God that He has sent our Christian moms and dads to us who have faithfully given us the word of truth, and especially made sure we received the gift of baptism, the seal of our faith. Before Jesus ascended, He said these words in Matthew 28 which we know so well as the Great Commission.

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

Again, Jesus has all authority because of His victory over all evil on the cross. And He sends His believers with the Word, teaching all things of the word of His truth, Law and Gospel so that others may believe and become disciples and be washed in the sacrament of Baptism!

Jesus sends moms and dads especially to their children with these gifts. And through them, the children also become united with Jesus and separated from the world. And the children are eternally thankful!

Moms and dads are also comforted to know that their children are protected by the word of truth. Why is this so comforting? Because Jesus does not take us out of an unbelieving world. But He sends us into the world, the very world that hates a Christian because the Christian has received the gift of salvation. But Jesus sends us into the world in order that others may believe through the word that moms, dads and children speak – the Good News of Jesus.

“Listen, listen God is calling, through the Word inviting, offering forgiveness, comfort and joy”, so the children sang this hymn. God is calling! God is inviting! With His Word! And offering His gifts of forgiveness, comfort and joy!

*“Jesus gave His mandate. Share the Good News. That He came to save us and set us free!
Listen!”*

The believers, God’s people, friends of Christ, the branches connected to the True Vine, are calling the world to listen to what Jesus has done! He has saved the world and freed the world from sin. Believe in Him and it is yours today!

*“Let none be forgotten! Throughout the world! In the Triune name of God, go and baptize!
Listen!”*

“But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.”

Jesus comes to the Father, ascends to the Father and sits on His right hand in glory reigning over His church, protecting them from the evil one through His Word and Sacraments. And the church has His joy. Complete joy! Joy of knowing the Father, joy of knowing the Spirit and the Son, joy of having peace, forgiveness, comfort and life in Jesus’ name! Now and forevermore. What a High priestly prayer Jesus prays for us, His church, believing moms, dads, and children. All glory to God! Amen. **“And this peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)**