

May 8, 2016
Sermon for Seventh Sunday of Easter (Mother's Day)
St Peter Lutheran Church
Bowie, TX
Larry Knobloch, Pastor
John 17:20-26

J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

John 17:20–26 (ESV)

²⁰ “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. ²⁴ Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Amen.

The scene is Nazi Germany at one of Hitler's death camps. There was a family named Rosenberg. Solomon Rosenberg and his wife were there and also their two sons, Jacob and David as well as Solomon's aged parents.

Because of the extreme working conditions as well as the lack of decent food or rest, the aged grandparents were unable to keep up with the workload very long and when they were unable to keep up with the work demanded of them, they were executed. It was that simple, no work, no life.

Solomon feared that his younger son David would be the next to go. You see, David was handicapped and often unable to keep up, but so far, his family as well as other workers helped to cover David's inability so thus far, he had gone un noticed. Solomon was assigned to a on a different work crew, separated from his family every morning. Each evening he returned to his family, fearing that David would no longer be there.

Returning home one evening, his fear was realized. David was no where to be found. Solomon looked around hoping to find his son when his eyes fell on his older son, Jacob...who was huddled up in a corner crying.

The father came to his son asking: "Where is David? Did they take him today?"

Jacob replied sadly, "Yes."

Solomon then noticed that his wife was not there either and asked his son, "But where is mother? She was strong, she could work...where is she?"

Through his tears Jacob replied: "Papa, they came here for David, and he started to cry. And so Mother pleaded with the guards to go along, and they let her. I saw them go, Papa".

"Mother was holding David in her arms so that he would not be scared".

This earthly story is a picture of what God did for His people in a much greater way by sending His Son, Jesus Christ.

The story of Solomon and his family is sort of a reflection of our text this morning. John 17 begins with Jesus praying to the God the Father for strength just before He heads off to the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus prays for Himself and the strength to accomplish the mission that the Father has laid out for Him.

Jesus being true man as well as true God, felt fear and weakness within His physical body. Even though He knew that God would insure His victory over death, He still asked for the strength to carry out the task.

But Jesus didn't stop there, He followed His prayers for Himself with prayers for His followers, His people. Jesus didn't pray for the world at this time but He prayed for His disciples and followers, the ones who would be bearing the brunt of the trouble that was coming during the time before His physical death and afterwards as they spread the Truth of the Gospel to the world following the Great Commission given in Matthew 28: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. ..."*

He asked for God the Father to protect them. Jesus cared for His followers and did not want to leave them totally alone as they faced the dangerous and uncaring world. Jesus asked the Father to protect them by His name, protect their belief in Him so that they might remain as His children, part of God, part of His family that is never left behind.

Going back to the imperfect reflection in our story from the death camp, we see the mother caring for her son. It is entirely possible that she had been praying for herself, praying for the strength to carry on day by day; yes for herself, but also so that she could care for her family.

And when the time came, just like Christ, she gave no thought for herself when the guards came to take her son, but only for him...as she picked up her son to carry and comfort him as he went to his death, knowing full well that her last act of comfort would cost her very life also. Just as Jesus' last thoughts of His life were for His people, so too were the mother's as she comforted her son. This my friends is what being a mother truly is.

I am not trying to make the point this morning that all mothers are Christ-like or that we should elevate them to the level of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, but mothers are a wonderful gift from God that He has given us to care for us and to show us, to give us a hint of God's love for us through their love and nurturing that is shown to us upon this earth.

We have spoken about the Greek word "*agape*" or unconditional love? Our best example of that unconditional love is found here from our mothers.

Yes, moms fail sometimes too. They are subject to the same failings of sin just like everyone else, but God has given them that special gift of love and nurturing that makes them a mother.

In fact a mother will sometimes go hungry in order that her children might eat, and not even mention it. I have spoken to several mothers that have told me of nights where they went hungry so that their children could eat. Their children never had a clue.

Many of us have seen it in our own families, but one of my favorite examples come from an old song. It's by Jimmy Dean and is called IOU. I plan on playing it during the offering. It just seems fitting for Mother's Day. I don't remember all of the words but he is remembering his mother and one example is when there are three hungry people and only two pieces of pie, mom would suddenly remember that she wasn't hungry after all...and she really doesn't like apple pie anyway.

There is also an ancient symbol of Jesus' suffering and death, it is the pelican.

It might seem strange to us until we find out that in times of great need, the pelican will actually give all of herself, including piercing herself and giving her blood to feed her young, up to and past the point of sacrifice so that they might live.

Most Christian mothers, if the situation called it, would do the same.

Now, we know that any female can give birth, can be a biological parent but it takes love to be a mother. One major key in this equation is the title Christian. Christian is not simply a title that a mother bestows upon themselves but it is one that comes for the mother's actions. As the Holy Spirit works in a mother's heart, she begins to not only care physically for her (and sometimes other) children but spiritually caring for them also.

How many of us received our first Christian education from our mothers? Some even before birth as we were carried in her womb to church to hear God's Word proclaimed, as she sang songs to us, read Bible stories to us or even more importantly as the Spirit led her to carry us to the waters of Baptism where we received the Holy Spirit also.

As I said earlier, not every bio-mother deserves the title of Mom, Momma, *mute'*, Ma Ma' or whatever endearing term that we give our mothers, but God provides plenty of mothers for all of the children of the world. Foster moms and adopted moms often fill the void left in the lives of young people, Some even find mothers after birth and later in life in the form of grandmothers, aunts, older siblings, teachers or even friends that take the time to give counsel, aid, and love to someone that needs it.

Some—do not like mother's day ... calling it a secular, made-up holiday with no place in the church—but God made mothers.

Mother's point us to God.

Through the love, nurturing, and sacrifice that mothers show us on this earth we can see and better understand the great love that God has for us shown through his sacrifice for us, as He gave His only begotten Son to die for us.

It was only in this way that we could be saved and have eternal life with Him in Heaven. Jesus, true God as well as true man, loved us enough to pay the price for our sins so that all that call upon His name in faith would not perish but have eternal life.

So, in closing, to all mothers, either by birth, adoption, or by making the decision to care for someone that needed a mother, please rise.

On behalf of all of us that are children here today, God Bless you and THANK YOU! Everyone please rise—and to all—the Peace of God which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds unto Christ Jesus.

Amen.

Sermon Outline

Jesus' High Priestly Prayer
(John 17:20–26)

- I. Jesus prayed for Himself and prayed for us also.
- II. We pray for ourselves and others too.
- III. We can reflect Jesus' unconditional love for others in our lives too.