



# Grow! Pray! Study!

Servants of Christ United Methodist Parish—Weekly Guide—May 13, 2018  
Seventh Sunday of Easter

## “She’s a Keeper’

### A Sermon by

Rev. Dr. Chris McNeill

#### Scriptures:

Acts 1:1-11      Ephesians 1:15-23  
Psalm 47      John 17:6-19

#### Scripture Lesson — John 17:6-19 New King James

<sup>6</sup>“I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. <sup>7</sup> Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup>“I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. <sup>10</sup> And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. <sup>11</sup> 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*. <sup>12</sup> While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. <sup>13</sup> But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

## Prayer of the Day

Gracious and glorious God, you have chosen us as your own, and by the powerful name of Christ you protect us from evil. By your Spirit transform us and your beloved world, that we may find our joy in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

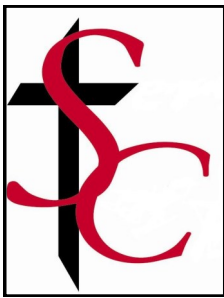
Protection. Unity. Joy. Truth.

On a night of washing feet and giving the first Lord's Supper, Jesus prays his will over the disciples. Far from a prayer for safety, that criminals would not hurt, or that our loved ones would get well, Jesus sets forth eternal words that will carry the disciples, and us, into the Kingdom.

He prays that we would be protected. I pray for protection every time I get in the car and drive down I-45. But Jesus had larger things on his mind. He prayed that we would be protected from the evil one. That sounds a little cryptic, but there is real evil in this world. There is deception every day. Some parts of the Body of Christ are being torn apart. Is that God's will? No, there is a... force, person, fallen angel, accuser that does not like love. This is not how we behave. A lot more is at work here. So, this is a biggie.

Unity. Next... Leadership guru, Patrick Lencioni, says any company, church, organization must have certain foundations to be successful. At the very ground level is 'trust.' Without trust there is no honest dialogue, no healthy conflict, and at the end of the day, no success. Jesus knew that if the disciples were going at it in unhealthy ways there would be no way for the gospel to get anywhere. Umm. And I bet the evil one would love that....

Joy. As I mention in the sermon, this is a passive perfect verb: 'they have already been given joy.' It's a done deal, a proclamation. It is a joy that is fully realized in sacrificial love where we are strong (continued next page)



## Servants of Christ United Methodist Parish

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*(continued from previous page)*  
enough in Christ to make the choice to serve others. In the washing of feet, Jesus was tak-

ing the place below servants--- they washed feet at the door while Jesus scooted around a table on his knees. Jesus is strong love. He can give his life tomorrow because he is loaded with eternal life. We rest with him when we serve and we are made strong. And that joy pours out.

Truth. That one's difficult. In short, Jesus prays that we would be 'well,' 'whole.' If I follow my truth things don't usually end well. As Methodists, John Wesley gave us a pathway to know what is true. What does scripture say? What does 2,000 years of Church history say? What is my experience of it? Is this reasonable? If I don't have all of these, I know for myself that I will end up believing the moon is made out of green cheese. ...believe... Jesus is praying that we would be grounded in the Ground of all Being, the eternal triune relationship of love whom we call God.

The Easter season is drawing to a close; a season in which we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, and the resurrection God wants each of us to experience. But there is a hitch: one can't be raised from death unless one first dies. So what is it in us that must die, before the new life of Christian faith can take root in our living? What old ways of thinking and doing and being do we need to let go, before we can receive the gift of a new and better way? What change do we resist, that prevents us from following the lead of God's Holy Spirit. Protection, unity, joy and truth: the gifts that Christ would give us today. Do we have the faith and the courage to receive them?

Exploring the Gospel:

1. What old ways of thinking and believing did the disciples have to give up in order to follow Jesus?
2. How did their time with him cause them to experience God in a very different way?
3. How did the life Jesus commended to them serve as a powerful blessing for them?

Quotes:

"Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayer is in the one who hears it and not in the one who says it, our prayers do make a difference." —Max Lucado

"To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing." —Martin Luther

"The Reality is, my prayers don't change God. But, I am convinced prayer changes me. Praying boldly boots me out of that stale place of religious habit into authentic connection with God Himself." —Lysa TerKeurst

## Lifting up Our Church Family in Prayer

### Prayers of Praise and Thanksgiving:

For all of our leadership past, present, and future

For those who live with open hearts and hands

### Prayers for Health and Healing:

Pastor Chris McNeill, Annie Gaspar, Nelda Zamora, Ruben & Elida Espinoza, Edna Henry, Wilma Beverly, Winna Bjornaas, Edith Owens, Patsy Welsh, Walter Welsh, Gloria Rae, Ruby Bolton, Justine Baly, Christopher Huron, Virginia Hardwick, Bobby Malek, Nathan Fleming, Anne Wofford, Linda Hulsey Bracewell, Alaine Ryan, Bob Allen, Ruth Allen, Wanda Arnold, Doann Flores, Astrid, Harry Rogers, Kim, Kailey, Mason, Mike Young, Alfred Wendelken, Eleanor Robinson, Bobbie Latham, Ed Pierce, Kevin Chapman, Ruben & Mary Espinoza, Juan & Maritza Zamora, Daniel & Tommie Mascorro, Bernice Steele, Nadine Bishop, Carroll Latham, Charles Robinson, Carolyn Dean, Jean Nichols, Leonard, Ashley Urbaniak, Doris Grauerholz, E'mile Landry, Kaylee Barfield, Stephannie Bryant, Jimmy McGee, Luis Ricardo Ochoa, John Beard, Carol Siler, Crossroads Community

### Prayers for Hope:

Please let us know your prayers and hopes by noting them on the Registration pads with your name.

### Prayers for Our Church, Our City, Our State, Our Nation:

Servants of Christ United Methodist Parish, its pastors and its people, City of Houston, Texas, the United States of America, and members of our Armed Forces and their families

### Prayers for our Covenant Mission Partners:

Crossroads, Mission Milby, Technology For All, Southeast Area Ministries, and Justice For Our Neighbors

## Regular Sunday Schedule

—9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Small Groups

—10:30 a.m. Celebration Worship Sanctuary