

Morrison Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Sunday, May 8, 2005

7th Sunday of Easter

John 17:1-11

Pastor Randy Ott

What is on Jesus' Mind?

Understanding the mind of a woman can be a bit of a challenging thing, can't it? It was a lot easier when you were a child, wasn't it, to understand the mind of your mother? That one wasn't hard to figure out. You knew what was on the mind of your mother when you were a child. You knew your mother loved you and cared for you and was very concerned about what happened to you. At least in my house, I don't know what it was like in your house, but when I was growing up, if you had the misfortune of doing something you weren't supposed to do and broke something and there was glass all over and you were laying in the middle of it—on the weekend, when Dad was there, Dad's first words out of his mouth wouldn't be, "Are you alright?" His first words were, "You dummy. What were you thinking?" But Mom's first words would be, "Are you okay? Are you hurt?" It wasn't hard to understand the mind of your mother.

This morning we get a glimpse in the mind, not of our mother, but the mind of our Savior. We see that he has a love and a concern for us that even exceeds the love and concern our mothers have for us. We see Jesus in this intimate conversation with the heavenly Father just hours before he would be arrested and less than 24 hours before he would endure the agony of hell to take away our sins. At that point in time, what is on Jesus' mind?—his mission and his messengers. He prays that the Father would enable him to glorify the Father as he carries out his work. Then he prays that God would help us to glorify God as we carry out the Word God has given to us. It is an amazing thing to see, I think.

One of the truths is that as we go through this life, we are going to have a lot of difficulties that a mother's touch can't fix—things that a band-aid and a hug won't chase away like when we were a child. We are going to have all kinds of difficulties, we are going to suffer, there are all kinds of things we are going to endure—what a wonderful thing it is for us this morning to see what is on Jesus' mind—to see that when we face them, one of his utmost concerns is that the Triune God help us and protect us. Really that is what is on his mind when he prays that God would help Jesus glorify the Father as he carries out his work because his work benefits you and I and every last person in this world. The work of Jesus, he speaks of in our text, as though it were already completed. Did you notice that? He said, "*I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.*" His work wasn't done yet. He still had to carry the cross, endure the agony of hell on that cross, and take all of our sins on himself and take the punishment that we all deserve—hell itself. Yet he speaks of it with that kind of certainty that it was already completed.

He speaks of it this way because his love for us is so certain that his love for us would not allow him to come down off the cross. His love would not allow us to be condemned to hell. His love for us could not allow anything to happen except that he bring to completion the work the Father gave him.

Think about the work the Father gave him. The work the Father gave him was to leave heaven, become true man at the same time that he was true God, and live under the Law. Think about this. If there is ever a job that has been given to anyone that was beneath them, this is it, right? You've been asked to do things in your life probably that made you shake your head and decide to let someone else do it because it was beneath you. You've never even been close to being as right as it would be in this case. Here is true God—the one who created us—putting himself under the Law because you and I are sinners. We are born in sin. Once we are born, we commit sins. We turn our back on God. We look at some of the tasks that God himself has given us as being beneath us. Someone else should just go take care of those little things—but not our God. Our God looks at every single one of us as so precious that he carries this task to completion so that he might glorify the Father as his act of worship.

That is probably something to remember—that each of these little tasks that we carry out in our daily lives, whether as a mother or a father or a child, wherever we find ourselves in our lives—it can be our act of worship. It is either going to be worship that is pleasing to God, or it is going to be worship that is not pleasing to God. It doesn't matter what task we are carrying out, we too will want to glorify the Father. There is only one simple reason why—because the Son carried his work to completion. The Father heard his prayer. The Father strengthened the Son and was with the Son and they carried out together the task that God had planned from the beginning of the world—the salvation of us, the salvation of the world. That is what is on Jesus' mind shortly before he goes through hell.

That might not surprise us, we might expect that. But the next thing that is on his mind should just floor us. It should just humble us and strike us with thankful awe that our God, the night before he is going to go through this hell and endure all the agony that we should for all of eternity condensed down into that time upon the cross—he prays for us because he knows that soon he would ascend into heaven. Forty days after his resurrection, as we celebrated this past Thursday, and his visible presence would be taken from us. He knows the kind of worry and concern that would produce among the sheep that he had shepherded during his three years of his public ministry—his disciples. He knew that they were all going to desert him that night. He knew that they were still “works in progress” so to speak, and he knew that they needed the Father's help—so he prays for them. He prays that God would be with them to protect them and sustain them so that they may glorify the Father and that they may be one as the Father and the Son are one. That is not agreeing to disagree, but that is perfect unity in who God is and what God has done and what God's Word teaches us about that. That is God's desire for his people. He prays for us.

That should humble us, but it should also instruct us a little bit. It should remind us that God has given to us a very important task to carry out. So important that he puts our interests even ahead of his own and lives and dies in our place. So important that he

spends this time in prayer for us on the night that he was betrayed. The purpose that we have is to live to glorify God and to live to share God with one another and live to share God's message of salvation with those who don't yet believe. There are people that are going through this life and facing the hurts and the sorrows and the difficulties that come because we live in a sinful world. They are trying to face them on their own. It's a weight that is too heavy to carry. Sure you might take a few steps for a little while, but eventually your knees are going to buckle, your back is going to break and those burdens of this world are going to crush you—if not in this world, certainly in hell.

That is what sin does to us. That's why Jesus lived and died in our place. That's why he gives us the message of reconciliation to proclaim. That's why he prays that we may glorify him in the world, because this is his plan—that we share the message of salvation. That we build up those who believe, that we reach out to those who don't yet believe, so that they may know this glorious truth of what is on Jesus' mind—his love and his concern. He prays for us and he is still praying for us. He still intercedes for us at the Father's right hand—each and every time that we are shown our sin from God's Word and we ask the Lord for forgiveness, Jesus is at the Father's right hand, so to speak, and he is saying you are forgiven because Jesus lived and died in your place.

Once we realize this glorious truth, it moves us to want to share the message. It moves us to want to share what is on Jesus' mind with others, because they are on his mind, and he has taken away their sins. God's love for you and I and for the world is incredible. It's our privilege to share it.

The love our God has for us goes even beyond a mother's love. It goes into perfection at all times to sustain us with his everlasting arms. **WE ARE ON JESUS' MIND**, but not only that—his arms lift us up as they assure us of forgiveness in the Sacrament and as they assure us that we are his children. He reminds us that **WE HAVE A TASK AND THAT IS TO SHARE THAT MESSAGE**. Lord willing, that is what is on our minds.