

Seventh Sunday of Easter – John

TO LEAVE OR BE LEFT?

John 17:1-11

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Mark Marius

[16:32 The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. 33I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!"]

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, 2since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. 4I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. 5So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

6I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; 8for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. 9I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on

behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. 10All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. 11And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

The 7th Sunday of Easter falls between the Ascension and the Pentecost. So in a sense Jesus has left the building, the planet, our world. He has returned to his heavenly Father. So while this “high priestly prayer,” in the context of John, is a prayer for his followers just before Jesus achieves his glory on the cross, we can also hear it this Sunday as a prayer for those he leaves behind post ascension (v. 11 “I am no longer in the world, but yet they are in the world,...”)

The pericope also begins, “After Jesus had spoken these words.” It might be good to know what those words are. There are a lot of words in Chapter 16 so I only include the last two to help shape the context.

DIAGNOSIS: Leaving Is Losing

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) : *We Are in the World*

Being in the world is very problematic for us. The world seduces us into taking control of what we can. Even when God comes to us, in the person of Jesus, or even as the Holy Spirit, we still have a hard time giving up control. If we don't like where Jesus is leading us we go ahead and leave (v. 32). We like to be able to read the writing on the wall and jump ship at the first sign of trouble. We sell houses and stocks, leaving the volatile markets before the price tumbles,” leaving us without our precious capital. We go to the doctors at the first sneeze in

order to beat the cold before the cold leaves us feeling miserable. We move out and leave the neighborhood before the neighborhood goes bad. So when it looks like Jesus will be leaving the world we head back to what we know.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) : *The World Doesn't Know God*

We are in the world and know the ways of the world. We scatter as Jesus predicts his disciples would before his crucifixion. We scatter after Jesus ascends into heaven. We scatter when we can't agree on how to read and interpret the Bible. We scatter when we can't agree on sacraments and doctrine. We scatter, we splinter, and we become the true champions of faith while the others fall away. We persecute in order not to be persecuted. It's the way of the world we live in. Unfortunately living like this we fail to know God. And not knowing God means not knowing his ways.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) : *We Don't Know Eternal life*

The problem of not knowing God and his ways means we will not know eternal life (v. 3). If we don't have eternal life, our life will end in this world and we miss out on God's peace and blessings. And that is a tough way to live, because the world is a tough place to live apart from God (v. 33). Leaving God alone means we are alone. And being alone, without eternal life, can only mean one thing—the world conquers us with death.

Prognosis: Jesus Leaves Us Better Off

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) : *Jesus Conquers the World*

What was that last part of verse 33 that Jesus proclaims? "But take courage, I have conquered the world!" What better news is there than that-Jesus has conquered the world! So he has the authority (v. 2) to change our lives. And he does so by

reconnecting us to God, restoring our relationship with God, through his glory on the cross. Death and resurrection is the light of the world. The control of the world is in good hands (marked with battle scars, even) so we can stop our individual battles of trying to control every little thing. And instead trust the One in control.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis: (Internal Solution) : *We Know God and Truth*

Jesus' death and resurrection is no secret. It has been proclaimed by the witnesses throughout the ages. And this is how we know God and truth. Jesus gave us the words, this is my body given for you, this is my blood shed for you. And we receive them each Sunday. This is life eternal. Not in some future world, but in the world that Jesus has conquered. Looking through the lens of eternal life our world look markedly different from the view the media and news outlets give you. We see a world of God's promise fulfilled, a world of hope, and a world in which Jesus reigns. We see that world of light which the darkness can't overcome (1:5).

Step 6: Final Prognosis: (External Solution) : *We Are One*

And so maybe John Lennon was picking up on something from St; John when he sang, "You may say that I'm a dreamer / But I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us / And the world will live as one." Imagine that. But we don't have to just dream it, we can live it. We have the protection from God that allows us to live as one, as God and Jesus are one. When we trust God and know that we are his, (our baptism reminds us of that) we live as one with God and with one another. That means giving to God and one another. That means realizing those threats from the world are not more powerful than the Conquerer of this world who guarantees our protection. It is that guarantee that allows us to protect those who don't know God. We don't have to leave others behind when we disagree and have conflict, but rather we

gather everyone up in God's love and grace.