


THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER



May 12, 2024

SANCTIFIED

in the truth

by Drew Downs

Jesus prays that God sanctifies his disciples in the truth. So what does it mean to be sanctified? *To be made holy.*

Sanctification isn't a common word; nor is it one many of us even like to use. And not because it is bad. I just don't think we're totally comfortable with what it means or implies. And to be totally honest, we aren't comfortable when other people use the word, either.

I'm willing to bet that our trepidation has something to do with the idea of human holiness. That we aren't comfortable with the idea of *being* holy. Even if it is God's doing.

Jesus's prayer is that we be sanctified *in the truth*, which is God's word. In a promise, blessing. To be active participants in God's dream, in reconciliation, and redemption. In bringing Good News, justice, love, and joy to everyone. To do our work in God's love.

EASTER

2024

WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

Parenting

Scripture offers some pretty complicated views on parenthood and parenting. And tradition hasn't always been the place to turn for the best advice.

The truth is that being a parent is hard. And just as unique as every person is, that uniqueness compounds with children—because they are just as unique as we are. The experience of being a parent *and a child* produces unique experiences in relationship and identity.

As we approach a pair of secular holidays honoring parents, we'll speak of common themes in stereotypes. In assumptions and reverence. Mothers will get flowers and breakfast and Fathers will grill and get new ties. It is an odd way of showing our *particular* appreciation for a *particular* relationship full of intimacy and complicated grace—only to reduce it to gendered simplicity.

A more thoughtful approach to parenthood invites us to honor and celebrate our relationships *in* their complexity. Even the complexity of knowing what to say besides "I love you" and "thank you."

The original Mother's Day was a call to end war. That all mothers would see a common moral obligation to not support the killing of each other's children. This strikes me as a far more valuable Christian vision. One that helps us see our relationships as complex and honors the complexity of the relationships of others.

May we choose to share the love and joy poured into all of us.

With love,
Drew

EASTER

2024

FOR SUNDAY

Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 12, 2024

Collect

O God, the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: Do not leave us comfortless, but send us your Holy Spirit to strengthen us, and exalt us to that place where our Savior Christ has gone before; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting.

Amen.

Reading

John 17:6-19

Jesus prayed for his disciples, "I 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. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for 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. I 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. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And 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. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth."

EASTER

Reflection

Jesus is preparing for departure. Once they finish dinner, Jesus will head to the garden, where he will be betrayed, arrested, tried, and executed. The events we call the Passion of Christ. And in this passage, we find Jesus praying for his followers. That they continue what they have been taught, commanded to love.

When Jesus says “I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves,” last week’s gospel is certainly ringing in our ears. A teaching about joy coming from love—that joy is what God wants for us. That we will know joy when we love one another.

Now, Jesus praying that their joy be *complete*. In them. As Jesus’s love and joy exists within them as an indwelling.

There is a natural tension for the reader here. Because goodbyes are always sad and a little bit scary. The promise that we’re ready, or that we have what we need is small comfort when we are pretty confident that we’d just rather have the security of his presence with us.

It’s funny, though, to think we can have that permanence, security. To compare the real to the impossible like it is a fair debate. As if the impossibility of total security gets to be something we long for. And then, at the same time, we hold Jesus’s promise of joy in the Advocate as an unknown possibility.

This, of course, is the nature of faith. Not that we are invited to hope for the impossible. But that we trust in the possible in light of a culture that already believes the impossible. Our security is in the love and joy of Jesus. A joy made complete through our love of one another in all circumstances.

ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
215 N. 7TH ST TERRE HAUTE IN 47807
812.232.5165

STSTEPHENSTH.ORG