

Available to listen to on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/U14K7RtD0m0>

7th Sunday of Easter - Sunday 24th May 2020

Jesus Prays For His Followers - John 17v1-11

1-5 Jesus said these things. Then, raising his eyes in prayer, he said:

Father, it's time.

Display the bright splendour of your Son

So the Son in turn may show your bright splendour.

You put him in charge of everything human

So he might give real and eternal life to all in his charge.

And this is the real and eternal life:

That they know you,

The one and only true God,

And Jesus Christ, whom you sent.

I glorified you on earth

By completing down to the last detail

What you assigned me to do.

And now, Father, glorify me with your very own splendour,

The very splendour I had in your presence

Before there was a world.

6-12 I spelled out your character in detail

To the men and women you gave me.

They were yours in the first place;

Then you gave them to me,

And they have now done what you said.

They know now, beyond the shadow of a doubt,

That everything you gave me is first-hand from you,

For the message you gave me, I gave them;

And they took it, and were convinced

That I came from you.

They believed that you sent me.

I pray for them.

I'm not praying for the God-rejecting world

But for those you gave me,

For they are yours by right.

Everything mine is yours, and yours mine,

And my life is on display in them.

For I'm no longer going to be visible in the world;

They'll continue in the world

While I return to you.

Holy Father, guard them as they pursue this life

That you conferred as a gift through me,

So they can be one heart and mind

As we are one heart and mind.

Thought for the week

At the Zoom coffee morning this week just gone we got into a discussion of the positives and negatives of the outworking of Covid-19 in people lives. We were talking about how God is causing people to rise and and be the best they can be at this time and also how through fear the devil is in places stirring things up. Into the conversation came this 1942 quote from C.S. Lewis, the great Christian writer, which is doing the rounds on social media:

“Satan: I will cause anxiety, fear and panic. I will shut down business, schools, places of worship, and sports events. I will cause economic turmoil.

Jesus: I will bring together neighbours, restore the family unit, I will bring dinner back to the kitchen table. I will help people slow down their lives and appreciate what really matters. I will teach my children to rely on me and not the world. I will teach my children to trust me and not their money and material resources.”

It is a brilliant quote which speaks right in to today and that’s especially amazing when you consider it was written in 1942. The small problem is that its utter cobbler. It was not written by C.S. Lewis in 1942 it was written by somebody in America in March 2020. It sounds and smells a lot like Lewis, particularly his Screwtape Letters, but it is not him. The glory and attribution is misplaced on this occasion.

We get a fair bit of that in the world generally. God made the world and keeps it spinning. The world is a living canvas and a very nice place to live. It fits us humans perfectly. That is no accident as God our Father designed and made us and designed and made this world in which we live. It’s not as it should be or as he would want it at the moment but his signature shines through I believe, particularly with new born babies.

But common parlance talks about Mother Nature as some benign faceless force behind our world. Evolution is seen as the mechanism that brought all of this creation about and the fact that’s it’s all here is just accidental. Our lives too are fleeting and of no great value in the scheme of the universe is also a consequence of this Meta Narrative of the age. My mate Phil whose job is to look down a microscope for a living tells me, “I can see evolution as a real thing everywhere.” But Phil along with me sees this as a mechanism used by Father God not as a cold explanation for our existence.

Giving glory and attributing thanks is important and in these days of incredible communication and phenomenal expertise we are sadly at times too lazy to check our facts. That is what Jesus is doing in the gospel reading for today and we could do with taking a lesson from him.

Jesus is not being big headed by saying he has glorified his father on earth through what he has done with the disciples, he’s just calling a spade a spade. When we get to the book of Acts we will see these wobbly first disciples talking and acting just like him, the plan worked, all glory to God. And Jesus knowing what is coming asks to be shown for who he really is. This happens when he is raised from the dead and when he pops up here and there to prove it. Jesus glorified. Absolutely human but so much more!

The prayer that Jesus prays continues and includes us, his friends. Jesus asks that his dad, our heavenly father, would keep an eye on us and work in us his purposes so that we look like little Jesus’s and bring glory to God. That is the exact opposite of the world picture where we were an accidental consequence of an evolutionary process that just simply happened for no reason.

This prayer of Jesus shows that this world is no accident. That God made us to have life and life in all its fullness. Through Jesus living and breathing earthly life and earthly death on the cross we have been forgiven and we are invited to start again with God. And we are not starting again with God as children with their wings clipped. We are starting again with God as fully adopted members of the family of God. By our life and actions we are to try and be the best we can be. We are to dance with God through this life as much as possible and we are by our existence to bring glory to our Father in heaven and our big brother Jesus.

How to gauge how you are doing. Well you could have a look at that not C.S. Lewis quote and see what kind of camp you fall into. What is going on at the moment is scary and the future timescales unknown for us all. But as we work this through are we going to leave behind us a path of peace which brings glory to God or something else?

Keep safe everybody – until next time.
Rev Ian

Questions to ponder

1. Do you see the glory of God in nature?
2. Do you see the glory of God in Jesus?
3. Do you get a bit twitchy when people talk about the devil?
4. How do you feel about the idea of you being an ambassador and imitator of Jesus?

Song for the day

Something about how the glory of heaven shines through Jesus and us.

From The Inside Out – Hillsong: <https://youtu.be/f2RTV3wI5Yc>

(Is it me or does the singer look like Jesus?)

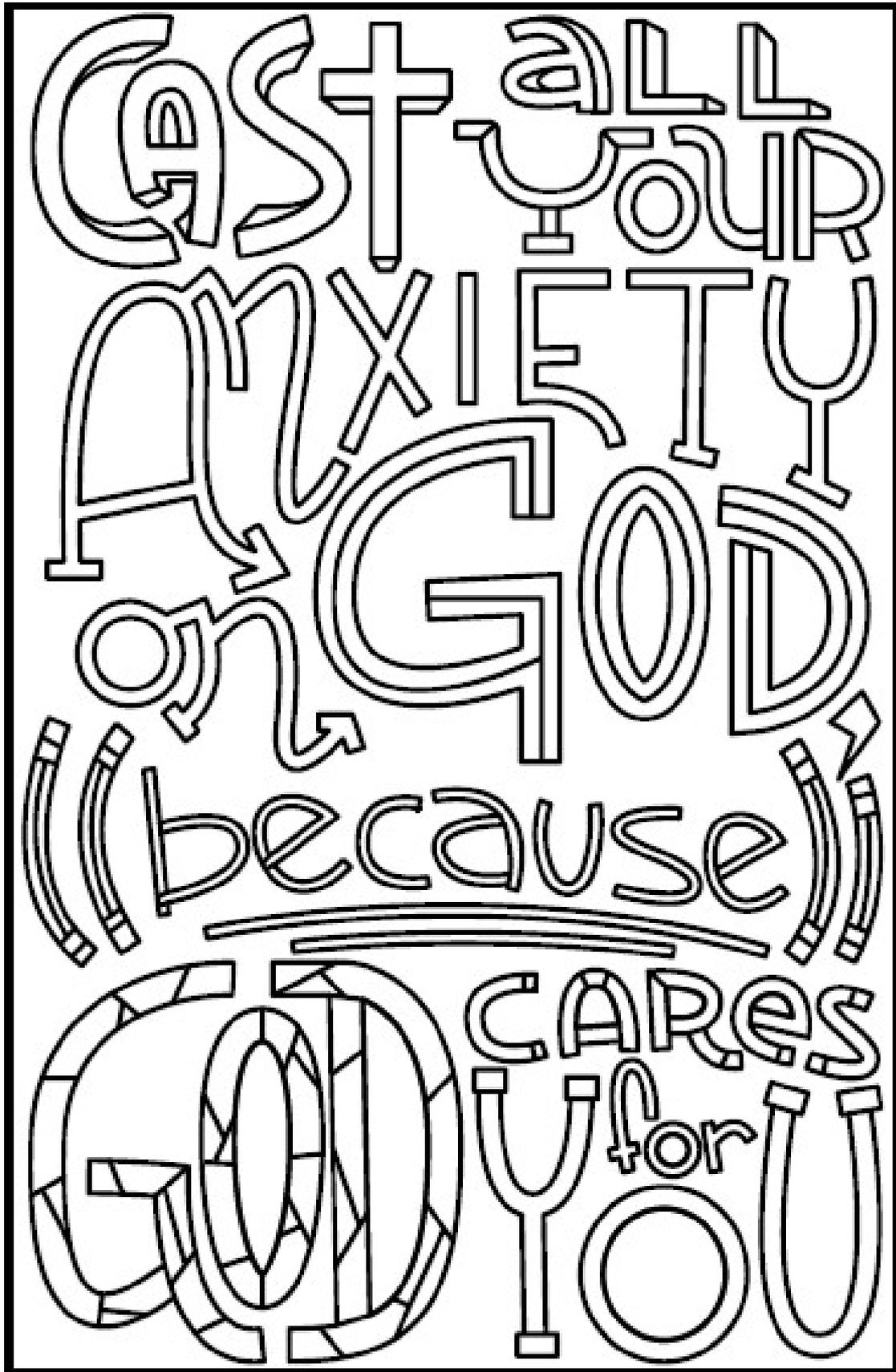
A prayer

Dear God, Thank you that when we stop and look we can see your glory and splendour shining through the world you have made and through the life of Jesus, who came to save and help us. Help us to let you shine through us in our day to day lives too. Amen.

I GLORIFIED
You
ON EARTH,
HAVING
Accomplished
THE WORK WHICH YOU
HAVE
GIVEN
Me **TO DO.**

John 17:4

COLOR IN THE WORDS



WORD SEARCH

Try to find the words from John 17 in the word search below. Words may go diagonal, up OR down and forward OR backward.

L P C Y L A U P E S S R A S K
U O Z I X C U E U U H B P Y Y
Y D F M R O T T S Z O E F N L
F E G Z G E P E H W U Y O I Z
F T N Q R Z J S F O R S B C I
U D P N T B G Y X E R O C U Y
L I A M R B V Y K C N I N K L
H L L E D E U F B A G I T E O
E V E R Y T H I N G L O M Y H
Q F W O R D S T Z C O D A O Z
S L Z D K L W X A C R N G G X
P A O W Y C K O M F I W S B N
Z H N E V A E H R V F K I E M
Z E K W Y B X H F L Y C P X H
I B Y E M A N I Z O D H F W P

JESUS
WORDS
HEAVEN
HOUR
GLORIFY
LIFE

FATHER
SON
AUTHORITY
ETERNAL
WORLD
NAME

EVERYTHING
ASK
BEHALF
MINE
HOLY
ONE