

Lessons for The Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 12, 2024

Psalm 1 ~ *Expression of the contrast between the way of sinners and the way of the righteous*

Acts 1:12–26 ~ *After Jesus' ascension, the believers chose Matthias to take Judas' place as a witness.*

1 John 5:9–13 ~ *God has testified that He has given us eternal life in His Son Jesus the Christ.*

John 17:11b-19 ~ *Before Jesus died, He prayed the Father to protect His followers from the evil one.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: Where Do You Belong?

We are claimed by God, bought by Jesus' blood. God has given His word as testimony that we belong to Him for eternity. Jesus prayed that His followers would be protected by the power of God's almighty name. There is another power, an evil one, working in this world to lay its claim on us as it did on Judas. God's love shown in His Son, Jesus, our Savior, will keep us safe in the day of judgment.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Lord Jesus, because You are throned in power and glory with the Father, I know You are able to protect me and those I love. Help me show Your love to others so that we may give faithful witness to Your mercy until the day You take us out of this world to Yourself in heaven. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: The evil one often attacks God's people through our dependence on money and material goods. Jesus' prayer that the Father protect us from the evil one promises His Holy Spirit to keep us in the faith. We show our trust in God as we use the material blessings He has given us to carry His word to others and work in His service.

OFFERING PRAYER: Lord, You have given Your word in Jesus, the Christ:
You will not forsake us in life or in death.
We have witnessed Your promise, just like Matthias;
Use our offerings to share our trust in Your truth. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: God will always have witnesses to his marvelous redemptive act in Jesus the Messiah, but we may not be among them, if we, like Judas turn aside. Jesus assured the disciples and us of his constant prayers on our behalf, that we not fall as prey under the temptation of the powers of this world, but being protected by the Father's love, may always know and give testimony to the truth of his love in Christ.

Questions to Consider: What are you doing here?

- What did the disciples choose Matthias to do?
- What is God's witness (testimony) about Jesus?
- How did Jesus death protect his followers?
- What did God choose you to do?

Bonus, page 2: Pilgrim Servant (a charge to Christ's people to be witnesses to the earth)

The Pilgrim Servant

O Pilgrim Servant, when God calls to send
you from your home to ventures without end,
and you step out with confidence in God
to go where none have been, by paths untrod,
you will not face your greatest fears alone,
for God will guide through perils still unknown.

God bless you on your servant way and hold
you in His hand, that you may be so bold!
Supported through God's love, your every groan
bears on its breath your prayers to heaven's throne.
He leads you by His hand and Shepherd's rod
and sends you forth to share the love of God.
To places you don't know, our God will tend
your footsteps safely to your journey's end.

– Gilbert A Franke, 5/22/08