

Lessons for Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 8, 2016

Psalm 133 (*Antiphon: v. 1*) ~ *Praise for unity in a family through which God gives his blessings.*

Acts 1:12–26 – At the direction of the Spirit, the group of believers selected Matthias to take Judas' place.

Revelation 22:1–20 – Jesus, the First and the Last, receives the redeemed in the heavenly Jerusalem.

John 17:20–26 – Jesus prayed that His followers be united in love to give witness to the Father's love.

GATHERING THE TEXTS: All are One by God's Design.

Before His crucifixion Jesus prayed for His disciples and for all who would believe in Him through their words, that we may be one in Him with the Father, united in His love and His glory. In answering that prayer the Holy Spirit guided the little band of believers as they chose Matthias to replace Judas as a witness and apostle. All the redeemed gathered in the heavenly Jerusalem, will be united in Jesus, the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Ever and the Always. Yes, He is coming soon to welcome us into the complete unity of His glory.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Lord Jesus, as I recall Your ascension into heaven, help me remember that You are always present with Your people, the Church, guiding and leading us by the power of Your Spirit, molding and shaping us together in one family as we deal with one another in love, until You come again on that last great day and receive us to Yourself in heaven. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: God has given us many material gifts, all to be used in ways that express His love to our fellow people, so that they may know our Savior is the Son of God the Father and Lord of love.

OFFERING PRAYER: You love us with eternal love and send us out to share it!
Make us liberal with our love, to risk and boldly dare it!
And just as boldly, let us share Your grace and righteous merit,
That through these gifts we may proclaim a kingdom to inherit. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: It is God's will that all believers be united in expressing His love, which we have known through Jesus' death and resurrection. To live in this kind of love, we have to die to our individual "rights" and our will to assert ourselves over others. We cannot do that! We must depend on the gift of God's reconciling oneness in Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. The unity of believers in faith and life promotes the expansion of the Kingdom of God which will finally be seen by all when He who is the First and Last comes in His glory.