

A Mother's Prayer

Sermon 2018-05-13 - Year B - Easter 7 - Ascension Sunday

Acts 1:15–26; Psalm 68:1–20; 1 John 5:6–15; John 17:11b–19

- What does a mother hope for her children? As many possibilities as there are mothers! General hopes: health, a good job, a strong marriage, grandchildren, protection from hardship and heartache, provision for needs.
- A Christian mother's hopes would certainly include faith in God, a desire to follow God's will for their life, keeping out of sin.
 - This world is not as it should be, / But the Savior opens eyes to see / All that's beautiful and true. / Oh may His light fill all you are / And the jewel of wisdom crown your heart; / This is my prayer for you.
 - You'll travel where my arms won't reach / As the road will rise to lead your feet / On a journey of your own. / May my mistakes not hinder you / But His grace remain and guide you through; / This is my prayer for you.
 - Take His hand / And go where He calls you to. / And whatever comes, seek Him / With all your heart; / This will be my prayer for you.¹
- Every mother eventually gets to the point where she has to release her children into the world. I am sure we will be praying for each of our children as they leave the protection of our home to pursue God's call in their lives.
- Jesus and his Ascension. Today's Gospel is his prayer to the father for his disciples as he prepares to leave them and return to the Father.

In the World (cosmos)

- John 17:11a - the world (cosmos). Cosmos represents all of humanity, and all that is unredeemed in creation.
- "...the word kosmos has a sinister significance. It is not the world as God intended it to be, but 'this world' set over against God, following its own wisdom and living by the light of its own reason (1 Cor. 1:21), not recognizing the Source of all true life and illumination (Jn. 1:10)"²
- John 12:31-32 - "The ruler of this world" a phrase used three times in the Gospel of John, refers to Satan.
 - When Jesus says, "the ruler of this world will be cast out" he is talking about the decisive victory at the cross, until Jesus returns, this casting out will only be partially complete. Thus he prays "...keep them from the evil one" (John 17:15).

But not of the World

- John 17:16 "They are not of the world..."

¹ Kristyn Getty, A Mother's Prayer

² R. V. G. Tasker, "World," ed. D. R. W. Wood et al., New Bible Dictionary (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 1249.

- Shanti Bhavan (“abode of peace” in Hindi) is a residential school which raises children from the untouchable caste.
 - This children leave their families at the age of four and stay there until they are 18, returning home only twice a year for two-week vacations.
 - At school, they are given an excellent education, but they are also taught values which will help them to transcend their family situations.
 - It is a bit of a shock for the children when they eventually leave the protection of the compound to go off to college.
- The world can be a shocking place for us, too, as Christians.
 - The world doesn’t share our values, the world doesn’t share our faith, the world doesn’t share our trust in the living God who watches over us and protects us.
 - John 17:14 - ”I have given them your word, and the world has hated them...”
- Why not remove us from the world? Because of those who are still OF the world. (v.18)
 - “Because the disciples have God’s truth they are set apart and sent into the world, just as Jesus was (v. 18). Like him they are to be in the world but not of it, judging and calling the world by being the presence of God’s light, bearing witness to his love and offering his life in the midst of the world.”³
- We are always walking a bit of a tightrope as we live in the world. We don’t want to be corrupted by the world, but we also can’t be so withdrawn from it that we are unable to share the love of Jesus.
 - So how do we do this? How do we live in the world and not be of the world?

Sanctify them in the Truth

- John 17:17 - “Sanctify (set apart, make holy) them in the truth...”
 - “Your word is truth” Here “word” refers not to the scriptures, but to Jesus himself, the image of the invisible God, the enfleshed revelation of God to the world.
 - Jesus’ prayer is that the Father would keep us from the evil one, keep us from being stained by the world, by keeping connected to him.
 - God is able to accomplish this because Jesus ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and has sent the Holy Spirit into the world.
- John 8:31-32 - “...the truth will set you free.”
 - John 8:34-36 - “...everyone who sins is a slave to sin...”
 - If you feel that you are a slave to the world and to sin, there is hope in Jesus!

Conclusion

- Mothers, there is no better place to entrust your children than the Father’s arms.
- I don’t know your mother’s hopes and prayers for you, but I do know Jesus’ prayer for you. He wants you to be freed by the truth, he wants you to be in this world but not of it, and he wants to have a deep relationship with you, because he loves you.
- John 3:16 “God so loved the world (cosmos)...”

³ Rodney A. Whitacre, John (vol. 4; The IVP New Testament Commentary Series; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 414–415.