*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

May 20 - 25

*Jesus in John’s Gospel*

**Monday, May 20 John 16:5-15**

*“The Ministry of the Spirit”*

 As the disciples become increasingly aware of the nearness of Jesus’ leaving, that his physical presence will no longer be with them, they are overwhelmed with sorrow. It fills their hearts. So Jesus explains things to them now which earlier they could not grasp. If he stayed on with these disciples in the flesh the Paraclete would not come. He is the One who will be the indwelling Presence, uniting them with Jesus. But this Helper can only come to the disciples when Jesus has finished his saving work and returned to the Father.

 The Paraclete will come to actively convict the world through the witness of these men by exposing the sin of the world. It is the rejection of Jesus which is at the root of all the world’s sin. If there is no faith in Jesus, self-centeredness, hatred, and immorality, all concrete signs of unbelief, will take over. This Advocate will also bring to light the righteousness of Jesus. In crucifying Jesus the world judges Jesus, this innocent One, guilty. But the Father vindicates him, declares him the innocent and righteous One, by raising him from the dead.

*We belong to you, Jesus, through the work of your Spirit. Amen.*

**Tuesday, May 21 John 16:16-24**

*“In a little while”*

 The departure of Jesus and its distress for the disciples has been a constant theme since chapter 13. Jesus does not let them ignore the reality of his going, and here he brings it up again. Seven times in this chapter Jesus refers to “a little while,” which prompts the central question of the section: “What does he mean by saying, ‘In a little while . . .’?” The confusion of the disciples is understandable. In 16:10 Jesus has said that he is going to the Father and they will not see him any longer. Now he says that they will see him, and it won’t be long. What does it all mean?

 This is not intentional ambiguity on Jesus’ part, nor is it an attempt to provide a double meaning. Nor is Jesus talking about his second coming. Rather, he is simply referring to his bodily return in resurrection. He is departing from the world in his death and the world will no longer have access to him. When he returns in resurrection, it will be his followers’ final opportunity to see him.

*Your return from death, Jesus, confirming that you are the Son of God. Amen.*

**Wednesday, May 22 John 16:25-33**

*“I have overcome the world”*

 Jesus’ saving death will revolutionize the praying of these disciples. All through Jesus’ ministry they have asked all kinds of anxious, earthy questions to satisfy their curiosity, but they have not asked in his name. But when the Spirit unites them with Jesus, they are to ask the Father in Jesus’ name, not fearfully or anxiously, but confidently in love, for their whole status has been changed. It is now on the ground of all that the Son is and does, and their unity with him, that these men will receive insight from the Father.

 There is a word of hope at the conclusion of the chapter, a great sense of encouragement for those weak, needy men, and for all who confront the hostile rejection of this world. In Jesus they will have peace, one of the fruits of salvation, even though in the world they will experience hatred and persecution. What a contrast! In Jesus there is peace; in the world, tribulation. That peace is only possible because in union with Jesus the disciples will share in his victory over the world.

*When I ask the Father in your name, Jesus, I am given every good thing. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

May 20 - 25

*Jesus in John’s Gospel*

**Thursday, May 23 John 17:1-8**

*“Glorify your Son”*

 This is an intimate prayer. When Jesus lifts his eyes upward toward “home” to commune with the One who sent him, he uses a tender family greeting, “Father.” The whole prayer is spoken out of that living union which he has had with the Father throughout eternity. In this final hour, an hour which has been anticipated all through Jesus’ ministry, he will share in the glory of God. That glory is always initiated from above. It moves from the Father through the obedience and love of the Son to those who believe in him, that it may return to the Father.

 Jesus has touched and transformed the common and the earthy – water has been turned into wine, a stormy sea has been quieted, the eyes of a blind man have been opened, and Lazarus has been raised from the dead. Through these signs, these acts of power in which the glory of God has been revealed, the disciples have come to know and trust the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. Here is a simple definition of faith: It is those who know that Jesus has come from God who receive eternal life.

*You have touched me, Jesus, and I have received eternal life in you. Amen.*

**Friday, May 24 John 17:9-19**

*“My prayer is for those you have given me”*

 Jesus prays for these eleven men he is leaving. He loves the world and came to save it (John 3:16) and neither his love nor his purpose has changed, even though the world has turned away and rejected him. It is as these men faithfully manifest Jesus’ glory and love that the world will be confronted and called to believe; it is as they remain in Jesus’ name that they will be faithful to the mission of being witnesses to Jesus.

 For Jesus to ask that these men be full of his joy does not mean they will escape tribulation and hostility. This would mean taking them out of the world. No, they will remain and be hated, just as Jesus has been, because they are not of this world. To bear the name of Jesus marks them as aliens in the world. And this provokes trouble; for when they are faithful to the word Jesus has given them, the world reacts with hostility. So Jesus asks that they be kept from the evil one. For he will break in as a thief and destroy this small band, stealing them one by one, unless they continue to be guarded by their commitment to Jesus.

*I bear your name, Jesus, and pray the Father’s protection. Amen.*

**Saturday, May 25 John 17:20-26**

*“I pray that they will all be one”*

 Jesus’ prayer is not only for these who are gathered with him. He reaches out and includes all those who will come to believe in him through their witness to Jesus, that they may know the glory and love of the Father and the Son. He prays that all his people throughout all time may be one. Jesus asks that their unity may be rooted in “us,” reflecting that eternal oneness which the Father and Son know in dwelling in one another. This unity of his disciples is not institutional or organized, but a living, organic oneness which flows from the action of the Father.

 This gift of unity is not a forced conformity, but an expression of the creative diversity within the Godhead. As there is only one “true God” who manifests himself through the differing functions of Father, Son, and Spirit, so the loving unity of the body of believers is expressed through a rich variety of gifts and ministry. The whole family of God is a beautiful montage of differing cultures and temperaments, colors and gifts, offered to God in worship and ministry that he may be glorified.

*May our church be one in you, Jesus, as you are with your Father. Amen.*