

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Sermon text: John 17:11b-19

Related text: 1 John 5:9-15

Date preached: May 20, 2012

Note: Confirmation for 8 individuals.

You certainly don't need me to remind you that summer is quickly upon us. Within the next two weeks school will be over for the summer. As the temperatures warm we will likely hear the phrase to "keep hydrated" and drink plenty of water.

We know that hydration is necessary for us to function well. Water is refreshing, invigorating and fun.

More importantly however, is that God uses water to make us his children. In Baptism, God used water and His Word to connect us to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. In that sacrament, God claimed you! He set his seal upon you.

You were adopted into his family, a family that in the language of Scripture and the church calls the communion of saints.

Now, from a logistic standpoint we don't use much water in baptism. But when God works upon us, he drenches us like you might be riding the river rapids

at your favorite water park. The Spirit guides you to the falls that leave you soaking wet from head to toe.

Jesus prizes and holds precious his relationship with us. Jesus does not let us go. He keeps us connected with God and each other. As he prepares to travel the way of the cross, to suffer the consequences of our sins on our behalf, our bond with God will be made secure.

We have in this prayer that Jesus reiterating the bond that will be sealed through his blood. Jesus is uttering a plea that we may be kept or protected from the threatening dangers of the evil one. The words imply that we as disciples will face danger.

The dangers are many. We face dangers from the sins of others. We suffer from the gossip. We suffer from the affects of a friend or spouse that has slipped into addictive behaviors, such as gambling, alcohol, etc.

Add to that the dangers that we inflict upon ourselves through jealousy, envy, insistence on our own way, selfishness, and the priority of our own pleasures.

We face temptations of all kinds. The allure of sin is powerful, deceptive, enticing and ultimately serves as

pop to a dehydrated body. In other words, the evil one wants you to think that all is good while you are drinking fluid that will still leave you thirsty. The devil gives us drinks that look good such as tolerance. The definition of tolerance is allowance to that which is not totally approved of.

From a Christian perspective we would be faithful in saying that tolerance would be the allowance of those things about which God does not approve. For example, there may be some who would say that we are to tolerate profanity.

Yet we know that God does not tolerate such language. To take the Lord's name in vain, violating the second commandment leaves us deserving of hell.

God's Word revealed in scripture through the law convict us of our sins. Those who love us will not excuse our sinfulness and tell us it is okay. Neither will love does love serve to not as a means of putting us down or destroying our self-esteem. Rather out of love, we call one another to repent and receive the forgiveness of our sins that God so lavishly desires to drown us in.

The outcome of repentance and forgiveness is to be tapped into Jesus, the living water. He said this to the

Samaritan woman he met at the well. There he told her that to drink the literal water that comes from the well will still leave you thirsty.

From John 4:14 we hear these words from our Lord. “But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up to everlasting life.”

Jesus is the living water God used to protect His people during Jesus earthly life. “I protected them in your name and not one of them was lost, except the one destined to be lost.” Now, God’s Word in scripture reveals to us Jesus Christ that we may see His protection. We are protected in the Word of God that defends us from the scorching heat of sin that is as overwhelming as a hundred degree day with 95% humidity.

The protection comes with being connected constantly to God and His Word in our lives. As disciples of our Lord, we are called to follow his teachings which will put us at odds with the values of the world, our culture and society.

By the grace of God, we have been connected to Christ. With that connection there is joy. It is the joy

of not simply hearing the law of God but the good news of Christ who suffered and died for our sins. To hear this good news is to drink from the fountain of the living water.

There is joy in being together to continue learning and flourishing as God's children, regardless of whether you are young or old. There is joy in following our Lord's example of humble and loving service.