

## Sermon 13 May 2018 Mothers Day

### John 17:9-19

In this passage we see Jesus praying for his disciples. One of the things that comes through in this passage is the love and care Jesus has for his disciples. It is a love and care that invites comparisons with the love and care a mother has for her children, but more of that shortly.

A couple of interesting points to note in this prayer Jesus makes on behalf of his disciples. Firstly, he prays for unity of his disciples. There is undoubtedly a message there for us all. A church that is not united cannot worship together effectively, nor can it spread the gospel. Who is going to be attracted to a congregation, a church where there is conflict of personalities or viewpoints? Where criticism of one another is apparent? For a church to be effective a sense of harmony, mutual respect and care must prevail.

In the same way, a family that is divided and fractured is unable to provide support and succor to its members. This, after all, is probably the prime function of a family. And whom do we usually look to in order to provide the glue that holds a family together? Mum. Perhaps not in every case, but usually.

Back to Jesus's prayer. The second point I want to draw your attention to is that Jesus did not pray that his disciples should be taken out of the world. In other words, they are called upon to get involved, to challenge both themselves and the people. Serving Christ does not mean that we will be spared the rigours of life, but rather that we will be equipped to deal with those rigours. And it is in the rough and tumble of life that both our faith and we ourselves grow. James put it so well when he said, 'Dear brothers and sisters, whenever trouble comes your way, let it be an opportunity for joy. For when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be strong in character and ready for everything.' *James 1:2-4*.

It is a well-known fact of life that we are shaped and moulded by the challenges that we have to deal with as we journey through life.

The last point I want to draw our attention to is contained in verse 15 – 'I am asking you...to keep them safe from the evil one.' The word that springs to mind is *protect*. We all need protection. It doesn't mean that we need to be shielded from trials and tribulations, on the contrary, but rather we feel a sense of security, of care, of love as we combat the slings and arrows, the rough and tumble of life. God certainly provides us with that sense of security, a sense that with him on our side we are equipped to deal with whatever comes our way. 'Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about what happens to you.' *1 Peter 5:7*

Once again, we see a comparison with the role mothers play. Their unique relationship with their children means that they are invariably the ones who project a sense of security and care for their young. I do notice that even though I do have a very good relationship with my boys that if there are tears it will probably be their mother that they run to for comfort. That is the special nature of mums, and nothing will change that. It is said that 'a father becomes concerned when his child breaks a bone, a mother when her child skins a knee.' A bit tough perhaps on fathers but you get the point.

We do learn a lot from our mums. There is no doubt that the concept of unconditional love sits fairly and squarely with the love of a mother for her children. We learn about patience as mess after mess after mess is cleaned up – it's all part of the job. Though mums are human. A young boy was telling the pastor that his mother said his prayers for him each night. 'What do you mean, your mother says your prayers for you?' the minister asked. The boy replied, 'When my mum tucks me in she always says, 'Thank God he's in bed.'

Let me finish with a mother's resolution. 'I will always be a good, fair and loving parent to my children. I will provide them with enriching experiences and opportunities. I will give them a solid foundation on which to build a useful life. After all, they may eventually be responsible for choosing a nursing home for me to live out my final days.'

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