

Thursday, May 21

In John 17:9-11, Jesus' prayer tightens into intercession: "Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one" (v. 11). Jesus asked that we be protected in God's name. In Scripture, the "name" means the revealed character of God — truthful, steadfast, merciful and loving. Specifically, Jesus asked that in the name of God we will be protected and become one as Jesus and God are one. Jesus prays for our unity and that as one – the church – we will be protected. This prayer must have been on the collective mind of the early church as they were persecuted, beaten and killed. That just makes sense. But what does Jesus' prayer for us to be protected and united mean for us 2000 plus years later? From what does the church need protection? How can we foster unity within our local congregation? How can we foster unity within our denomination and with other churches? In the name of God, can we work together to make our world a better place. Write your thoughts here.

Friday, May 22

Pastor Timothy Merrill mentioned the observation from Jesus' High Priestly Prayer, that we are to live in a world in which the Paradox of Presence exists. Our Creeds remind us that Jesus has left our world and is at the right hand of God the Father, Almighty. But Jesus is still present in the world. That call of the church involves being the living body of Christ in the world today. Connecting on of our other message in this Adult Confirmation series, is the world experiencing the Fruit of the Spirit through the mission and ministry of the church? How can you project the presence of Jesus the Christ to others in the workplace, in your neighborhood and in the public? Think about these concepts and write your thoughts here.

Message Notes May 17, 2026

Adult Confirmation 101: The Church *

- I. Our Covid-19 Pandemic experience just might help us understand a paradox in our scripture for today — absent yet _____, remote yet _____.
 - A. We can _____ anew to Jesus' words in John 17:11: "I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world."
 1. Jesus is preparing his disciples for a new kind of _____.
 2. The _____ will continue, but now they, not Jesus, are going to do the _____.
 - B. Pastor and writer, Timothy Merrill writes, "This naturally induces _____ anxiety, attachment issues and more than a few serious _____."
 1. It's important to remember that Jesus words, at this point, is not a _____ but a _____.
 2. How will Jesus the Christ be in the world but no longer of the world? The answer is simple... ____! The _____!
- II. What does it mean to remain _____ the world, while at the same time being "not _____ the world?"
 - A. Pastor Merrill mentioned four _____ might help to reveal the answer.
 1. The first truth of living "still in the world" is that the _____ of Jesus the Christ continues.
 2. Second, before they do anything, the disciples _____.

3. As Christ's followers we are kept in the _____ of _____.
4. The final observation about being in the world but not over the world is the _____ of _____.

- III. We conclude our Adult Confirmation 101 with the understanding that the _____ is the presence of _____ in the world.
- A. To be "still in the world" is to live as people who remember _____ they are and _____ they are.
 - B. Wherever you find yourself this week, practice _____ over _____.
 - C. Christ has not left the _____; he has left it in _____ hands — _____ hands

Daily Devotional Guide

The following is a daily devotional and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

Monday, May 18

The message began with a seemingly foolish question: Do you remember the Covid-19 Pandemic? It changed our world; the way we work, communicate, meet people, make plans, take out loans and even date. We met as a church in worship without begin physically in each other's presence! There was a desire in companies and certainly in the church to come back together. We wanted to shake hands, hug and stand beside each other. What was your experience of the Covid-19 Pandemic? How has it changed your life? Meditate for a moment on these questions and write your reflections here.

Tuesday, May 19

Read John 17:1-11. This passage is part of what is commonly know as Jesus' Farewell Discourse (John's Gospel, Chapters 13-17). As Jesus sat with his Chosen Twelve commemorating the Passover, he shared final teachings while demonstrating humility, promised the arrival of the Holy Spirit, the need to stay connected with him and our Heavenly Creator. Jesus predicted Peter's denial and Judas' betrayal, instituted the practice of Holy Communion and celebrated his resurrection and conquering death. Chapter 17 is known as Jesus' "High Priestly Prayer." Jesus prayed for the Chosen Twelve but his prayer is also for us! Jesus, as he was returning to the glory of heaven was placing the Kingdom of God work, which he began, into the hands of his followers, including us! Jesus prayed for our unity and protection while making it clear the future of God's Kingdom on earth was in our hands. How does it make you feel that Jesus prayed for us? Does it make you more hopeful? Frightened? Inadequate? Encouraged? Meditate on these thoughts and write your thoughts here.

Wednesday, May 20

Read again John 17:1-11 and as you do, consider what it is that Jesus is asking us to do. Certainly, Jesus is asking us to continue his work on earth as he returned to heaven. That request alone gives us a sense of belonging to something greater than ourselves individually. The more important question is what is Jesus specifically asking of you? What can you contribute to the world of Jesus the Christ in the world today? Do you feel like you belong to this continuing work of Jesus? Prayerfully consider these questions asking for God's wisdom and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Write your ideas here.