

Lessons for The Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 21, 2023

Psalm 68:1-10 ~ *Celebrate God's work in forming Israel from a suffering people and leading them to Zion.*

Acts 1:12-26 ~ *The Holy Spirit provided Matthias to take the place of Judas.*

1 Peter 4:12-19; 5:6-11 ~ *We glorify Christ by suffering patiently for His name.*

John 17:1-11 ~ *Jesus prayed that His followers would continue to bring glory to the Father.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: God Strengthens Community in Suffering.

"Misery loves company," is a negative way of expressing the theme of today's lessons. A positive way might be, "Suffering needs company." Jesus promised to provide the company of his Spirit for the community of believers as they faced the difficulties of witnessing to him throughout the world. St. Peter pointed out that suffering patiently for Christ's name can be a good way to witness to his love. Jesus, in fact, prayed that his obedience in suffering would not only win salvation for the world but give glory to God and attest to his oneness with the Father.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Lord God, you have brought me into this family of faith. Through my sisters and brothers in Christ you give me courage and strength to face the troubles of each day. Help me grow in trials so that I may know the grace of Christ more fully and share his love more freely. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: We often use blessings of material goods and life to bring honor to ourselves. Blessings as well as suffering gives us opportunities to bring honor to God by the way we use them and handle ourselves.

OFFERING PRAYER: O Lord, You give us many gifts today
Of body and of soul.
In what we do and how we use them, may
Your glory be our goal. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: Jesus was a glory seeker: He prayed, "Father, glorify me so that I may glorify you." Our prayer is usually just the opposite: "Father, glorify me, since I have given You a little glory." The way we handle life either gives glory to God or detracts from His glory. This is especially true in how we respond to unjust suffering. And surely when we suffer unjustly we are sorely tempted to rail at God, which takes away from His glory. Jesus magnified the Father's glory by suffering unjustly for our sin. When we handle temptation and suffering well, people see God's glory through us.