

THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

ROGATE

Pray, You All

Study Notes for the Christian Layperson

by: Rev. Travis Loeslie



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John 16:23-30 (31-33) ESV

Author and Date:

The Holy Spirit caused the Apostle John to write the words of this Gospel in AD 90. These words were compiled in the great farewell discourse of Jesus to His sorrowful disciples in John 14-16. These words were uttered on Holy Thursday, the night Jesus was betrayed. This great farewell discourse is the heart of the preaching in the one year lectionary from Easter 4-6. Jesus promises to hear the prayers of His disciples. He promises to ask the Father on their behalf, as their Mediator and true High Priest, just as Jesus opened peaceful access to our Father's ears by the death and resurrection of Christ.

²³ “Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. ²⁴ Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.”

- In this verse is a brief sermon on prayer. Jesus reminds the disciples to pray, to ask the Father in Jesus' name. Here, Johann Spangenberg sees four points instructing Christians to pray to God. The first reason to pray is: “God's order and promise. For if God has not instructed us to pray nor pledged to hear, none of us creatures would be able to get a little kernel” (Johann Spangenberg, *The Christian Year of Grace*, 198). Jesus taught in Luke 11:9, “Ask and you will receive; seek, and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you.”

- Second, prayer is the language of faith founded on God's promise. The one who doubts sins doubly: First, James 1:6-7 warns: “Whoever will ask something of God, let him ask in faith, and not doubt, for whoever doubts is like the waves of the sea which are driven by the wind. Let such a man not think that he will receive something from the Lord.” Second, he makes God a liar who has promised something and neither can nor will keep it” (Spangenberg, 198). God is truthful. Prayer depends on His faithfulness.
- To the third point, when Jesus “goes to the Father,” they will begin to pray “in Jesus' name.” Why ought they to pray in Jesus' name? “There is no other name given to men in which we shall be saved” (Acts 4:12). “We can therefore give no higher praise to God the Father than by calling on Him in our troubles and cares through Jesus Christ, His beloved Son” (Spangenberg, 198).
- The fourth point is that Jesus promises to hear pray and present them to the Father in the midst of troubles and distress. Where Christians call on God out of their need and heartfelt desire for His aid, God can't help but answer prayer. “Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you, and you shall honor Me” (Psalm 50:15). Jesus promises the fullness of joy for His disciples when they see the fruits of their prayer answered by our Heavenly Father.

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- Spangenberg delivers great comfort in Christ: “I, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Wisdom of the heavenly Father, the everlasting Truth which can neither err nor deceive; I, the only Mediator, Redeemer, and Savior, say to you...My children and sons whom the Father loves: Truly, truly, I say you to. By Myself I swear. I am Truth itself, I cannot err. I give you My faithfulness as a pledge: If you ask something that is good and profitable for you in body and soul, that lies on your heart, that presses and weighs upon you, in which you can find no help or comfort either in yourselves or in others, and you ask the Father in My name, He will give it to you. For the Father loves you with all His heart...” (Spangenberg, 198).

²⁵ “I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father. ²⁶ In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; ²⁷ for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. ²⁸ I came from the Father and have come into the world, and now I am leaving the world and going to the Father.”

- Jesus brings the petitions of His faithful on our behalf. That means the disciples can have confidence that every prayer is considered and heard by their Mediator and High Priest, Jesus. He came from the Father and is one with the Father. Jesus “goes to the Father” by way of His cross and the grave.

²⁹ His disciples said, “Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech! ³⁰ Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you; this is why we believe that you came from God.” ³¹ Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? ³² Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.”

- The disciples are relieved to hear straight talk from Jesus. Jesus reminds them that they will be scattered as the Shepherd is struck, as Zechariah prophesied (13:7). When the cross comes, the disciples scatter. Judas betrays Him. Peter denies Jesus three times. Still, the Father remains with Jesus through His bitter suffering and death. The disciples scatter to themselves and regroup at the good news of Easter morning.

³³ “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

True peace is from Jesus. It comes as a fruit of His passion – His blood shed and His bitter death for poor sinners. He ensures that peace of conscience for every believer by His resurrection from the dead. He gives peace of conscience and a joyful heart even in the midst of the world’s persecution. “The game is already won...Victory is here and all has been vanquished. All that remains is not to give up, but hold tight. Even if you see the old dragon, the serpent of hell, viciously spread his jaws, flash his fangs, whet his claws, rage and storm, and tyrants strike and shake their fist, remember the words: I have overcome the world...For all authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18). (Spangenberg, 200).



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