

Sermon

St Peter's Brighton Beach

Sunday after Ascension

Ps 97, Rev 22.12-21, Jn 17.20-26

The Gospel

“I ask not only on behalf of these but also on behalf of those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

“Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them and I in them.”

Sermon

The Lord is king let the earth rejoice:

Let the multitude of islands be glad.

Clouds and darkness are round about him:

righteousness and justice are the foundations of his throne.

The Lord loves those that hate evil:

The Lord guards the life of the faithful,
and delivers them from the hand of the ungodly.

Light dawns for the righteous:
and joy for the true of heart.

Rejoice in the Lord your righteous:
and give thanks to his holy name.

Today is the Sunday after the Ascension. Before his ascension into heaven, Jesus looked up to heaven, and prayed to God for his church, from protection from the evil one, the tempter, and the divider. Jesus prayed to God to sanctify his church, to make it holy. Jesus prayed that his church would come to know the joy of fellowship with God, by the Spirit. By humble obedience to the will of God, there is joy in the Christian life and fellowship. There is the joy of Christian unity. There is the joy of the gospel. So that the world may believe.

The church is sanctified, made holy, by God. God, his glory, is with us now, by His Son. In our worship, the Spirit brings the glory of God the Son near to us. God himself draws near, in His Son. The proclamation of the Gospel, the celebration of the Sacraments, these are not merely human actions. These liturgical actions, are divine actions. Divine actions, that are there for us, to sanctify us, to make us holy, to make us one. So that the world may believe. So that the world may know the love of God. So that the world may have eternal life. The eternal life that is ours already now, however incomplete. As we worship the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit. As our liturgical texts at this time prepare us from Trinity Sunday, in two weeks time.

Jesus' desire, the desire of God, is for the church to be one. As God is one God in three persons, so the church is called to unity. Jesus' desire, the will of God, is for the church to be one. Jesus' desire, is for one people, in worship and

service of one God. So that, by the visible unity of the Christian church, the world may believe, in the one God, of the one human race. The Creator, of heaven and earth.

The world does not know God, the Righteous Father of the human race, Jesus says in our Gospel today. But Jesus knows him. And we know him. For Jesus has revealed him to us. So that we may be one, as God is one. So that the world may believe.

In a divided world, the Church is called to unity. And by this unity, point the world to its own future destiny, the human race united, in the kingdom of God. The church is a sign of the future kingdom of God. A sign that points beyond itself, to the future. To the future of the human race, united, redeemed, restored, made new, in the kingdom of God, when it comes.

‘See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone’s work. I am the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. It is I, Jesus..I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star. Surely I am coming soon.