

John 17:20-26

St. Marks Episcopal Church – May 29, 2022

Easter 7

William H. Grow, Jr.

### **Come, Lord Jesus**

I read a short story, parable, if you will. It is about a farmer that has a grand stallion. One day the stallion gets out of the corral and runs away. The farmer's neighbors all say, "Oh what bad luck". The farmer says, "Maybe yes or maybe no."

The next day the stallion returns and has brought several wild horses with him. The farmer quickly puts them in the corral. His neighbors all come and say, "Oh what good luck." The farmer says, "Maybe yes or maybe no."

A few days later the farmer's son is trying to break one of the wild horses, is thrown off and breaks his leg. The farmer's neighbors all come and say, "Oh, what bad luck." The Farmer says, "Maybe yes or maybe no."

A few days later the King's army comes to the town of the farmer looking to conscript young men into the army to fight in foreign wars. They quickly pass the farmer's son because of his bad leg.

Our first reading, from Acts, is a similar story to this. Silas and Paul are in Philippi in Macedonia to spread the good word. Here, they met a young slave girl that had a spirit of divination, able to tell the future. She followed Paul and Silas and proclaimed, "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation." She followed them everywhere they went for days and Paul became annoyed. So, Paul casts the spirit out of her. Good luck for her, but not so much for her owners. They have now lost their money maker. They take Paul and Silas to the authorities where they are flogged and chained in the middle of the jail where it would be impossible for them to escape. Bad luck for them.

Paul and Silas spend their time in jail telling their story and singing of the Lord until an earthquake knocks the jail down and opens all the chains. Good luck for them, but not the jailer who fears that all of the prisoners have escaped. Bad luck for him.

He considers suicide until Paul shows him all of the prisoners are still in the jail. The jailer realizes he is in the company of great men and falls down, asking what he must do to be saved. The jailer listens to Paul and then takes Paul and Silas to his family. They accept baptism and also become followers of Jesus.

It is interesting that slavery and imprisonment led to unity and the enlargement of the community of faith. Unity, in the middle of controversy. Is it possible that we might find unity for our church, or our country, or the world in the midst of all our current controversies? I say yes.

It is love, the unconditional love of God that draws us into a community and unites us as one. This is the unity that Jesus prays for in the Gospel today. I read that, "The elegance of the

wording of our passage from John leads us to an appreciation of the elegance of God's purpose for us. Creation is an evolving, changing and developing phenomenon that attests to the dazzling finesse of our God and the perfection of the relationship that we share with God in Jesus Christ. That this relationship could exclude anyone is beyond imagining."

In the Farewell Discourse of the Last Supper in the Gospel of John, the last thing Jesus does before going to his crucifixion, death and resurrection, is to pray for the Disciples and all those who believe in him. He prayed for us. He prayed that we remember that God loves us as much as God Loves Jesus. His only son. Good luck for all of us.

"The glory that you have given me I have given to 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."

The seventh Sunday of Easter offers these odd stories to attempt to open us, like the earthquake opened the doors of the jail in Philippi. The world is looking to us to live into Jesus' devout moment of prayer.

Is it any wonder the last words of the Bible are, "Come, Lord Jesus"? It can be a prayer unto itself.

Come, Lord Jesus. Amen