

# Lectionary Gospel Commentaries

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## Based on the Lectionary Pericope Covering:

SOLA-LSB (Lutheran Service Book):  
RCL (Revised Common Lectionary):

## John 17:20-26

Year C - Easter 7, Text: John 17:20-26

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By the time we reach the Seventh Sunday of Easter, Holy Week has come and gone. Once again, God's people have been encouraged to give serious thought to the events in Jesus' life associated with Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and now are coming to the end of the Season of Easter. But today's pericope brings us back to that night in the Upper room, before all this happened.

In Jesus' "High Priestly Prayer" (John 17), he does speak of what was about to happen to him, but he also spoke of all this would effect his followers, and what it means for God's people to live in relation to His purpose in their own individual lives.

**Verse 17:20-22:** Here Jesus prays for us! "I do not ask for these only [ i.e. the first disciples], but also for those who will believe in me through their word." The key is in the Word. Then, when Jesus goes on to say, "The glory that you have given me I have given to them..." — he is still talking about the Word.

What a precious gift that we have been given in the message and stories of Scripture! The older I get and the more I grapple with the Bible's "big story," the more I am convinced that God's people need to be equipped to grapple with that big story — in great detail! The narrative embedded in Scripture is huge, complex, and profound. But all of it points forward to the promise that Jesus came "to do His Servant thing, on cruel cross to die" — for us!

In John 10:11, Jesus had told his disciples this is how it would be, "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." John's whole passion narrative reflects this idea. Jesus' death is not due to cruel fate, or to plans that go awry. Jesus is the master of His passion at every turn. He is doing what His Father sent Him to do (17:4; 19:28-30). It happens because it must happen (12:38; 13:18; 19:24, 28, 36-37).

None of it takes Jesus by surprise. "Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to Him ... (18:4)," goes to the

cross voluntarily. Jesus remains calm and dignified. So we should not be surprised when we find this same Word fulfilled in us! We are now made the means of delivery for his Word.

**Verse 17:23-26:** Jesus gives the reason for his prayer: "So that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me." Throughout his Gospel, John has already mentioned many witnesses who testify for Jesus:

- John the Baptist (1:6-34; 3:28; 5:32-34)
- Jesus Himself (3:11, 32, 33; 8:13-18; 18:37)
- Jesus' works or signs (5:36; 10:25)
- The Samaritan woman (4:39)
- God the Father (5:37; 8:18)
- The Scriptures (5:39)
- The man born blind (9:1-41)
- A crowd of people (12:17)
- The Holy Spirit (15:26)
- The disciples (15:27)
- The evangelist himself (19:35; 21:24)

John now adds us to that list of witnesses. And we, too, now know that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life!

The Jewish leaders/teachers of Jesus' day were waiting for their God to provide them with a king who would give them domination over the nations of the world forever. They believed that Jerusalem would serve as the earthly capital of that world and God would dwell in the Temple within its walls. He would enable His "special people" to live a happy, prosperous life.

However, when Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, He was on His way to His Coronation — on a cross. When He washed the disciples' feet on Maundy Thursday evening, He was demonstrating to us the true nature of His servant Kingship and the nature of

the life to which He called His followers. His cross was His Throne! His resurrection was His vindication — by His Father. His ascension declared His eternal lordship over history and creation.

What would it be like on Planet Earth if every person living on the planet were to ask, “How can I devote life to glorifying God by devoting life to serving humanity at large?” We do well to consider the fact that in a “heavenly sense” there are only two people on Planet earth — me and Jesus. All those around me are Jesus in disguise. (Here, give serious thought to Matthew 25:31-46).

Since we are called to devote life to serving Jesus full-time, what does that imply? God’s answer is, “Reflect my Son’s mind and manner — full-time.”

John’s passion narrative. Jesus shows Himself to be:

- The Passover Lamb dying for the sins of the world;
- The Good Shepherd who offers his life for his own;
- The Son who carries out the Father’s will to death;
- The Judge of the world and the powers of darkness;
- The Messianic King enthroned in glory.

How do we live as lambs of his flock and citizens of his kingdom, set free from sin, death, and the devil? The implications of all this are mind-blowing! Indeed, food for thought!

We mere specks of mortals live on a tiny planet in a universe in which there are 100 billion galaxies, and in each galaxy there are billions of planets. Furthermore, the biblical truth is that no human owns anything; everything belongs to God (Acts 2:43-47, 4:32-37)!

Jesus’ brothers and sisters are not to live merely to accumulate and enjoy. They are to live to share and care and serve — and look forward with joy to that day when Jesus will welcome His brothers and sisters with His embrace of grace into God’s Eternal Home. As Jesus says in our lesson today:

*“Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.” (John 17:24)*