

Gospel lesson

Today we skip to the end of Jesus's farewell discourse, where He begins to pray.



picture from <https://www.pexels.com/photo/bearded-man-praying-with-his-eyes-closed-8955462/>; photo credit: Ivan Samkov

John 17:1-11

NRSV

¹After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you,

²since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.

³And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

⁴I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do.

⁵So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

⁶"I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me is from you;

⁸ for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.

⁹ I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours.

¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.

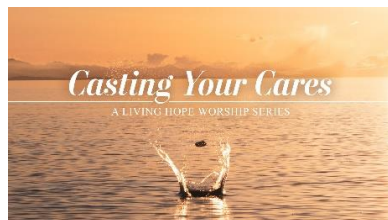
¹¹ And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

The word of God for the people of God

<Hymn "Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise"

UMH #312

Message: Casting Your Cares



picture from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/a-living-hope/seventh-sunday-of-easter-year-a-lectionary-planning-notes/seventh-sunday-of-easter-year-a-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Almighty Lord, fulfiller of all your promises, as we take time now to further consider today's

scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may cast our cares upon You and be refocused to joyous life as You would have us live it. Amen.

We conclude our Easter season series “A Living Hope” today with “Casting Your Cares”:

“If you are one of those who believe that worship should leave you feeling lighter, unburdened, and set free, then this is the week for you.

“Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7 NRSV). Peter is telling us that it is about perspective.”

Interactive lesson



picture from MMMS collection

Does anyone know what this building shown is, and where?

When I was in London in 2016, I was taking pictures of Westminster Abbey when I turned around and snapped this, capturing the roof architecture before realizing what the building was. Why do you think I am showing it to you today?

This is Heritage Sunday for the United Methodist

Church. Do you know why Methodists observe it this week?

Back in 1738, the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, was an Anglican minister who was having a bit of a faith crisis. He was advised to “Preach faith until you have it, and then because you have it, you will preach faith.” He preached so effectively that quite a few people, his brother Charles included, experienced a divine assurance of faith.

John was getting despondent that he had not had a similar spiritual experience, when he went to a group meeting on Aldersgate Street in London on May 24, 1738. Does anyone know what happened there?

As Luther’s preface to Paul’s Epistle to the Romans was read, he felt a strange warming of his heart. All at once, Wesley knew in his heart, not just his head, that God loved him. He felt complete trust in Christ’s salvation of him personally. It was a life-changing moment for him. Has anyone here experienced something like that?

What does it mean to your life, to be completely assured of God’s love like that?

When we are secure in our faith, we are able to live better and to develop better relationships with others. It is much like a schoolchild with a safe, stable home environment.



picture from MMMS collection

You can ask any schoolteacher about the difference the home environment makes for their students: a secure child generally does better at everything.

Living in this sin-filled world, we get caught up in sin, worried about things that are off-focus from God's desires for us. That is the heritage of sin, its history that we see in the Bible readings today:

- † In the psalm, people of the world argued and fought so much that God has to intervene on behalf of the Israelites.
- † In Acts, the disciples wanted to know about restoration of the kingdom of Israel instead of restoration of the kingdom of God, and their inclination after Jesus ascended was to keep watching the sky instead of trusting that Jesus was still taking care of them.

The disciples at the ascension kind of remind me of a baby who loses sight of their parent while they are just learning object permanence.

- † In the epistle of 1 Peter, we hear about fiery ordeals and suffering, not just of the individual hearing the words, but of all Christians in the world at the time. Would you stick to your faith if it meant getting beaten or your home raided?



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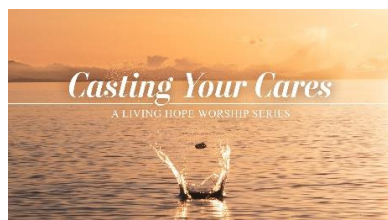
The only one not caught by their own misfocus was Jesus. As we heard in the Gospel of John and in Acts, Jesus focused on God as His foundation for everything. He did not fear, but rather prayed for those all around Him who did.

When people give their worries over to God, what happens? Have any of you tried it, or seen someone who did?

The Psalmist praised God for providing abundant blessings to the people who worshiped God: homes to live in, freedom to live prosperously, power and strength. In 1 Peter and in Acts, the followers of Jesus are assured of Jesus' care, and are then able to live more fully as Jesus taught us to.

Jesus is our strength and salvation. We can cast our cares upon Him and know that there is a path of love in which to move forward. When we trust in God, we see more opportunities to which we can respond, because we are no longer held back by fear.

Are you secure in your faith?



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One other thing to note about casting our cares to Jesus: What happens when you cast a rock into the water?

Just as a rock thrown into the water causes a splash and ripples, so our giving our worries to Christ will allow the love of God to ripple out to those we deal with, to the community around us. Many more people besides ourselves are affected by our faith-based decisions. God can bless many people through us, if we let Jesus work in our lives.