

Sunday after Ascension - Sunday 12th May 2024 – Emmanuel, Billericay.

John 17: 6-19

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.

12 While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled.

13 But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves.

14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.

15 I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one.

16 They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.

17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

18 As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

Home Group Questions:

1. Think a time in your life when a journey or a plan took an unexpected twist. What did you learn from this? Where were you able to find God in the new outcome?
2. Notice how Jesus prays for the care and protection of his disciples in verses 11 and 15. He does this because his time with them is coming to an end and can no longer be their physical protector (v12). In what ways have you noticed or felt the protective hand of God the Father in your life, or in the lives of those around you?
3. How does stepping back and taking a wider look at the Old Testament biblical story help you understand the work of Jesus? Does the idea of the Old Testament sacrificial system being a “temporary road” give clarity to the “once and for all” work of Jesus on the cross?
4. Think of the times when you’ve lacked faith, love and compassion or tried to live only by your own strength or efforts. How did God work to bring you back to relying on only him?
5. The mission of the church is always to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection with the world. We do this through *loving our neighbours, praying for our enemies, ensuring sure the poor are fed, the sick cared for, and that no one in our community goes without justice or compassion.* How might the way you and your brothers and sister in this church live lives of faith enable Emmanuel Church and Billericay Parish to pursue these goals?
6. What does it mean for your life to be found “in Christ” and not in your own hands? What could this lead to for you and for the wider life of the parish?