

*After 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. 7Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; 8for 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. 9I 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.*

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

*11And 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.*

A few years ago Sue and I played golf on the Fourth of July – late in the afternoon. The golf course was almost empty. As we paid for our round I asked the manager when were the best times to play so you would have the golf course to yourself. His answer: The very best day to play golf is Mother's Day. Almost no one is there.

Lots of folks have plans for Mother's day. Most of those plans involve mothers.

And food.

And gifts.

And remembering - lots of remembering. Do you remember when ... the sentence will begin and a story will follow. Maybe it will be a story at a mother's expense and all will be laughing at Mom. Maybe it will be a story a mother tells – about a son or daughter as a toddler – an elementary student – a teenager. For many of us the stories will be of a mother who is not present – who lives far away or in a nursing home or who has died. These stories will have a different feel to them. And when the day is over and we are alone there may be more remembering still, remembering missed opportunities, ways we failed one another, challenges that lie ahead.

On the night that Jesus was to be arrested Jesus was gathered with the ones he loved to share a meal. He washed feet, told his disciples to love one another, he gave them bread and cup and told them it was his body and

blood. Then Jesus did one most important of all: Jesus prayed. Each of the four gospels tells us that Jesus prayed. Matthew, Mark and Luke tell us that Jesus prayed for himself, that if possible there might be a way for him not to die on the cross but even more he prayed that God's will would be done in him. John tells us that Jesus prayed for his disciples and for us. He prayed that we might be protected and that we might be one in his name. It is interesting that no miracle resulted from Jesus' prayer – Judas was not kept from betraying Jesus, Peter was not protected from denying Jesus, the other disciples were not saved from fleeing at the first sign of danger. But Jesus in his praying put himself and those he loved in the hands of God.

That is where you and those you love belong every day – in the hands of God. Many of you already take time each day to pray, "God, I entrust my loved ones to you. Guard them from temptation, keep them safe, give them faith. If something bad should happen to them this day I know they will be safe in your care – in life or in death, safe in your care."

Many of you pray for yourself as well, "Heavenly Father, watch over me this day. Let your will be done in me. Help me to listen, help me to be generous, help me to trust in you. If anything bad should happen to me this day, give me confidence that I will be safe with you, through sorrow, sickness, and shame - safe with you.

But I fear many of us are more like me when it comes to my woodchuck – just hoping that things will be okay. You know how foolish I am not to prepare for the day of the woodchuck's return – but in matters of faith and prayer it is so easy to just let things slide and to complain when tough times come. If Jesus prayed, why would we imagine we could get along without prayer?

As with Jesus' prayer, our prayers may not change what will happen. Planes will still crash, cancer will still strike, children will still experiment with risky behavior, and God's Son will die on the cross. But when we are praying regularly it will not be to a stranger that we turn in our time of need. The world may not be changed by your prayer, but you will be.

Peter writes in his first letter: “Like a roaring lion, your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith.”

The image is of a predator, and you and I the ones being stalked. As I read this warning this week I asked, “What does the devil hope for in us?” That we would be full of fear and anxiety and that we would rely on ourselves. For then we are most vulnerable to temptation and to that greatest of sins: despair.

And what does the devil most hope that we will not do? Pray. For then fear and anxiety are driven out by faith, and our trust in ourselves is replaced by trust in God.

When Jesus had ascended, the disciples and Mary and the brothers of Jesus, and the women who followed Jesus gathered in the upper room, devoting themselves to prayer. For them in this time before the Holy Spirit came upon them this was a time for uncertainty, a time of change, a time of readying themselves for the challenges ahead.

These days we are living in are always a time of uncertainty it seems - always a time of change - always a time of readying ourselves for the challenges that lie ahead. Let us like them devote ourselves to prayer.