May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. Amen.

There are moments in our lives when life gets really real, we could name those moments as “a dividing line”. Last week I told you a story about young girl who kept her mother’s cut hair in plastic bag. There was life before her mother passed away and there is life after she passed away. That dividing line is one of those threshold moments that calls into question everything: priorities and values, the way we live and relate to one another, the things that truly matter, how we want to be in this world, what we want from life. They hold before us questions about who we are, who we want to be, what we’ve done, and whether our life matters and makes a difference.

There is no one right answer to any of those questions. And I wonder if that’s what’s happening with Jesus in today’s gospel. It’s the night of the last supper. Jesus washes the feet of his disciples and then he begins a long monologue about leaving and his impending death. He talks a lot and for a long time; four chapters and 117 verses worth of talking. He talks about what it all means and what it will be like for the disciples. But we also get some hints about what’s going on within Jesus.

* St. John says that “*Jesus was troubled in spirit*” and declared that one of his chosen friends would betray him (John 13:21).
* Philip says, “*Lord, show us the Father and we will be satisfied*” (John 14:8). And Jesus’ response, “*Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me?*” (John 14:9) causes me wonder if Jesus is questioning what he has accomplished.
* Jesus tells the disciples, “*If you love me, you will keep my commandments*” (John 14:15). If? Is Jesus not sure that they love him?
* Jesus is, however, sure about the world. He says that the world hated him (John 15:18).
* He also knows that he will be abandoned by his friends. “*The hour is coming*,” he says, “*indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone*” (John 16:32).

That’s the context for Jesus’ prayer in today’s gospel. Jesus’ prayer isn’t a simple, “Dear God, please ….” It’s confusing. It’s hard to understand. It moves back and forth and folds in on itself. It’s as much about him as it is the disciples. He only asks three things of his Father: that God would protect the disciples so that they may be one as Jesus and the Father are one, that God would “protect them from the evil one,” and that God would “sanctify them in the truth.” The rest of the prayer is Jesus saying what God has done, what he has done, what the disciples have done, and what the world has done. The rest of the prayer is Jesus working through what’s happening.

Jesus’ prayer sounds to me like there is a thread of grief running through the prayer. It sounds to me like Jesus is trying to get some clarity and work out his life, what he has done and what is coming next. It sounds to me like Jesus has come to a dividing line in his life, and more often than not… dividing lines are places of prayer and pleading.

We all come to dividing lines in our lives. It might be a heart attack, the death of a loved one, a divorce, the loss of job, a shattered dream. But it might also be a graduation, a marriage, the birth of a child or a grandchild, a retirement, an unexpected opportunity. In some way our lives are a series of dividing lines. Every one of you could look back and see the dividing lines in your life; the questions that were raised, the choices you made, the struggles you faced, and the ways in which your life changed.

Dividing lines frame the human condition and our struggle to be authentic, faithful, and whole. In that regard Jesus isn’t as different from us as we often think or want him to be. Today we see the human Jesus standing in solidarity with us and our humanity. Today we see the human Jesus working out his life. And who among us doesn’t know what that’s like? We all do. We all struggle to work out our life.

So, tell me this. What are you working out and struggling with today? What is the dividing line running through your life? What are you doing with it?

I can’t tell you what to do with those dividing lines. I don’t have your answers. But I’ll tell you this. I am struck by what Jesus doesn’t do. He doesn’t isolate or close in on himself. He doesn’t get angry or resentful. He doesn’t resist or fight back. He doesn’t run away or try to escape. He doesn’t complain about or deny the reality of what is happening. Instead, he faces his life. He’s in touch with his humanity. He grieves. He weeps (John 11:35). He gathers with his friends. He prays. He lives with a faith that Easter is always on the other side of the dividing line. Amen.