

Rev. Timothy M. Crummitt

Fifth Sunday of Easter - Year A

Week 9 of Quarantine

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Acts 7:55-60

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

I Peter 2:2-10

John 14:1-14

05/10/2020 (Mother's Day)

Gospel

The Holy Gospel according to St. John:

14:1 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me. **14:2** There are many rooms in my Father's house; if there were not, I should have told you. I am going now to prepare a place for you, **14:3** and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you with me; so that where I am you may be too. **14:4** You know the way to the place where I am going.' **14:5** Thomas said, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?' **14:6** Jesus said: 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me. **14:7** If you know me, you know my Father too. From this moment you know him

and have seen him.’ **14:8** Philip said, ‘Lord, let us see the Father and then we shall be satisfied’. **14:9** ‘Have I been with you all this time, Philip,’ said Jesus to him ‘and you still do not know me? ‘To have seen me is to have seen the, Father, so how can you say, “Let us see the Father”?’ **14:10** Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak as from myself: it is the Father, living in me, who is doing this work. **14:11** You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; believe it on the evidence of this work, if for no other reason. **14:12** I tell you most solemnly, whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, he will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father. **14:13** Whatever you ask for in my name I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. **14:14** If you ask for anything in my name, I will do it.

The Gospel of our Lord.

Prayer

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Do Not Worry

Good morning! I wasn't sure what was happening, but all I knew was that it clearly wasn't something that was good. My throat had been getting this burning sensation at the bottom, what I would come to know was heartburn. But because I was 21 years old, I had no idea. The heartburn had gotten worse, but it didn't really explain what I was feeling. I couldn't breathe, my heart was racing, and there was a strange sense of nervousness. After finally deciding to go see a doctor, who listened to my symptoms, I quickly learned that I was having a panic attack.

Me? A panic attack? What was there for me to be panicking about? Come on! I had my whole life ahead of me! In fact, my WHOLE life... all those decisions... But this is Tim Crummitt, I'm carefree! "What's going on in your life?" the doctor asked. "Well, not much really." I said. "Just the usual stuff... I mean I am in my last semester of college, so that's probably got me a little anxious. Oh, and I'm trying to get ready for a move to South Carolina for seminary to become a pastor. But that's fine! I'm happy and excited, did you know I got engaged a few months ago! That wouldn't make me anxious would it? I guess the wedding planning is a little hectic, my fiancée is in Alabama for a year so we're trying to plan it all via phone... actually, I guess I do have a lot going on."

“14:1 ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me.’”

The weird thing about having a panic attack is that you have this strange dialogue with yourself as it happens. “Calm down, start breathing more slowly, take deep breaths. If you don’t get this under control it will just get worse. Am I breathing slow enough?! Is it getting worse! Don’t think about it, it will just make it worse! I’m not panicking! I’m not panicking! Oh my God I’m panicking!”

Jesus has just dropped a bombshell on the disciples. We pick up today’s text directly after washing the disciples’ feet and at the end of chapter 13 he lets the disciples know that one of them will betray him AND Peter will deny him. He then launches into what scholars call the “Farewell Discourse” which consists of chapter 14-16 and is the last time that Jesus speaks and teaches the disciples before he is crucified. I don’t know about you, but when someone, including myself, tells me to calm down it tends to have the opposite effect. Looking at the text now, it’s different, but you can’t help but empathize with the disciples who are anything but calm, and very confused. Thomas, trying to figure out what Jesus is saying, and Philip’s request for Jesus to just show them the Father are almost comedic in their exasperation.

“14:1 ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me.’”

We often hear this text at funerals, but it has so much to offer. One scholar writes that *“The opening imperative of the Farewell Discourse is not just an affective command. ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled,’ is a direction to the disciples’ will. It is a command to stand firm, even when their hearts abandon them. Their theology of a messianic military strongman will be replaced with the revolution that only engaged compassion can bring.”* It’s weird how you latch onto different things depending on what your life is like at the time. I have heard this text hundreds of times, and yet the reference to dwelling places in the opening of the text took on a new meaning for me as I’ve spent over two months now in my own dwelling place. It’s been hard to stay connected, but this text has reminded me that distance doesn’t have to be the end of community. It’s a thought echoed by one commentator who writes that *“The lectionary readings for the Sundays after Easter are replete with instructions for the disciples about how to live as Jesus taught without his physical presence in their midst.”* If there was ever a time we needed that assurance, it’s now.

I mean, I get it. It's been a crazy year. It seemed like we were going to go to war in January, then pretty much all of Australia caught on fire, and then the coronavirus started to get worse and worse. That's not even over and we're dealing with what the media has affectionally named "murder hornets." I understand if you're a little anxious right now. But just like the disciples, it's easy to forget that God has been revealed to us in the person of Jesus Christ. And that God won't let pain, suffering, anxiety, or even death get the last word. "**14:1** *Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me.*" Amen.