

Rev. Timothy M. Crummitt
Sixth Sunday of Easter - Year C
St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Acts 16:9-15
Psalm 67
Revelation 21:10, 22—22:5
John 14:23-29
05/22/2022

Gospel

The Holy Gospel according to St. John:

23Jesus answered [Judas (not Iscariot),] “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. 24Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me. 25“I have said these things to you while I am still with you. 26But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. 27Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. 28You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I am coming to you.’ If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. 29And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.”

The Gospel of our Lord

Prayer

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

Amen.

Peace

Good morning! How do you define peace? Or, what does that word mean to you? When we think on a national level, peacetime is the period when we are not in conflict. For parents of small children, peace is that brief period of time when the child is asleep before they too pass out from exhaustion. For the children of the 60's, peace was a symbol that was inextricably bound with things like rock and roll, flowers, and certain other... substances. As I was working on this sermon I kept wondering what peace means for Jesus Christ.

Our text today is part of what scholars call the “farewell discourse.” The first 11 chapters of the Gospel of John, the first half of the book, are dedicated to the three years of ministry that Jesus undergoes. From chapter 12-22 we focus on his final week of life. The final discourse that we have been reading parts of over the last few weeks is the last chance Jesus has to teach his disciples before his arrest, trial, and crucifixion. But as Elizabeth Johnson points out, *“First Peter, then Thomas, then Philip, and then Judas ask for clarification about what Jesus is telling them.”*¹ It seems that Jesus’ last lesson is not without some confusion. But within those words we get a glimpse of two things I want to call attention towards.

The first is the promise of the Holy Spirit. The season of Easter is 50 days following the Resurrection of the Lord. And in just two weeks, we will celebrate the culmination of that holy time with Pentecost. As Jesus prepares the disciples he reminds them in our text today that they will not

¹<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/sixth-sunday-of-easter-3/commentary-on-john-1423-29-5>

be alone. The word we use is Advocate and Holy Spirit in our translation, but another older name is the Paraclete, from the Greek word in the text *paraclêtos*, which “*signifies ‘called along beside’*”² or as one who walks with you. It’s this promise that comes with the third Person of the Trinity that I love so much. Even in the most vulnerable of Jesus’ last hours he still thinks about how to help those he loves. After his death, he promises, they won’t be alone. The Holy Spirit will journey with them! And it’s a promise for all of us too! Spoken in a room with his disciples, the words go out through the generations as a promise to us all.

The second thing is the peace that Jesus brings. One scholar writes that “*the peace that Jesus gives is nothing less than the consequences of the presence of God. When God is present, peace is made manifest.*”³ And it was at this point that I hit a wall. Because I kept struggling to write what should come next. And that was when I realized that God’s peace isn’t really something you can put into words. It’s something you must experience. So what I’m going to do is read the Gospel lesson again, slowly. Then I’m going to sit down, and after a few minutes of silence I will end with a prayer. Hopefully you will be able to experience the peace that God desires for each and every one of us. So, close your eyes if you need to, take a deep breath, and let God’s word dwell within you richly.

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² Ibid.

³ Bartlett, David L., and Barbara B. Taylor. *Feasting on the Word. Year C, Volume 2.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008. p. 494.

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Silence

Amen.