

## SERMON – EASTER 5A – MAY 10, 2020

**Text: Jn. 14:1-14, especially v. 1**

- I. Our gospel lesson for today begins with those wonderful comforting words from Jesus, “Do not let your hearts be troubled”
  - That’s one of the reasons the Christian Church has often used this passage as a funeral preaching text. It goes on to include Jesus’ promise that He will prepare a place for us in heaven... a place with many dwelling places... a welcoming place... a place of generosity for all who believe.
  - We should notice, though, that these words were first spoken to Jesus disciples and they had every reason to have troubled hearts.
  - There were only 11 disciples present when these words were spoken. Jesus had just finished identifying Judas as the betrayer. The previous chapter tells us that Satan had entered him & he went out to betray Jesus and have him arrested that very night.
  - Jesus told them He would soon leave them and they could not follow. When Peter protested that he would follow even if he had to lay down his life, Jesus replied, “before the cock crows you will deny me three times”
  
- II. This was the tense moment when Jesus spoke these words recorded in John 14, “let not your hearts be troubled”
  - John chapter 14 is the beginning of section 14-17 that we call the “farewell discourse”. In these chapters, Jesus speaks as the risen triumphant Christ, not as a person who is about to be humiliated, betrayed, tortured and killed.
  - It is as if Jesus is saying to his disciples (and to us) in this section, “Listen... we’re going to go through some really tough, disappointing, soul-searching times, but... don’t worry... I’ve got this!” I’m going to prepare a place for you!
  - In chapter 16, Jesus adds the punch line, “In this world, you will have trouble, but fear not, I have overcome the world!”

- III. When we are in the midst of trouble... times that some have called the “dark night of the soul... how can we not be afraid and avoid despair?
- Jesus answer is: “believe... you believe in God, believe also in Me! I and the Father are one!”
- Isn't it wonderful that God is our Father? The gods of the Greek and Roman pantheon would come down to earth once in a while to amuse themselves or to change some events of history, but they would never, ever consider living with humans like you or I.
- God our heavenly Father revealed Himself in the flesh of Jesus Christ. He lived with us. He died on earth and rose again and ascended into heaven. He continues among us with His Holy Spirit.
- Jesus prepared a way for us from death to life... He is preparing a place for us where this sinful world and our own sinful flesh is left behind and we can live in everlasting righteousness with God and the saints.
- IV. Once when I was catechizing a new Christian, she asked me, “why doesn't God show Himself to us?”. I told her, “Well, He did. God showed Himself to us in Jesus Christ. He came down from heaven, was born as one of us and revealed His very nature to us.
- Her reply, “Well why doesn't He do that now?”
- I told her, “Look what they did to Him the first time? Why would He come back?”
- It was a cheeky answer and if I had a chance to say it again, I would think of something else. I would explain...
- We are sinful people who live in a sinful world. It was extremely dangerous for our God to come down to earth. He had decided not to kill us but to bring us forgiveness. When human beings were confronted with the righteousness of God and His offer of forgiveness of sins, they killed Him. The greatest irony of history is that God our Father, transformed the murder of His Son into our redemption from sin and our sure hope of resurrection and eternal life.

- V. The closest we can come to describing a sacrificial, compassionate and forgiving love like that is to say, “He is our Father... Our Father who art in Heaven...”
- So, we say to ourselves and to the world, “Who is your daddy?” That is to say, who do you believe in and put your trust in when the chips are down?
- “Some of us want to be more powerful than everybody around, which makes domination our daddy. Others of us want people to love, admire and respect us, which makes emotional safety or possibly status our daddy. Some of us want to pile up so many non-perishable good in the basement that no stock market crash could possibly take us down and that makes security our daddy. Some of glory in being smarter or prettier or even crazier than everybody else around which makes brainpower or sex or coloring outside the lines our daddy. Some us even want to be the least capable, most screwed up person around which makes non-accountability our daddy.
- So, Jesus comes to tap us gently on the shoulder and says, “I am the truth. ‘God’s your daddy’. God made you as you are and that should take away everything you have to fear or prove in life. Believing your life is made by powers on earth sentences you to constant worry about inevitable defeat because there’s always a bigger dog on the block than the one you’ve given your soul to. Your life, however, comes from God and, properly understood, that changes everything. You are freed of all those other tyrannical daddies.” (from a sermon by Pastor David Hoster 04/20/08)
- Psalm 146, our Psalm for today says something similar, “I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save.”
- Jesus says, “Believe in me.”
- VI. Our God... our Heavenly Father... is so much bigger than we can ever imagine Him to be.

-He creates and loves all life. He redeems it through His Son. He sustains, adorns and empowers it with His Holy Spirit.

-He is so much bigger than all our troubles. In Jesus Christ, He offers us so much more than a life full of trouble and a grave.

-The Apostle Paul was a man who had more trouble, I suspect, than any of us. Yet by the power of God's Spirit, he accomplished much with his life.

-He, with other believers in Jesus, laid the foundations of the Holy Christian Church on earth that has lasted longer than any empire or human institution.

-These are some of the ones Jesus was talking about in our text when He said, "whoever believes in Me will also do the works that I do; and greater works..."

-It was the great Apostle Paul who was able to say in the midst of all his troubles, "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed to us."

-Believe it! Believe in God, believe in Jesus also!

-Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!