

SERMON – EASTER 6A – MAY 17, 2020

Text: John 14:15-21 – especially vv. 16-17 & 21

- I. As I write this, one of my grandchildren is in hospital... again. She has a kidney infection and is undergoing a kidney scan to find out if there is something more.
-This is a time when the “what if?” thoughts involuntarily come to my mind. What if she doesn’t get better? What if she will be chronically ill and it stunts her growth... even affects her brain? What if it’s cancer?
-These are thoughts that spring to my mind and I don’t even want to admit I have them, let alone speak them out loud to someone else.
-But they are there
- II. Jesus was speaking to His disciples in our Gospel lesson for today
-Their minds were also filled with “what if?” thoughts... very serious, deadly, threatening thoughts.
-They knew something was up! They heard the rumours... the temple authorities were so mad at Jesus they could kill Him.
-Someone even said that ever since Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, they were making a plot to assassinate Him.
-Then there was this strange supper meal. It felt like a last supper & Jesus was saying strange, important things... like they should memorize them.
-Jesus even said someone was going to betray him, and it turned out to be the one who dipped his bread along with Jesus. It was Judas. Judas stormed out of their company and he looked as though he was full of the devil
- “What’s going to happen?”, they thought. “What’s going to happen to us?”
“What’s going to happen to all those who believe that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God?”
- “What if...” “What if they kill him?” “What if they spread lies and fake news about Him and about us?” “What if they hunt us all down?” What if thoughts were filling 11 frightened minds that night

III. Jesus speaks to those thoughts

-In our Gospel lesson, Jesus speaks words of comfort and hope to His disciples. He doesn't tell them the future or the details of what will happen. But they are wonderful words of comfort that enabled them to go on.

-We must remember that when Jesus speaks, He doesn't speak ordinary words

-His words are the Word of God

-The word of God always does things

-Isaiah said that God's Word never returns to Him void and that heaven and earth will pass away, but God's Word never passes away.

-Remember... God spoke and the world and everything in it was created

-Jesus spoke the words, "Lazarus come out!" and Lazarus rose from the dead and came out of the grave

-Jesus said to a little dead girl, "Talitha cum" which means I say to you arise and she became alive.

-Jesus speaks and bread and wine are also His body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins and for strengthening our spirit.

IV. Jesus said to His disciples and to us

- "I will not leave you orphaned" He never promised that they wouldn't have troubles, but He promised to be with them.

-These are divine words that calm us down & enable us to function as Christians

-The disciples worried that they wouldn't have courage. They worried that they would fall into temptation and abandon the faith... maybe even betray each other

-Jesus said, "don't worry about that... I'm going to send my Holy Spirit to you. He will strengthen you... He will help you to deal with the temptations and the fears and the threats... the troubles and the suffering. He'll be there to bring you joy and peace too. (Well, Jesus really didn't say all those words exactly that way... but they are implied, right?)

-He spoke to their worries about the future. He answered their questions concerning what will happen to the company of believers... the future church?
-His words would come back to them and they would realize that it was Jesus' promised Holy Spirit that builds and nurtures the church
-In the future they would remember Jesus word about being joined in everlasting love with Jesus and the Father. He said, "He who loves me will be loved by my Father and I will love him and manifest myself to him"

V. Come to think of it... we teach our children to memorize those wonderful in a song, even now, 2000 years after they were spoken...

- "Jesus loves me, this I know
- For the Bible tells me so
- Little ones to Him belong, they are weak but He is strong
- Jesus loves me, He who died
- Heaven's gates to open wide
- He will wash away my sin, let His little child come in"
- (Well, Jesus didn't say all those words in our text... but they are implied in His exact words, "because I live, you too shall live")

VI. All of you have had loved ones who were sick like my granddaughter... no doubt some of the dear ones you and I were worried about and prayed over even died
-Yet we are comforted by the words of Jesus, knowing He loves us and is with us in the midst of our worries and troubles

- His Spirit comforts and strengthens us... even gives us joy
- His Spirit does this for people all over the world and knits them together in the Holy Christian Church
- The Holy Spirit works powerfully through God's Word and Sacraments
- We might worry that people will stop believing and the church will disappear, but it never does!

-And we know that those who are in Christ, never really die, they go to an eternal life with Jesus and the saints

- VII. Jesus speaks to me, interrupting my “What if” thoughts about my granddaughter
 - He says to me, remember... “I love your granddaughter and you with an everlasting love... and you both love Me.”
 - I will not leave you orphaned... I will never leave you or forsake you
 - My Holy Spirit will give you both strength for the day and bright hope for tomorrow.
 - I will comfort and strengthen your whole family
 - Everlasting blessings and joy are yours
 - Because I live, you too shall live and be happy... forever
- Christ is risen
- He is risen indeed
- Alleluia