

I LEAVE YOU  
[written in oral form]

John 14:8-17,25-27  
Pentecost Year C

June 9, 2019  
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>ask 18 year olds to come sit at the front<

Today's passage has a very theological tone.

The issue under discussion is the special relationship of Jesus to God.

It addresses those who were having a problem regarding Jesus as the full revelation of God.

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In verse 8, Philip petitions, "Show us God."

Jesus replied, in essence, "Good grief, don't you get it yet?"

Jesus unequivocally declared his total identity with God, saying, "Whoever has seen me has seen [God]."

He goes on to teach them that if they believe in God, then they will have the same effect on people as Jesus did, and likely have an even greater impact.

Near the end, he informs that God will come to them/ be in them.

They will receive the Holy Spirit.....to help them because Jesus will be gone.

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This assertion can only be understood in the light of Pentecost.

We must remember also that this passage was written some sixty or more years after the unique event at Pentecost.

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This powerless, small group of Galileans could no more imagine than we can how God could redeem the world through their witness of words and deeds.

It was so, at the end of the 1st century, when John wrote the Fourth Gospel, and that amazement continues at the beginning of the 21st century, as we sit in our chairs, numbed by the cataclysmic upheavals of our own time.

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Yet, the key that unlocks and opens up that potential is in the contingency Jesus presented:

IF,... you love God and hold onto / live what has been shown to you, then you will have God's Spirit in you-- to guide and empower you.

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In this passage, Pentecost is a promise. In John's time and in ours, it was and is a reality. As we read the news on our screens, it may be incredibly difficult to see the hand of God in the turbulent affairs of our time.

Yet, We are NOT alone. We live in God's world who has created and is creating,... and who came as Jesus to show us the way,... and has given us God's Spirit to carry on.

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Jesus presented a bold, confident message:.....However, ... can you feel a hint of concern and worry in Jesus' words?

Vs 9 - "What? you still don't know me? You still don't get it?  
And in verse 25, HEY listen,... I'm telling you this stuff because we won't be together much longer.

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I think Jesus is a bit concerned and worried.  
I imagine Jesus is looking at his disciples who have blank stares, maybe stunned or have their heads down looking at their phones.

As he is instructing them, Jesus may be thinking:  
Will they rise to the occasion?  
With God's Spirit they have the ability, but will they be faithful?  
Will they falter?  
Will the world get the best of them / overwhelm them?  
Will they forget?

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?? How have we done??

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Moreover, this situation sure feels like parents obsessing about their 18 year old turning into a young adult and leaving home.

Consider again, verses 25 and verse 9.  
Time is short. The Separation will soon happen.  
?Will the young adult....remember the love...and . remember the lessons and the values given over the years.

Will our children remember? ... be strong? .... be faithful?  
Or, will they falter and be overwhelmed?

And, just as important, ... will they regularly attend church?  
We are even afraid to ask that question.

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Nevertheless, most of this passage radiates Jesus' confidence and hope.  
We must not underestimate the power of God's Spirit / the power of Love.  
We have presented the life and lessons of Jesus.  
They understand and value the wonder of the church community.  
It is part of who they are.  
Also embedded in each 18 year old is the passion and loving devotion of their parents. Like God's Spirit, that love is in them like DNA.  
The witness / the examples of the parents lasts forever in their children.  
To be sure,.....for now,.....other distractions may be inhibiting their appreciation for their parent's lessons and legacy,.....yet.....they will come around. They will not forget.

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In addition, let us all remember, with confidence, that God's Spirit is present and is moving within them.....and us.

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These 18 year olds [ ] will be fine.

They have been well nurtured and taught by numerous compassionate adults... in the church, at home and at school.

Parents and this church have diligently shown them the way of Christ / God's way,.... and we have loved them.

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So Parents,... you child,.... after high school:  
may linger nearby for awhile, but will move away.  
They could go but a few kilometres away...  
They may relocate to the States...  
Or, move to a far off country.  
We do not know for certain,.... BUT they will NOT be alone.

They will carry the love generously bestowed upon them.  
Our prayers will dwell with them, and God's love / God's Spirit will always be with them.  
They will not be alone.

~~~~~[pondering pause]~~~~~

Yet,.....do I have this comparison backwards? ???  
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The adults / the parents don't exactly fit the Jesus part.  
Jesus is the one going away. Parents are not going away!  
The teen is the one leaving / moving on.

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Maybe it fits better to associate Jesus' role with those who are 18?  
They are the ones leaving.

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So,..... to those in their 18th year, [ ] Have you adequately prepared your parents?

Are you reassuring and encouraging them?

What have You taught them?  
Have you given them reasons to be confident?

Have you told them they will be okay without you?

Perhaps, you could remind them that your spirit and love resides in them?

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Moreover,..for you, parents:  
Just like Jesus' promise,... all predictions are.... that your child will come again and return to you.  
.....Likely, to your basement.

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No matter how we project ourselves into the text, the message Jesus presents is less about physical placement, and more about relationship with God.

Jesus was saying, the focus is not him.

The focus / the relationship / the faith is with God.

After Jesus, the personal relationship / the connection is felt and empowered because of God's Spirit with us.

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We call ourselves Christians, but that can be confusing because it is really all about our connection with God.

Jesus showed us how to better discover that.

In the context of this passage, the Jesus part / the Jesus relationship with humans would soon end, but .....not really. It was always about God... because God was in Jesus. Jesus always pointed to God.

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Verse 27, feels like a goodbye, as if Jesus said, "I leave you....."

Generally, hearing a goodbye is not a pleasant experience.

Yet, verse 27 states:

"Peace I leave With you" Peace I leave with you.

Jesus' peace of being with God is given to us.

Do not let our hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid.

God is with us and our children.

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May we hold onto this,.....AND may we share this.

The peace of dwelling / being in God's love is our powerful witness.

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When we sing the hymn of response, sing it for our children and sing it as a message to you and me.

Oh,...and one last word to those in their 18th year:

The world needs the church,.....and the church needs you!