

The Sixth Sunday of Easter

“May the Holy Spirit Be with You”

May 9, 2010

Text: John 14:23-29, Acts 16:9-15, Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5

Can you imagine getting a message from God that God was moving in with you? Our gospel tells that God is coming not just for a visit but to reside with you! Are you ready to have God move in? Maybe there are a few things to do before God moves in. House cleaning perhaps? Okay God probably does not care about how clean our house is (at least I pray that it is case!) but we would have to make room for God in our lives and maybe change a few things. Would we clean out an extra bedroom for God? Maybe build an addition for God? At times if God is living with us, maybe a whole separate apartment for God might be nice. You know, so that you could come in and out without being noticed? You would not have to share kitchen space! Maybe God would not know what and when you were eating? When God moves in, what other things might have to change? Maybe your television viewing habits? Maybe dinner conversations would take a different direction? Other language may need to be modified for some. When God comes to make a home with us, life will change!

Maybe more accurately, when we realize that God has already made a home with us, life will change. For those who love Jesus the Christ and God the Father – no matter how imperfectly we do so—God has made a home with us already. The Holy Spirit is with us and has been since our baptisms. This was the promise to the first disciples and I am certain is the promise to us as well! Almost 2000 years later, we do have the promised presence of God in the Holy Spirit. We are taught what Jesus the Christ taught to the first disciples who physically walked with him. God is dwelling with us even now.

This is both law and gospel. It is law when we are reminded of God’s constant presence because there are parts of our lives what we really do not want God to see firsthand. We all sin and fall short of the glory of God, so we all would like to hide some things from God. When we remember that God is with us, we do not immediately feel like we have an advocate or helper, sometimes we know we have a judge. But even in the midst of trying to transform our lives because God is ever present with us, we know that at the heart of the gospel is love. Love enables and even commands forgiveness. So the fact that God is dwelling with us is also gospel. When times are difficult and we are uncertain where to turn, we know that our hearts should not be troubled because we are never alone. Even at the end of Jesus’ earthly ministry, there is a promise to all who love Jesus that they will not be orphaned.

Because the Holy Spirit dwells with us, we are never quite sure where God is calling us to go next. Prior to our first lesson, Paul is preparing to return to churches and areas he has previously travelled but God keeps putting roadblocks in front of him. Finally in a vision, the Holy Spirit leads Paul in the opposite direction to Macedonia. So he goes. In our own lives, we do not know where or to what tasks God will call us, but we continue to try to listen and follow in God’s ways. When God lives with you, your life changes and your plans are not your own desires.

It is interesting to dwell on what means for God to live with us. The vision in Revelation might be the clearest sign of what that looks like for us. The image of the New Jerusalem is one where God is the source of light for the whole city. There is no need for a temple because God is present. The light of our Lord will draw all the nations together, instead of dividing. The gates will be forever open because only the righteous will enter with the light ever present. Water of life will give hope and healing for all. That river of life comes from God's own throne. The promise that there will be a time when it is obvious to all the world that God is dwelling with all of the creatures of the earth.

May the Holy Spirit be with you today! May you know that God has moved into your home, your very heart and mind. Trust that you do not have to be troubled but might know true and lasting peace!