

Pentecost Sunday- June 5, 2022. John 14:8-17 [25-27]

8Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.”

9Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves.

12Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. 13I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

15”If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever.

17This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.[

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.]

SERMON-

“Do not let your hearts be troubled” rightly translates to Jack Coleman Oklahoman English— sometimes barked at my brothers and me to calm us down— “don’t get shook”. Easier said than done.

“So Thomas, Peter, Philip and ‘all ya all’ don’t get shook.” But Jesus isn’t shushing for his own peace of mind. Jesus promises God’s Spirit in the disciples’ time of great peril.

Jesus has just told them he’s going away. He’s like the glue holding it all together and now he’s leaving. Earlier that night, one of their own has slipped away from the supper table to rat out Jesus to the religious and civic authorities. When Peter tries to play the hero, Jesus rebuffs him—in less than 24 hours Peter will disavow the group and Jesus.

How does one NOT get shook? Jesus sometimes calmed storms, but the disciples’ inner turmoil doesn’t immediately dissipate.

When Jesus says his farewells he says something like better things are coming. Maybe we’re thinking what Thomas says out loud: “Really? We don’t know the way. How CAN we?”

We might share Phillip’s wish for God to self-reveal in some spectacular fashion—then we’d be OK. Phillip reminds me a little of students who would impatiently implore me to just tell them what material would become a test question and that would be enough already.

Today’s church and faith communities know something of the fear, anxiety, and despair experienced among Jesus’ first followers. We’re apprehensive about the future of the Christian church as we know it. We’re traumatized by news headlines about war, school shootings, climate crises, contaminated drinking water, monkey pox, and Covid.

Instability and uncertainty rattle us individually and as community. Likewise Jesus assures us— individually and as community. The first hearers of John’s Gospel were shook when people were being expelled from synagogue.

When we’re anxious we need things repeated or phrased in a variety of ways. John’s Gospel relishes abundance; or as the Bible scholar Matt Skinner phrases it, “John turns up the volume” John is heaping stories, images, prayers, and conversations upon each other in hopes we’ll bathe our souls in Jesus presence with us and in us.

Jesus promises that God’s own spirit will dwell in our midst and within each of us in the same fashion God is in Jesus and Jesus lived among his disciples. The Spirit comes alongside us to teach, comfort, and shape us into a community that does what Jesus did in his life. The Spirit comes among us to form us into people who love in the same fashion God so loves the world.

Jesus promises that God’s own spirit will lead us to do even greater things than these...These what? Remember the signs Jesus does?....bringing God’s extravagant abundance when water becomes wine....giving sight to those who never saw before....healing those who were paralyzed....feeding those who hunger....raising someone from the dead.

Maybe the sort of Pentecost today’s churches need resembles Jesus’ bypassing locked doors and breathing God’s Spirit into us and among us— Imagine Jesus breathing comfort and courage into the church and into each of us that we might bring Christ’s healing, abundance and steadfast love into this world that God so passionately loves.