



MAY 10, 2020

LOVE FIRST, FIRST LOVE

WEEK DEVOTIONAL BASED ON SUNDAY'S WORSHIP SERVICE

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP SUNDAYS 9:00AM AT
WWW.FIRSTLUTHERAN-BARRON.ORG OR ON THE RADIO 97.7FM

John 14:1-14

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe[a] in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?[b] 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And you know the way to the place where I am going.”[c] 5 Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you know me, you will know[d] my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” 8 Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” 9 Jesus 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’? 10 Do 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. 11 Believe 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. 12 Very 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. 13 I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If in my name you ask me[e] for anything, I will do it.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Give us grace to love one another, to follow in the way of his commandments, and to share his risen life with all the world, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

REFLECTION

BY PASTOR RON MATHEWS

The Gospel lesson for this week is commonly used at funerals because it speaks to death, grief, and hope in the midst of tragedy and uncertainty. And there are few things more uncertain than death. Here, before His Ascension into heaven, Christ offers his disciples words of comfort to “not let their hearts be troubled” and a metaphor of going to his father’s house and that in his father’s kingdom there were many rooms where he is going ahead of us to prepare a place for us.

Jesus uses very personal language here, “I go to prepare a place for you” (Vs. 2). He tells his disciples he is going ahead of them to prepare a place for them, personally. This is to be a vote of confidence to his followers. That when they die, they will be with Jesus again, who is already there waiting to receive them.

This word often interpreted as “mansion” or “Father’s house” is based on a struggling image for the Greek word “monai” which means “dwelling places.” These promised “dwelling places” (monai) are linked grammatically to the Johannine concept of “abiding” (meno). These dwelling places are the noun form of the verb that Jesus uses just a chapter later, when he tells the disciples to, “Abide in me.”

An invitation to abide with God offers the image of protection and provision. Dwelling with God is a place of security to be vulnerable and share in hearing a comforting word. This space Jesus has prepared for you is a space where you have no concerns, only to simply be. God’s dwelling place is a place where God will wipe every tear from our eyes.

As Revelation 21:4 envisions, here “Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.” To dwell with God is to live in a place that is apart from our struggling, our hurting, and our doubting. Living in the presence of God is a place of hope and healing.

So Jesus tells his closest friends, his Disciples, in the wake of his Ascension: “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” He isn’t saying “do not be sad” or “get it together.” Here Christ is offering words of hope and assurance so that our hearts would not be troubled. He is offering his disciples permission to admit their concerns, own their pains, and accept their grief.

Faith is more than a simple “just don’t fear any more” or a “just trust in God.” That’s not how it works folks! Just “trusting God” doesn’t automatically remove fear, concern, or worry from our hearts. But faith allows us to find peace in the midst of fear. To find hope in the midst of even a pandemic. Faith allows our hearts to not be troubled despite being sad and afraid.

Christ is teaching his disciples, and us today, that we need to not shy away from our grief and fear but rather we should embrace them and their pain. And do so in the loving embrace of dwelling with God.

While we have no control over many aspects of our lives, death being one of them, we do have the choice of faith, of trust, of dwelling with God. And while grief may seem to be the primary emotion of folks these days, there is salvation to be found in the One who created you, in the One who loves you.

Remember that Loved conquered death and destroyed sin so that we may dwell in the house of our Lord forever.

AMEN.

**FAITH MEANS
TRUSTING GOD. WE
MAY STILL BE AFRAID,
BUT FEAR WILL NOT
KEEP US FROM ACTING
BECAUSE WE HAVE
CONFIDENCE IN FAITH**

