



Fifth Sunday of Easter

Sermon by Rev Allie Joseph



Sunday 10 May 2020

READINGS

Acts 7: 55-60; Psalm 31: 1-5, 17-18; 1 Peter 2: 2-10; John 14: 1-14

Troubled hearts come home

Backdrop

Our Gospel passage is part of the farewell discourse Jesus gave at the last supper.

While Jesus was saying these words, his apostles were still trying to make sense of what just happened, Jesus washed their feet. He just said that Peter would renounce him three times. Then he says: do not let your hearts be troubled.

Trust in God still, trust in me.

Jesus knows that his disciples need to hear this from him because they will face hardships and temptations very soon. In the end they will all die a martyr's death, except for John who will die in isolation, banished to an island. The other disciples will be crucified, burned alive, stoned, and tortured to death. They needed to hear these words from Jesus.

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still trust in me. In my father's house there are many mansions.

Jesus knows that for the troubled heart there is the one thing that will bring a sense of safety and security amidst the feeling of being lost and out of control. That is coming home.

Personal experience.

In all my travels spanning more than 25 years of travel, living, and working on four different continents, coming as close as any person can come to not having a home. All this led me to see the value of coming home. Having a home. A place where even I can find rest and be at peace.

As Jesus is preparing to exit this world, leaving his friends, and loved ones behind he knows how it feels to be physically absent from those he loves. He crossed the distance between heaven and earth to come save us and now he is going back to his father and our father. He

tells us not to let our hearts be troubled. He calls us home. He calls us to cross the divide of physical, social, and financial distancing. He reminds us that in faith we are still connected.

Real life issues

People's hearts are troubled today by the uncertainty of what is going to happen in the future. They say that we are dying a thousand deaths fearing one. More and more people will tell you that anxiety over what could happen has changed the way they live; change the way they see themselves and the world.

The fears that grip our planet at this current moment is an ever-increasing number of infections and deaths, job losses and the resultant socio-economic distress the world is finding itself in. With the most vulnerable always being those without financial means.

In our country where trauma is a way of life for most of our population, our current situation has just brought more trouble to our already troubled hearts.

All the uncertainty is leaving us with just more anxiety.

That the numbers of the huge amounts of money are properly pronounced now does little to stem the fear that it will disappear into the pockets of politicians who have already stolen from the poor in the past.

In all of this we are going through the stages of grief over a life that we are all losing and will never be able to put together again.

Many of us go through a range of emotions brought on by the reality of covid19

The pandemic has taken away so much more than just the lives of hundreds of thousands with almost 4 million people having to live knowing that they tested positive and their lives are in the hands of God. As are all our lives.

When asked what the virus means to them, each person will come up with a different response but what is common all over is the sense of uncertainty and loss.

Imagine having all the money in the world and not have the vaccine or cure for the virus.

We are all affected from the richest to the poorest, with the poorest of the poor suffering the most.

Landing

Where will we go to find rest for our troubled hearts.

Jesus invites us to find the remedy of our troubles in our connection of faith, faith in God the father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. To come home to the father's house. This faith will bring us home to a house where there are many mansions.

Faith as the substance of things unseen yet hoped for.

We hope for:

Health, safety, security

Life free of sickness and disease

Education and a future for our children

Financial wellness despite economic crisis.

Harmony and love in relationships and family units.

Eternal life for our deceased family members and friends.

Freedom from loss and grieve.

All these things are difficult to see during this time of crisis. Almost like being away or disconnected to the point where we feel out of place, even homesick.

Celebration

In a time where it seems that there is so little to celebrate, let us celebrate the power of the human spirit. The power to overcome despite being faced with insurmountable odds. We have the way to the father, `Jesus Christ. Who assures us of an eternal home in the house of the father.

Prescriptions

Trust in God's promise of a home where you will be welcome and loved.

Recognize and follow Jesus, the way to the Father

Stay connected and strengthen your connection with your brothers and sisters.

Make known your needs to God