

John 14:23-29

Jesus said to His disciples:

“Whoever loves Me will keep My word, and My Father will love Him, and We will come to him and make our dwelling with him.

“Whoever does not love Me does not keep My words; Yet the word you hear is not Mine but that of the Father Who sent Me.”

“I have told you this while I am with you. The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My Name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.

“Peace I leave with you; My Peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. You heard Me tell you, “I am going away and I will come back to you.” If you loved Me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe.”

The Gospel of the Lord

Reflection Questions

- 1) **The Context:** The context for this passage is the entire Chapter 14 of John's Gospel. Jesus is very aware that His death is coming soon (Jesus' raising of Lazarus set the death threats into motion; see John 11:53 'So from that day on, they planned to put Him to death.'). Jesus was quite cognizant of the plans of the chief priests and Pharisees to kill Him, and yet Jesus is more concerned for His disciples than He is for Himself. In Chp. 14 Jesus tries to comfort the disciples by reassuring them that He will not leave them alone but He will send the "Paraclete" (Greek: Parakletos; meaning one who consoles, comforter, one who intercedes on our behalf, an advocate), the Holy Spirit. Jesus offers this promise, not only to His immediate disciples but to all who love Him and keep His word. This passage is Jesus' response to Judas' (not Judas Iscariot, probably Judas, the son of James, Lk 6:16) question; "Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus seems to offer a rather obtuse answer to the question, but as we dig deeper, we will see that He is offering an all-encompassing answer. Jesus knows that He is returning to the Father, but He promises to make spiritual provision for the disciples by giving them the Holy Spirit. The Peace that the disciples will need will be given by the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

- 2) Jesus begins by saying, "Those who love Me will keep My word" (vs. 23). The term for 'word' here is the Greek; 'Logos'. John's gospel begins with "In the beginning was the Word (logos) and the Word was with God and the Word was God." (Jn 1:1). Jesus **IS** the logos. All of the words that come forth from His mouth are an extension of His very Self. The one who keeps His Word, honors who He is, venerates who He is, surrenders to His authority and thereby demonstrates his/her love for Him. How does the study of scripture help us to know Jesus better and therefore love Him more by keeping His word? What does it mean to you to show your love for Him by keeping His Word?

- 3) Almost every command Jesus gives is followed by a promise. The ones who keep His word, will have the privilege being specially loved by the Father and of having the Trinity come and dwell with him/her making their home with that person. Any person who obeys Jesus in His Word, can be reassured that the Trinity will be with him/her wherever he/she is (in heaven or on earth). Just as God the Father dwelled in the tabernacle and the temple, so also the Father, Son and Holy Spirit dwell in us, as we become God's temple (see 1 Corinth. 3:16, 6:19, 2 Corinth. 6:16). We are God's temple because we house Him as He enters us through Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation (and for some Holy Orders). How have you experienced God dwelling inside of you or in your midst? (through the Sacraments? Through the community? Through your family?)

- 4) God's promise to dwell in the midst of His people has its origins in the Old Testament. Take a look at 1 Kings 8:27, Ezekiel 37:27 and Zechariah 2:10 and compare God's dwelling among His people with some of the New Testament references to God's dwelling in the midst of the disciples. (John Chp. 14-17).
- 5) Jesus makes reference to the opposite case. It will be clear to Him which people do not really love Him because they will not bother to keep His word. We see this principle used in 1 John 2:4-5 to help settle disputes within the community. Jesus is giving this command to the entire community so that His love will be able to flow freely there and all in the community will love each other with the Love He has given them to give. He makes it clear that He does not operate on His own but the 'word' that He speaks comes from the Father Who sent Him. In what ways does our obedience to His Word, help us to keep His love flowing in our communities?
- 6) In Verse 25-26 Jesus reassures them that when He is gone, the Holy Spirit will 'teach (them) everything, and will remind (them) of all that He has said to (them).' Jesus gives the disciples comfort by reminding them that He is not leaving them alone, the Spirit (sent by the Father) will be with them to represent them, to defend them, to argue their case, to give peace and to provide counsel. Jesus is letting them know that the Holy Spirit will help them to remember His teachings after He has been resurrected and is ascended to the Father. The Spirit will make all things clear. This message continues to reassure us as disciples today because we continue to need the comfort, guidance, protection and leadership of the Holy Spirit. How is a Christian community's willingness to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit connected to Christ's fruitfulness in and through them making them a special gift to the world? How do you invite the Holy Spirit to guide you and to comfort you each day? (e.g. in your daily communions? Fellowship? Scripture study? Prayer?)
- 7) "Peace, I leave with you. My Peace, I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you." During that time, the world was experiencing a certain kind of peace, "Pax Romana"; Roman 'peace' which was founded on military strength, Roman taxation and violent use of force when necessary. Jesus offers them a qualitatively different kind of Peace, contrasted with this false 'peace' that the world offers. When have you experienced Christ's qualitatively different Peace (not dependent upon circumstance)? When do you experience that Peace the most? How can we differentiate it from the 'peace' that the world offers?
- 8) Compare **John 14:27** with **John 16: 33** "I have said this to you so that you will have peace. In the world, you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world." How is the Peace that Christ gives always going to be

qualitatively different from the 'peace' that the world gives? Why? How is this difference connected to His victory over the world?

- 9) In the final verse, Jesus reminds the disciples that they will experience the fullness of His promises, if they simply persevere in faith. How has this been true for you? As you have persevered in faith, have you experienced to a greater extent His promises for you?