

A Reflection on the Promises of Christ found in John, chapter 14

Readings: Acts 7:55-60; Psalm 31:1-5 &14-15; 1 Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14

Focus: Jesus tells us of two promises of great comfort

Function: We rely on Christ's promises: We are to believe and pray; Pray and believe

In a world that is greatly in need of divine comfort—in our gospel today, we find the most comforting words of the gospel of John, and perhaps the most comforting words of all of Holy Scripture.

Jesus is making two great promises to His Disciples, and to us.

- Now, I'm from New York. Where I come from, if a person makes a promise to me, I have two choices. I can take it with "a grain of salt;" which means I will believe it when I see it, or, if it's important enough, I will get the promise in writing.

These promises of Christ are different.

- We can rely on these promises, because it is Christ who makes these promises.

The first promise is one that is usually spoken of at funerals.

- Christ has promised to go and prepare a place for us, and that Christ will come again, and take us to be with Him for eternity.
- This feels like a future promise, fulfilled only at our death...
 - ...or at the death of a loved one.

This place being prepared for us is our heavenly home; Jesus calls it His Father's house; It is the dwelling place of the faithful—the dwelling place of the angels and saints; the dwelling place of our Lord; where we will one day abide with Christ forever.

Even if this dwelling place, this heaven, is a future promise, a promise not for right now; This promise is still comforting; it is of great consolation at a time when there is little else to console us.

This promise is that we will never be alone—

...For Christ has promised to be with us...

...and Christ has promised that we will be with Him for eternity.

The promise is simple; easy to understand:

Christ says in verse 3:

"so that where I am, you may be also."

Please understand the reason for this incredible promise:

- This promise is made by Christ out of Great Love for you!!
- There is nothing you need do; just believe.

Believe that Christ went willingly to a cross and died for the forgiveness of our sins, reconciling us to the Father, and on the third day; arose so that we can be inheritors of this promise of life everlasting with Him.

This promise of everlasting companionship is a promise of GREAT LOVE!!!
This is a promise for the future; but it is also a promise for right now!

Two of the disciples in our gospel reading today struggled with these promises:
Thomas was confused by Jesus' words, and asks a question.
Thomas says he doesn't know where Jesus is going, how can he know the way?

And we hear the incredible words that Jesus speaks about himself:

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life..."

(Joh 14:1 ESV)

Jesus is the "Way" for us right now!
Jesus is not just a guide to our salvation—HE IS OUR SALVATION!!

- He is our comfort and strength.
- He is the truth and the life!

And that is of great consolation.

The Apostle Philip also had doubts—in verse 8 we hear that:

Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."

Sadly, it seems like the Apostle Philip is putting conditions on his believing.

Jesus replies that He is in the Father and the Father is in Him.

Jesus tells us to believe...

...or at least believe because of the works He has done—the blind see; the lame walk, Lazarus was raised from the dead...just believe...

And we do believe.

- We believe that Jesus is the Son of God—the revelation of God to us.
- We believe that Jesus is Lord...

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The second great promise of our gospel today is that Christ is telling us we are to pray in His name; and when we do; that He will hear our prayers...

...and that if we ask in His Name, He will do it.

- He also says we will do the work that He does, and even greater things, because we ask in His Name.

This promise feels a bit different from the first one.

- We do pray in His name; it seems we do that out of habit, without thinking about it.

Even so, there are times when it seems that we don't see the answers to our prayers.

- Many times; it may seem like there is no answer at all.
- We might even ask ourselves: Are we praying correctly?

I assure you my friends, don't worry about technique, or if you are praying correctly, or praying often enough, or if you are saying the right words, or not using enough words.

- Our God is not like that—God doesn't withhold His Grace because we don't ask correctly.
- God sees and hears what is in our hearts, and that is enough.
- Pray in his name; pray unceasingly.
- Know and believe this for certain: Christ has heard your prayers.
- And we pray, knowing that...

...Prayer is opening our hearts to Christ, and listening to Christ.
And Christ is saying to us:

"Let not your hearts be troubled..."

(Joh 14:1 ESV)

Remember: it is Christ who is speaking to us!!

- Because it is Christ, we listen and obey!
- And if Thomas and Philip, two people who were with him during his earthly ministry; if they struggled with the promises; well, in our struggles we are in good company.

This promise of praying in Jesus' name is a promise for right now.

RIGHT NOW:

- We have the promise of His Everlasting presence in our lives;
- We have the promise of praying in His Name.

These are two great promises of comfort.

- We are to believe and pray; and pray and believe.

IN FAITH, we believe; knowing Christ loves us:

We can live our lives in the comfort of these promises right now!!

This pandemic we are experiencing right now isn't going to last forever,
but the good news is:

Christ and His promises are going to last forever!

He has promised; that is enough.

And so we believe!

And so we pray: Your will be done, O Lord...

IN JESUS' NAME WE PRAY!

Amen