

The word Gospel means good news. Jesus knows the good news brings a peace that is needed throughout humanity. “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man loves me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”<sup>1</sup> We first seek peace in Christ.<sup>2 3</sup>

We can find Christ’s peace through prayer. For me, that is through the rhythms of the daily office. There are also prayer beads and extemporaneous prayers. And of course, the Book of Common Prayer; this is especially useful when struggling to find words for a difficult situation.

The words of comfort in this gospel scripture are clear. Will there be moments of pain? Absolutely. Our duty is to be the calm in the storm. To use prayer to find peace and stand firm in the face of chaos. To constantly search our souls and find the peace of God. Or what St. Paul calls “the peace of God that passes all understanding.”<sup>4</sup> We do this through gentle words. And Through kind actions.<sup>5</sup>

In our Gospel scripture we see Jesus emphasizing the relationship both between him and his Heavenly Father as well as with the Holy Spirit.

What Jesus tells us here is that God is about peace.

Jesus tells us that soon he will not be able to communicate with us in the same way. As his disciples, we are called to search for him in a new way, through this Holy Spirit.

At the time of this speech, the disciples did not know what that meant. Now we know, it brings the peace that enables us to do ministry in the most difficult situations.<sup>6</sup>

Jesus’ resurrection changes the world forever. It humbles us that Christ died for our sins. The sacrifice is violent and painful. The disciples, and now we, are called to show the healing nature of this inaction.<sup>7</sup>

John’s gospel brings us a reminder of the eternal, We know Christ’s resurrection is not the last. We are called to invite others, as many as possible, into Christ’s peace.

Jesus, as our ultimate leader, is trying to be incredibly clear on who he is as our Messiah. He has told Peter, Thomas, Philip, and now Judas (not Iscariot the betrayer), so that in time they too might find a way to bring Christ’s peace to all.<sup>8</sup>

If we want to find Christ, to abide in Christ Jesus. In this context abide means to remain close and to stay with. This abiding is about seeking the peace of Christ. John’s Gospel ties together eternal life with the here and now.

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<sup>1</sup> John 14:23 King James Version

<sup>2</sup> Lewis, K.M. (2014). *Fortress Biblical Preaching Commentary: John*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

<sup>3</sup> In our Gospel scripture, we see that being Christian cannot be done in a corner, rather it must be done in a global sense. For Christians, there is an inclusiveness, because a single church belongs to God and therefore all God’s creation. Clendenin, D.(2022). <https://www.journeywithjesus.net/lectionary-essays/current-essay?id=3388>

<sup>4</sup> Philippians 4:7

<sup>5</sup> Sloyan, G. (2022). *John: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Louisville: Westminster: John Knox Press.

<sup>6</sup> Sloyan, G. (2022). *John: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Louisville: Westminster: John Knox Press.

<sup>7</sup> Wright, N.T. (2001). *Luke for Everyone*. London: SPCK.

<sup>8</sup> Johnson, E. (2022).

<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/sixth-sunday-of-easter-3/commentary-on-john-1423-29-5>

When we are at our best, possessing the wholeness that is present in the word peace, we dwell with God.<sup>9</sup> Some people will not understand this peace, nor will they want it at all.

Think of a person who brings chaos wherever they go. Perhaps you know such a person? Maybe your friend, your family, and if you don't know such a person, it might be you.

I enjoy watching *Grey's Anatomy*, which is a medical drama that has been on TV for 18 seasons. One of the original characters, Izzy, was chaos personified. Everywhere she went there was drama. She unplugged medical devices, dated patients, and much worse. Most of her drama I cannot mention in a sermon without having a very long supervision session this week. Many of us know Izzy's. They are the people that thrive on chaos. The people who aren't happy unless they are unhappy.

Jesus is saying that we cannot live in such chaos. Our souls thrive on the calming of the seas. John's gospel is an invitation to see how we can bring peace where there is chaos.

Even though Jesus made the Holy Spirit known to us in the world, there is still anger and hurt. There is still war. What we know about Jesus and the Holy Spirit is that even in the midst of all this, God can bring good in small and large ways.<sup>10</sup>

The purpose of Jesus coming is to bring peace. He wishes, in all things, to comfort our nervousness that we may best embody his love. We are called through Jesus' words into a peace we cannot always understand. When we approach the communion rail let us pray for the chaos of the world to melt away; as we are invited to be one with our Savior alone.

We see peace and biddings to not be afraid throughout scripture. We would do well to remember on this sixth Sunday of Easter that one of the first things Jesus tells his frightened disciples after his resurrection is "Peace be with you." He repeats this, perhaps because their hearts were so full of fear. The Hebrew word for peace is Shalom, which means wholeness, completion, and inner calmness.

There are moments when we cannot feel God's peace. Sometimes as a result of gossip, relationship tension, or our own inner chaos. It is these moments of pain when we must seek The Holy Spirit through prayer. It is when we are called to use the Holy Spirit to spread peace.<sup>11</sup>

Bringing peace throughout the world means seeing the gifts each person may have to offer. The uniqueness of our cultural backgrounds can bring out the best in the Holy Spirit. Both the rhythms of Celtic and Latin American theology inform us of a God that is mystical and spiritual. John's entire Gospel certainly reflects such a God.<sup>12</sup>

Bringing a peace that is about knowledge of God and inner calm means facing danger. We as humans have a natural tendency towards unrest, we want the inside scoop, the gossip, and so finding that peace is a challenge. Spreading that peace is an even greater challenge.

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<sup>9</sup> Johnson, E. (2022).

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<sup>10</sup> Johnson, E. (2022).

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<sup>11</sup> Sloyan, G. (2022). *John: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Louisville: Westminster: John Knox Press.

<sup>12</sup> Clendenin, D. (2022). <https://www.journeywithjesus.net/lectionary-essays/current-essay?id=3388>

The world Jesus calls us to evangelize is a growing world. It began with the small group of his family, grew to those witnessing his birth, then his disciples, and now is all of humanity. We are called to bring Christ to all so that they may know his peace.

In our actions, we give first loyalty to God. We lift up those who are downtrodden. Our call to Christ's peace pushes us away from politics, instead reflecting Christ in our thoughts. We cannot truly wish another ill will if we are invoking Christ's peace.<sup>13</sup>

We are called in John's gospel to be mirrors of Christ. We see and experience his love and peace, then we must reflect this love in earnest. We need to reform our thoughts so that our actions reflect the words of peace and love.

As Christians, we must also be open to the changes in Christianity. The Spirit constantly changes us to better reflect the Gospel.<sup>14</sup>

My prayer for us today is that we are all able to emulate God's peace in our lives. I pray for us to constantly seek the Spirit throughout each day. So, let me close with this prayer, from Søren Kierkegaard

*Lord! Give us weak eyes  
for things that do not matter  
and eyes full of clarity  
in all your truth*

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<sup>13</sup>Clendenin, D.(2022). <https://www.journeywithjesus.net/lectionary-essays/current-essay?id=3388>

<sup>14</sup>We experience the Holy Spirit at many moments of our lives. I think it is easiest to see the Holy Spirit during the Sacraments and Sacramental Rites of the church. When we have confirmations and are receiving new members; we feel the Holy Spirit around us. When we lift up the ministries of the church during prayers, and yes, when we amplify our ministries through church planting and new missions. These are ways the Holy Spirit works in our lives. We experience the Holy Spirit at many moments of our lives. I think it is easiest to see the Holy Spirit during the Sacraments and Sacramental Rites of the church. When we have confirmations and are receiving new members; we feel the Holy Spirit around us. When we lift up the ministries of the church during prayers, and yes, when we amplify our ministries through church planting and new missions. These are ways the Holy Spirit works in our lives. We no longer live in a world dominated by a euro-centric view. Instead, we live in a world where we see The Spirit, feel peace in Christian centers that are in places such as Bruno's Aires. We are called to embrace this movement and learn from it.Clendenin, D.(2022). <https://www.journeywithjesus.net/lectionary-essays/current-essay?id=3388>