Father’s Day Message (John 14:15-24)

St. Andrews Canterbury 18/06/2023

What should this sermon be about?

1. This is a passage about love and Jesus’ commandments. Four times throughout these two are connected, sometimes “if you love me keep my commandments” sometimes “those who keep my commandments love me”. Clearly there is a link between loving Jesus and obeying him, especially when his primary commandments are to love God and love one another. (Link to love/loyalty to YHWH in O.T.)

So, this should be a challenge – are we obeying his commandments? How are we loving him by loving God and one another?

But…

1. This passage is about the giving of the Holy Spirit! Jesus speaks of how he will ask the Father to send the Spirit to the Disciples. Even though he will leave them, the Spirit would help them in his absence. The Spirit would never leave them and would be proof that God has not and will not abandon them. (Link to the Tabernacle/Temple)

So, this should be an encouragement – how the Spirit is always with us. How through him Jesus never abandons us. How he is the seal, the guarantee of both God’s presence with us and our identity as the Temple/Body of Christ. Through him the very presence and power of God is available to us every day.

But…

1. This passage is about the Trinity! The Son asks the Father to send the Spirit. It’s the Trinity in action. How God the Father is connected to us through his Son and his Spirit. It is then a fascinating passage that shows us their individual and collective roles in their relationship with us. We are connected to the Trinity by our love and obedience to the Son, and so we are one with the one who is one with the Father. And he sends the Spirit to us to dwell with us and in us forever – because the Son asks it.

So, this should be a theological lesson on the workings of the Trinity and how we relate to it. How we, humble as we are, are connected to the infinite, eternal Trinity.

But… Today is Father’s Day, and I’m here with my Dad, with two of my daughters, and with the real pain of away from my youngest for almost 6 months.

1. This is about a Father. This Passage is about a Son speaking of his Father in Heaven. All of the three things I saw in this passage centre on God the Father. The love and obedience towards the Son is what connects us to the Father. The Spirit is sent by the Father, so our help, our guarantee finds it source in the Father, the Father’s gift. And the interaction of the Trinity is centre around the Father, it is the Son who speaks the words of the Father, and it is the Spirit that is sent by the Father. And the result of the love and obedience, the result of the Spirit’s presence with us, the result of the Trinity’s work is – “to make a home with us”.

And in this we see the Bible-wide desire and goal of the Father’s heart. In Exodus he spoke of his desire to dwell, to tabernacle among his people. All the way through to Revelation, where in 21:5 he still speaks of that same desire, now complete as heaven joins with earth. (Link to the idea of God’s exile – Bible is a story of God coming home)

So, this is a Father’s passage on Father’s Day. It is a reminder that the God we love and serve is a Father. A Father that longs to make a home with his children. Who loved them so much by sending his son to die in order that what separated him from us could be torn down.

A Father that sent us the gift of the Spirit, so that until the day that we dwell in his presence, his presence will dwell in us. Giving the life of his Son so that we can love and obey and see and know the unending, unchanging love of the Father for his children.

Amen