

John 14:23-29  
Sixth Sunday of Easter  
May 9, 2010

**John 14:23-29 (New International Version)**

<sup>23</sup>Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. <sup>24</sup>He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

<sup>25</sup>"All this I have spoken while still with you. <sup>26</sup>But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. <sup>27</sup>Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

<sup>28</sup>"You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. <sup>29</sup>I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe.

Mother's Day: a highlight of the year. Why? What do moms do? A lot. You can find lists of the jobs mothers perform and the wages you would pay to hire the work done. Mom serves as a nurse, teacher, chauffeur, cook, custodian, and psychologist, among other responsibilities. The total for such tasks would go well beyond the income of most of us. Although there are jokes about old wives' tales and mother's advice, we freely admit moms deserve more than one day for special recognition.

That's not all. Someone recently mentioned a Christian mother who was on her deathbed. As the children gathered around her, her words were, "Stay close to Jesus." Her statement reminds us of the most important role of a mother. She is vital to a child's spiritual development as she tells of Jesus' love, teaches little hands to fold in prayer, reads Bible stories, listens to memory work, and sets an example of godly virtues and conduct. Those thoughts are not far from the concern Jesus shared with His disciples the night before He died. So as we consider them we also say

STAY CLOSE TO JESUS AND HIS WORD

- I. As the home of God and His love v23-24
- II. For peace through the Spirit v25-27
- III. For joy in the Savior v28-29

The message of the Word is God's love. Jesus is the heart of the Scriptures. He once asserted: "They testify of me." The Old Testament is more than the history of nation. It reveals God's promise of the Savior, how He passed that promise on through the generations and kept alive the nation bearing it. The whole Old Testament pointed ahead to Jesus. The New Testament tells how God fulfilled His promise and sent Jesus as the substitute for the human race, keeping the law of God perfectly, dying on the cross to pay for the world's sins, and rising again in demonstration of His victory. He performed that act of supreme love for a world that responded to His goodness with disobedience—not only occasional slips, but direct defiance, often honoring other gods and doing the exact opposite of what God wanted and deserved.

People sometimes remind us that even a criminal is a mother's son. Some do such horrible things that only a mother could love them. The world is so corrupt that only God could love it, and He did. That's what we learn in the Word.

Jesus called on His followers to keep His Word. That is the literal thought of His declaration, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching." We cling to that Word and treasure its truths. We trust the Savior it reveals as the only rescue from sin. It brings God's grace and mercy which has saved us. We keep going to it for comfort and strength.

We also will put it into practice. Follow God's ways in thankful love. Live according to the Word. We do so not to earn merit before God but as a natural response to His love. If you give Mom a special day—flowers, brunch, a gift and a card with a mushy verse—but refuse to do what she asks you, she will legitimately question whether you meant all those flowery sentiments. So we obey the teaching of our Savior in thanks for His goodness.

When that happens, "My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." Imagine that! The infinite God comes to live in you. He is a permanent guest. As He filled the temple in the Old Testament times with the sign of His presence, so He comes to live in you. You are a church!

His indwelling brings wonderful blessings. We receive spiritual knowledge, comfort and strength for times of trouble, and power for Christian living. As St. Paul wrote to the Galatians, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Ultimately His living in us leads to our living with Him in the joys of heaven.

Can we use the thoughts of mothers and Christian homes to formulate an understanding of the blessed condition? Home is our source of security and comfort, the place we seek refuge from the stresses and struggles of life. We older ones have fond memories of the smells of baking delights, the hugs, the laughter and lessons from home. Mom was always there to keep the family together and make us feel good. If you had such a home, you can appreciate the picture Jesus paints here. The mental vision encourages us to stay close to Jesus and His Word as well as to examine ourselves to see if we are doing so.

## II.

We also stay close to Jesus and His Word for peace through the Spirit. Jesus promised to send the Spirit to His disciples. The name Counselor is used. He spoke of the one who calls to give aid, who is at our side as mediator, intercessor, and helper. The work mentioned here: "Will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." The Lord Jesus taught many truths to His disciples. No one could possibly remember all that He said and did during the three years they were with Him. Some lessons they had not caught, as reflected in the questions they asked and misunderstandings that were evident. Other truths they could not handle, as He noted later in this discussion, "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear." When the Spirit came upon them they were able to record in detail the events and teachings of Jesus' ministry. They testified to the world with clarity and correctness. They could carry out their work with confidence.

The Savior sends the Spirit to us through the Word. The inspired and inerrant Word is the Spirit's tool to work in our hearts. He leads us to acceptance of the gospel truths. We can rely on that Word with absolute trust.

The Spirit brings peace. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives." Christ's peace is unlike that of the world. People seek to establish peace but it does not last. Wars and fighting rise up constantly. What we often look to for peace of mind and security easily fails.

True peace comes in the forgiveness Jesus won for the world. That's why He termed it "my peace" and why He can give it. He has erased our record of sins. We are not afraid of God's judgment. We know He loves us and will deal with us always in love. Christ's peace remains during troubles. Bad things happen constantly in our sinful world but we know God has a plan in all of it and He will bring about a good result. We also know that one day we will be in heaven where only good will exist. Knowing the end of our journey, we can be at peace along the way, calm and confident. Stay close to Jesus and His Word and enjoy peace through the Spirit.

### III.

You will also find joy in the Savior. The disciples were not feeling it right then. Jesus had spoken of leaving and they were saddened. They needed to consider the purpose for His leaving and the results, both for themselves and for Jesus. He would be leaving the very next day in death. However, that death was the means of accomplishing His mission. That absence would be short, for He would rise again. He would resume the glory of His exaltation. He would share the greater condition that was His in His essence. He would no longer be in a state of humiliation. Be glad for Him!

Not much longer and He would leave again, in His ascension. He would be returning to His Father. His visible presence would be gone from them but they would not be abandoned. He would remain with them, present everywhere, but especially at hand where believers gather in His name and around His Word.

So they should not focus on what was gone but on what it meant. He was doing it for them. By Jesus' work they and we were redeemed, forgiven for all sins. Knowing the burden of sin that we carried, what a joy and relief that is!

Our joy will be lasting. We have a victory to celebrate and benefits to enjoy. We are filled with peace and the indwelling Godhead. Keep basking in those wonderful conditions as you use His Word.

We express our joy when we come to worship and praise Him, both with our fellow Christians in His house and in our homes. We share the joy of Jesus in our witness to those who do not know the Savior or who have strayed from His Word.

We also live our joy. We find joy in pleasing the Lord and experience added blessings in doing so. There will be good relations with others and a meaningful life. We anticipate an eternity of joy.

So stay close to Jesus and His Word. Make a mother happy, and you as her child. God's Spirit will fill you with joy and peace and keep you in faith. One day you will also be close to Jesus in your heavenly home.