

Grace Lutheran Community, 7 May 2023: Fifth Sunday of Easter

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The sermon text for today is based on the text  
John Chapter 14 verses 1 to 14

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“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.”

As we gather today in the context of our modern world what does that look like for you? Are you at peace or are you anxious with fear, doubt, worry or sorrow and grief?

Are things going ok for you? Are you just getting on with life or do you feel you are thriving? Do you have purpose, hope and joy in the things you do?

If I asked you are you troubled by anything today how would you respond?

It is wonderful that life seems to be getting to the place we as a society are caring more. We have RUOK day and we may see car stickers that encourage men and women that it is good to talk about mental health, to be open and share and to find support. These are good things that we are seeing in our daily community. People being encouraged to share the things they are troubled by.

Then you read about the latest research into the age we live in where people are no longer giving a wave of acknowledgement when someone

lets you in while you are in traffic. We still live in the world of the selfish human heart. In a world where there is brokenness and pain and sorry and suffering. But in our world, in your place in the world do you know where you are going?

The world we live in and the things we see are from the heart of humans. When we see the things of God from the hearts of those around we see the resurrection of our Lord Jesus in action. The words and deeds of a new creation in Jesus Christ. People growing in Him living the Risen Lord in daily life.

One of the greatest fears for many in life is to be vulnerable. One of the greatest assets in relationships is vulnerability but how hard do you find that?

When you chat with others and even in your own experiences vulnerability is seen as a weak or even a pathetic thing as surely in life we want to be strong, positive always or at least to show others that we are strong always and to show that we have it all together so people won't judge us or even worse see the truth that we are troubled by something. Jesus knows our every weakness our every thought, He knows our anxious troubled hearts.

Today Finlay and Rory don't seem too troubled by much. They might get frustrated when they are hungry and voice that concern in a gentle or not so gentle way or they might remind their parents that they are cold or need a nappy change but beyond that they seem like they are not worried or troubled by life.

No what a joy it would be if we as followers of Jesus could be the same. To have a simple life trusting that our needs will be met. For Finlay and Rory they are vulnerable, they don't have the strength to get their needs satisfied without the help of a parent and we in our life don't have the

strength to carry our burdens, our worries, our insecurities - rather as Saint Paul reminds us to be strong in the Lord.

Jesus reminds us today, do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in me. Trust in me. Follow me, do not be worried or anxious but take my hand, hear my voice and follow me.

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Today in the gift of Baptism Finlay and Rory have received the precious gift of the Holy Spirit and they have had their names written in the book of eternal life. Faith has been created and now their faith as they remain in Jesus and He in them will grow.

Yes like you and me they will still have times of doubt and worry and fear and yes their hearts will be troubled from time to time with the worries and brokenness of the world but they will know the way to go. The way to walk each day just as you and I will still worry and be troubled and we have the same way Jesus who calls us to follow. We don't need to search for the truth in the world when we live the truth of Jesus in our lives. We know where we are going because as you witnessed today in baptism we are chosen by God to be His own children and He gives us in His only Son who suffered and died for our sins, eternal life. Jesus is life, eternal life that begins in faith. As we believe we will live forever. Yes we will age and can be called home but in faith we will live forever.

And as we find our hearts troubled we have Jesus our Risen Lord, our Good Shepherd and our Saviour who gently speaks to us, do not let your hearts be troubled for I am with you. What a joy we find in Jesus. When we look to Him rather than looking at our troubles for Jesus never fails us nor deserts us we find peace. We no longer need to be troubled in our sin, for Jesus forgives you and you will find in Him rest for your souls.

Again today Jesus sends us out reminding us that He is one with the Father. If we want to know what God is like we only need to know Jesus through His word.

If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves.

So Jesus sends us out as we are. We know longer need to be troubled about our future and our now and our past. For Jesus calms us, reassures us and reminds us of God’s love, grace and mercy as Jesus blood has washed us clean. He sends us out to do God’s work, to share God’s love with others in service to our King. He makes us Holy and gives us purpose and all this is offered to anyone who believes in the one God has sent Jesus.

Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Live in the Risen Lord Jesus and go asking Jesus for all you need to do the work of the one who sent you into the world. Amen.