

The Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 1, 2016

**Prayer of the Day:** Father of lights, every good and perfect gift comes from you. Inspire us to think those things that are true and long for those things that are good, that we may always make our petitions according to your gracious will; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Verse of the Day:** Alleluia! Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! 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. Alleluia! (John 14:23)

**Sermon Text:** John 14:23-29

This morning I want to start by asking you a question. You do not need to raise your hand and give your answer.

I just want you to take a few seconds to dig deep into your heart and think of one single answer. Ready? Alright, here it is: "Where do you find peace?" I am not asking what your neighbor thinks peace is. I am not asking you to tell me what the world calls "peace." I am not asking where you should be (or wish to be) finding peace. I am asking you: "When life grows uncertain, you find peace in (fill in the blank)."

Did you discover that one object you search for comfort in the midst of trouble? As you watch the presidential primary season reaching its end and you wonder who will govern our nation next, where do you find peace? When the number in the bank account runs outside of your comfort zone, where do you find peace? When school gets tough and fear eats your mind, where do you find peace? When you think about how life will be for your children and grandchildren, where do you find peace? When you realize that being Christian in a society which seems to grow increasingly anti-Christian is not so easy, where do you find peace?

Now, one final question: "Does your answer bring peace to you?" Does it wipe away every fear and instill the confident reality that everything is actually alright? If it does,

**John 14:23-29**

<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.

does your object of peace have the power to grant you comfort in all situations at all times?

Maybe the question in the back of your mind is: “Is there such a thing as ‘true peace?’” Some days you may feel relaxed and confident. At other times you may feel absolutely terrified. Can you actually expect to live life without fear and know that everything is truly alright?

The answer really revolves around the question we will focus on: **WHERE DO YOU FIND PEACE?** *Look to God’s own Word and Discover life-changing peace.*

That is where true, lasting peace is found—in *God’s own Word*. Jesus says: “**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.** So, as you wonder who will govern our nation next or when school gets tough and fear eats your mind or when you realize that being Christian in a society which seems to grow increasingly anti-Christian, **WHERE DO YOU FIND PEACE?** Do you *look to God’s own Word?*”

After all, did you catch what Jesus is saying to you? **If anyone loves me...** If you say that you love God, then what results is **you obey his teaching.** Jesus even answers the “Why-should-I-obey-his-teaching?” question. **My Father will love him and we will make our home with him...** Only through the Word God lives in your heart ([Romans 10:17](#)). That means, through God’s Word, the Holy Spirit creates faith in your heart. Your faith responds by loving God and loving to hear his Word whenever possible.

So, do you *look in God’s own Word* to silence fear and give your feet stability? God chooses to speak to you only through his Word. In it he gives you his promises, guarantees, assurances so that you have peace.

So, do you cling to those words? God assures you: “*I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness*” ([Jeremiah 31:3](#)). Do you remember that unchanging sentence when you battle illness or feel alone when making decisions? Or do you despair because it seems God is so distant? Jesus points to your baptism in order to assure you that he has not forgotten you; he has called you [personally] by name; you are his! ([Isaiah 43:1](#)). Does this promise drown out fears of terrorism? That even if (God-forbid it!) terror runs through your town, that you still remember God has made you his own, that he protects you, and when his time is right, will bring you safely to heaven? Or do you forget the importance of even your own baptism—that you fail to remember this saving act still touches your life now? In the Lord’s Supper Jesus repeatedly assures you of just how dear you are to him. That he gives his very own body and blood so that you can forever live with him! He alone washes a guilty conscience clean; only Jesus tells you that he has made you ready for heaven! Do you cherish this great gift so much that you meet him at his altar as often as possible? Or are you tempted to grow lazy and stay away from this precious gift?

**WHERE IS PEACE FOUND?** Not at home. Not in your own perseverance, wisdom, or determined American spirit. All these guarantees, promises, and assurances are found in his Word! This is why he gives you the Bible— so you can hear him speak to you!

Yet, **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.** Not listening to the Word is not the same as refusing to read a book; it is refusing to hear the voice of God! Refusing to hear the Word demonstrates little love for Jesus. It is like saying: "I love God, but I do not love him enough to listen to his Word as he tells me to do." Little love for God's teachings declare that we have some power to replace God's Words with our own words. If we ever believe that is the case, then we will go to hell. Jesus is clear on that. That does not bring any peace.

So, Jesus tells you **WHERE YOU FIND PEACE.** *Look to God's own Word.* "**All this I have spoken while still with you. 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.**" When Jesus first speaks these words, he is just hours away from his crucifixion. So, he warns his disciples about what the future holds. They will be surrounded by shouts of hate, the sight of blood and torture, and the smell of sweat, wine-vinegar, and death. How easily they could despair and believe God absolutely left them!

Yet, it is God's Word which illuminates just how deeply God cares for you! Jesus dies so that he can remove your fear of eternal death in hell. He stands before God in your place, so that he can hear how the Father judges those who refuse to listen to his Word. He heaps the guilty-sentence on Jesus and immediately abandons him to death. On the cross Jesus reaches down into the deep, dark, shadowy cranny of death in order to grab life and pull it out for all the world to see.

Easter morning he bursts from his tomb and declares that you who trust that only he has forgiven your sins have life forever with him! This truth is wrapped up by God's unchangeable, unbreakable Word. So, **WHERE DO YOU FIND PEACE?** *Look to God's own Word and Discover life-changing peace.*

I mean, peace is intimately connected to the Word. The Word carries peace—and Jesus makes that clear. He was going to leave this world soon, but it did not mean that you would be alone. He says: **Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.** Jesus gives his unique brand of peace— not something that you are going to find in the world or on the television or in family pictures or in your favorite hobby. He says: **I do not give to you as the world gives.**

Is that true? That Jesus really gives you peace which stands out from the world? The world does offer peace, but how long does it last? It constantly seeks world peace (which is good), but never obtains it. When tragedy rears its ugly head, people flee, wondering where to find comfort. A quick Google search has people list nature and thought that humans have lived on earth for a while objects of peace and comfort. Our world promises that those in committed relationships will have the same blessings as those in a committed marriage bond. Is that really true? Lack of trust and fear of commitment never go away! God gives security only in marriage! Any children raised in that sphere of committed relationships ultimately grow up with the same insecurity. Adults do not receive the warmth of love God promises in marriage. In short, the world promises life will get better by following what it considers important— but does it really bring peace?

Consider the peace Jesus gives. It is not a wish; the peace of knowing believers go to heaven is an established fact— as good as done! Jesus does not give hopeful promises; he keeps his promise to remove any worries you have about your body because he actually heals

you and provides food for you! He does not just try to keep you safe, but he is an unshakable refuge in which to stand even when life shakes in uncertainty all around you ([Psalm 46:1-3](#)). You have peace in the midst of it all— because Jesus gives you peace unlike any other.

That is why he says: **Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.** It is easy to quickly breeze over these words. Did you notice that he gives you a command? He does not tell you: “Well, you do not need to be afraid”— and then tries to convince you as to why. Instead, he commands you not to cower in fear or be afraid.

He makes that command because he has removed terror. He has destroyed fear. Because Jesus rose from the dead, he defeated the greatest enemy the world has ever faced. Doctors might be better at treating illnesses today. Inspectors can limit accidents. Yet, no one can stop death—let alone bring the dead back to life. Only Jesus can; only Jesus does. He dies in your place for sin so that you can wear Jesus’ robe of perfection. Now you stand before God at peace; heaven belongs to you; this is your home.

Because Jesus conquers the unconquerable foe of death— you need not fear, because your Jesus stands over the greatest enemy the world has ever faced. He is your object of peace. See him sitting on his throne already reigning ([Revelation 21:22-27](#)). See yourself walking through gates of pearl, down the streets of gold, and into his courtroom filled with the light of the sun. This is why he can make that command “be not afraid or terrified.” Jesus has won and his victory continues.

Jesus gives a peace that is different— because it is not just empty words. The Word of God that you read has the power to do the things it says. *Discover life-changing peace* with him. Believers who have cancer know that they will not lose; they will regain body and health in heaven. Christians who lose loved ones have a confidence that their loved one is at Jesus’ side and it will only be a matter of time before they rejoin them. In a world which constantly decays and disappoints, Jesus reminds us that he has already won.

You who love Jesus love his Word— and will want to make constant use of the Word. So, when the world shakes with uncertainty, you grasp the promises of Jesus. These are no mere words. They are guarantees that Jesus is with you through challenges and triumphs.

So, **WHERE DO YOU FIND PEACE?** As you watch the presidential primary season reaching its end and you wonder who will govern our nation next, where do you find peace? When the number in the bank account runs outside of your comfort zone, where do you find peace? When school gets tough and fear eats your mind, where do you find peace? When you think about how life will be for your children and grandchildren, where do you find peace? When you realize that being Christian in a society which seems to grow increasingly anti-Christian is not so easy, where do you find peace?

Find peace in God’s Word. Remember who is really in control. See how your Savior rules all things for you because he says he does. Continue hearing the Word; continue reading it. Only in God’s Word will you find that peace which the world cannot give. That peace will always change a trembling heart to absolute certainty.

So, can you actually expect to live life without fear and know that everything is truly alright? Yes, you can. Because **WHERE DO YOU FIND PEACE?** *Look to God’s own Word and Discover life-changing peace.*