

When Jesus Makes His Home with You

John 14:22-31

Judas (not Iscariot) asked Jesus, "How is it Lord that You will manifest Yourself to us and not to the world?" The question was natural and came from the experience of the disciples. Jesus had been with them but the larger world around them was very aware of the things that Jesus said and did. Judas expected that when Jesus came back from wherever He was going these basic realities would remain in place. The assumption was that Jesus would return to the status that He had in that moment and this is not what Jesus was going to do.

We often make the same kind of mistakes. We assume that God looks at things as we do. He does not. We just experienced what seemed to be the nearly seamless passing of Ann Willis. She was 98. She had no apparent life threatening issues. She was still living in her own home and carrying on her regular routines. And she died quietly in her sleep without the end of life suffering that so many people endure. If I could choose then I would like to die like Ann. But most people do not experience such an ideal departure. Disease, accidents, tragedies, untimely deaths of the young, protracted pain and suffering, the loss of mental and other faculties - these things and many more are more often the attendees at our death beds. God has a perspective that is removed from our own. His priorities no doubt include the needs of loved ones left behind, the power that patience in suffering can have in the lives of witnesses, the intimacy of utter dependence upon Him, the need of lost souls to see the triumphant faith of God's children as they are tried by suffering and loss. If you believe in God and trust in Him are you willing to receive from Him the struggles and trials that He may choose for you?

This is actually the sort of answer that Jesus gave to Judas. He assumed that Jesus' coming to them would be like their present experience. Jesus assured him that His coming would be different than that. Judas was thinking of Jesus in the flesh and Jesus was promising an experiential coming of Father, Son and Spirit.

Judas could not see how Jesus could be seen by them and not seen by the world. Jesus wanted him to see that He would be so much a part of their lives that when the world saw them, they would also see Jesus.

But how? The first answer is the Holy Spirit coming into the lives of believers. His name is Comforter or helper. He is God dwelling within us. Consequently, we are never alone. We are never helpless or hopeless or hapless. Instead we have the joy and purpose of an eternal partnership with God. He has not left us here for nothing but to do His work. Together, that is ourselves and God who is within us in the person of the Holy Spirit and by extension, Father and Son, we possess the legacy of His commandments and the empowerment of His love. We live differently and with a grace only possible through Christ.

Specifically, Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would teach them all things. This promise is very important to us today. God has the answers. He is able to direct you through any and all of life's confusions. He delights in giving insight and understanding to those who seek to hear what He is saying through the Scriptures. The teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit is inexhaustible. He is more available and has more knowledge than you will ever find on Google.

Jesus also promised that the Holy Spirit would "bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." The Gospels were written in the 40 years or so after Jesus was resurrected and ascended into heaven. During that time what Jesus had said and taught was the foundation of all the church believed and taught. Jesus' teaching defined the church. These teachings were accurate remembrances of Jesus' spoken word. The dynamic of the Spirit's work in "bringing to your remembrance all things that I said to you" is evident in every gospel. Each is so rich in nuance and meaning that after 2000 years the student of these writings continue to discover meanings that are fresh and new. To experience the Holy Spirit's living presence all you have to do is open the Bible and read it with your ears tuned to listen to the Holy Spirit and obey the truth that He reveals to you.

Then Jesus also promised peace. "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let

it be afraid." This was immediately experienced as peace in the midst of turmoil and chaos. Trusting in God is the path of peace. We cannot control people or our circumstances. God is working in His world. We do not have a say in what He allows or does not allow to take place in the world at large or specifically in the events of our own lives. Getting mad at God over your suffering or your disappointments or your tragedies requires a certain arrogance that seeks to lift the sensitivities you feel above those of God. And the consequence is disillusionment and despair. Jesus offers something better. Peace. His peace. Looming over Him at this time was the horror of the Cross. And He spoke of His peace. Peace is more than a word. It is a spirit of calm and serenity. Peace is projected by the body and confirmed by the spirit. Peace would be impossible to fake. Our emotions show. We reveal them unconsciously when we don't reveal them consciously. To offer peace Jesus had to be at peace in the least "peaceful" of all times. To have this peace we need to know the promises of God and we have to trust Him to keep them. We must surrender to His call upon us to participate in the work of bringing those promises to fruition. "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Through it all, Jesus was at peace.

Jesus then gave them a little poke. He challenged them to put their selfishness aside and think of Him. If Jesus was going to the Father as He had said, wasn't that a good thing for Him? Couldn't they find the grace to be happy for Him? Set your own losses aside and rejoice in the blessings of others. This is the path to peace and joy - Jesus style!