

# ST. JOHN'S AT DIOCESAN CENTER IGLESIA EPISCOPAL DE SAN JUAN

23 E. Airy Street | Norristown PA 19401 | (610) 272-4092



## MY HOUSE IS YOUR HOUSE

**The Rev. Andrew F. Kline**

Text preached the Sixth Sunday after Easter

May 22, 2022

ACTS 16:1-18 | PSALM 67

REVELATION 21:10, 22-22:5 | JOHN 14:23-29

Judas, who was not Iscariot, because Judas Iscariot was out of the room at that moment plotting to give up on Jesus, had a question. He asked: “Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?”

If you think about it, a very important question at that moment, their last supper together. Jesus has told them in many different ways he must suffer and die, he must go away. It is exactly the same question the disciples will have after the resurrection, as Jesus tells them he is ascending to the Father. He is going away. Now what? How will you reveal yourself to us when you are no longer physically present here on earth?

Jesus' reply is powerful, even beautiful. "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them." Love will make a way. A special kind of love. A love of faithful attention to another.

I am sure many fine sermons have been preached about the content of that word. To the lame man beside the pool at Bethsaida: Rise, take your mat and walk. To the man born blind, receive your sight. To Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life." To Lazarus, "Come out! To those watching: "Unbind him and let him go." To those who could not understand why he must suffer: "Unless a seed fall to the ground and die, it will not bear much fruit." To those he was about to leave: "Peace I leave with you, my own peace I give you." To those worried about where he was going: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Believe also in me.

Think of the Psalmist prayer this morning: "Let your ways be known on earth! Your saving health among all nations!" Ever since Moses revealed the law, and commanded that it be recited, remembered, passed down, posted on our doorways, and fastened to our foreheads, God's people have been trying to keep his "word", his "way".

A better word for Torah, or Law, is the Way. "Lord, let your way be known on earth! Your saving health among all nations!" We know the way!

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

And then Jesus came among us, touched us, spoke to us, and added so we could tell the difference between what was of first importance and what followed after: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love the one true God. Love your neighbor. These are all the commandments in one place. Keep my word.

Yes, we know the way. What we don't know how to do in this crazy world of ours is pay attention to it, to not get distracted, to guard, value, savor, focus, on the way. How does love die? Like any living thing, from lack of attention, cultivation, care. And what is the main problem all around us? Our attention is being stolen, colonized, bought and sold in a virtual world that robs of real human and divine connections.

Notice again the profound simplicity of Jesus' promise to us: "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them." Many of us are missing the spark that lights this fire. The good news is that it only takes a spark, to get a fire going. Say his name: Jesus. Listen to his words, and add this: Lord, your house is my house. Now, don't get distracted. Pay attention. People. Places. Things. In all your relationships, let the way be known, take hold, and guide your steps.

It was just as true in the old Soviet Union as it is today in modern Russia, when you live in a society of propaganda and lies, when you no longer have a shared sense of what is true, the biggest problem is not that you become cynical because you don't know who or what to believe. The biggest problem is that you become isolated, you no longer trust anyone else, or even yourself. This is taking hold among us here, in Mexico. Loneliness and alienation are our demons, behind all the principalities and powers that steal our attention and make our hearts grow cold.

The antidote. Start by saying his name: Jesus. But don't stop there. Let that be the spark that lights a fire of exchange. His peace is not like other's because it is not the absence of strife. His peace comes with gifts of the spirit. His love is based on his promise that he will come and make his home with us.

The story of Lydia is in the book of Acts for one reason, and one reason only. She opened her house to Paul and Timothy. She was an unlikely Jew in a foreign place, who said the name Jesus, was baptized, and then said to her new friends, come, stay at my house. And when Paul then caused a whole lot of trouble in her city, afterward, she said, come on back. Stay here a while until God takes you further. This is the way.

So the whole sentence is: Jesus: Your house is my house. Your heart is my heart. Your way revealed among all my people, my places, my things. Friends, you will have a moment this week when you feel lonely, when you are looking at your screens and you feel so disconnected and empty. It will be inevitable. This is our current struggle. Just say his name. And don't forget these words: "Jesus. My house is your house."