

May 22, 2022

**“I Do Not Give to You as the World Gives”
Sermon by Rev. Susan Drake**

Scripture Reading

John 14:25-26

“I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom God will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”

Sermon

The gospel reading is a little short this morning, mostly because these four sentences are so packed with meaning. We could take an hour with each of them but I want us to look at them together as well, because I do think John had his reasons for putting them together and in this order.

We can reduce them down to this; you aren't alone, you will know what to do, live your life for spiritual reasons and you will have peace, an untroubled heart and fear won't rule your life.

I have the first three pretty much etched in my soul but I have never had an untroubled heart or lived unafraid. Now I have a great deal of courage but I have never lived unafraid they aren't the same thing. What is that saying? Courage is just fear that has said it's prayers. I have to be intentional about letting go of my fear, and releasing the trouble in my heart.

And I have to be intentional about not taking my worry back, or feeding it with outside forces like the news and the internet. In my lifetime we have gone from having the news at six and ten to being constantly bombarded with it, along with a constant flow of opinions from life's armchair and news desk quarterbacks who don't know squat about what they are talking about.

This is what the world offers us right now, catastrophic thinking and the arousal of fear. For sure, we live in a world in need of our attention, but it's not either or. We can be working for change, and aware of the needs in the world without being overcome by it, without being rendered absolutely useless with fear.

Because before we can fight the good fight, before we can go spreading God's love we have to be centered in the Spirit, we have to cast our burdens on God and let God quiet our minds and give us peace so that we can hear the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

I have heard much religious abuse in our country with people claiming "God told me to go and build a new church... or buy a private jet" on and on. But that doesn't negate that the Holy Spirit does indeed, move us, empower us, and guide us.

Many might call this our conscience but it's more than that. It's more than just knowing between right or wrong. It's about being inspired, excited, moved to be the hands and the heart of Jesus here on Earth.

First, I have to have quiet in my mind to feel the presence of the Holy Spirit in my heart, to hear it's guidance and pull in a certain direction. I have to have quiet and let go of control long enough to hear that thrum that says things like, "you are loved, you are enough, I need you, you are mine."

I do this through meditation where I picture myself putting everything I am troubled about in the hands of God, or I picture myself releasing things like you would a bird, giving it up to God. I upload my worry to God so I can go about the work of putting love in the world around me.

I am worried about our world, we are in crisis. I'm worried about Russia and mass shootings and the racism that seems to have come out of the closet and danced proudly and hatefully around in our country again.

I am worried that truths that we have held self-evident are being questioned and squandered. But I am not worried that we are alone in this.

I am not worried for I know that God will give us the courage to speak Love out loud when we are called to do so.

I have a little bit of a pet peeve, sometimes in my 12 step meetings or online I hear people trivialize God's intervention into the course of human events by saying things like, "God got me a parking space just when I needed it" or "God helped me find the perfect outfit for the dance" and so on.

There is no way that God is interested in these things when there are people dying and suffering all over the world, when a country that was built on freedom is being overtaken by religious

thugs in suits, when a racist teenager can drive 200 miles to a black neighborhood and just start murdering people.

We have got to ask how does someone who has only been on the Earth 18 years get to be filled with so much vile hate. This is what the world is giving us.

To pretend that God is not interested in these things, does not care about our suffering, is to not understand God at all. We are going to be called to speak love loudly and we need the things that the Holy Spirit gives us to do so.

The things the Holy spirit gives us are courage; strength; resolve; compassion; and above all, the ability to love our enemy— because the Holy Spirit, the advocate, is here to remind us of all the things that Jesus said.

To love our enemy and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Remember though that turning the other cheek is not turning a blind eye. We will not strike back with hate but we will counter the hate with the most powerful force in the universe, love.

But as always, peace begins with you and me, we have to let God's love into our soul, into every fiber of our being, before we can give it to others.

May you find your particular way of doing this, through prayer, or meditation, or mantra. Allow the Holy Spirit to sort you out and put you to rights, to get rid of any of your own self doubt or insecurity, to un-trouble your hearts, and to arm you with the peace, the resolve, the courage, and the love that only God can give. AMEN

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Allow the Holy Spirit to sort you out and put you to rights

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