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St. Martin's-in-the-Field Episcopal Church
May 15, 2016
Pentecost C
John 14:8-17 [25-27]

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.”

Set the stage/put in context within John's gospel:

Part of the larger “farewell discourse” in John

Happens one night over dinner

Three themes:

- 1) Jesus is leaving: “Little children, I am with you only a little longer.” John 13:33a
- 2) His followers are staying behind: “Where I am going you cannot come.” John 13:33b
- 3) Someone else is coming to help continue the work—today's passage

Disciples have logical questions:

Peter: Why can't I come with you now?

Thomas: Lord, how can we know the way?

Now is Philip's big moment: Lord, show us the Father and we'll be satisfied.

One can imagine Jesus either woefully or almost in a scolding tone responds to Philip: “Look, I've been with you this whole time and you STILL don't get it?! Pay attention: If you have seen me you've seen the Father.” DUH!

This answer comes in an echo from the very first chapter in John's gospel: “No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known” (1:18)

Why does Jesus do any of these things? What point is Jesus trying to make to the disciples and for us today?

What this points to is a truth about our frail humanity: We are a creation that cannot know a God....cannot be in relationship with a God....we do not know.

So, to these disciples—and for every disciple since, who has been left behind—the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, has been with them (and us), to continue the work of making God known in the world that Jesus started.

And, by “making Jesus known in the world, “ I’m talking about making:

- His life and life story known out there in the world;
- His acts of power and unfailing love... known out there in the world;
- Make known His message of “come to me all that are heavy laden and I will refresh you,” ...out there in the world;
- His redefinition of what it means to be in relationship with God—going from “follow all the rules to be in relationship with God,” to: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your mind and all your body, AND, love your neighbor as yourself.” ...make THAT message known out THERE in the world.
- His message of a new way of being in relationship with God...because now our sins have been forever washed away, and death forever defeated as the last word...making THAT, not just Good News, but FANTASTIC news, know out there in the world.

Humanity cannot know a God, cannot be in relationship with a God, that humanity does not know.

Today at the 10:00 a.m. service we will welcome Bishop Chilton to St. Martin’s and she will help us celebrate the fact that a dozen of our youth have decided to confirm those promises that were made for them at their baptism when they were just infants in arms. They will make a public and adult affirmation of those vows saying that amongst other things they will seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving their neighbor as they love themselves; that they will work for justice freedom and peace; and that they will proclaim by word and deed the Good News of God in Christ. And they will do all of these things with the sure and certain knowledge that they will accomplish these things, NOT on their own, but that they will do them with GOD’S help...with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Our job as disciples of this Jesus, as recipients of this Advocate, this Holy Ghost...is to find ways to make Jesus, who is the very love of God incarnate, known in the world.

We rely on the help and aid of the Holy Spirit to inspire us, to guide us, to lead us, to stir up in us the love that it will take to accomplish OUR part of Jesus’ work as we are the generation to whom that work has been given right here and right now in this place.

How do you live your life? In what ways do you make God known for anyone else? What ways are you a living example of God’s infinite love for God’s creation? How would anyone know that you are a person of faith?

These are not easy questions...and they may not sit very well with us—which is a good sign. But, as difficult as living our faith may be, as hard as it is to love those who are our enemies, much less those we don’t agree with...we are never alone in that work. We have an Advocate, we have, today, the gift of the Holy Spirit.

What will we do with this gift we have been given? How will we allow the Holy Spirit to move us as this church, as disciples of the risen Christ to help make everyone out there know the love of our God?

AMEN.