

EASTER 6, A – May 17, 2020  
SCRIPTURES – Ps. 119:89-105; Acts 17:16-31; 1 Pet. 3:13-22; John 14:15-21

Jesus says in John 14, ***“Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”*** Let us consider these words, what they mean for us and their impact upon us.

***“Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me.”*** Jesus was talking about His crucifixion, and then His resurrection; events that would begin happening right after He and His disciples left the room where they were celebrating the Passover. They really didn’t understand what He was talking about until after He rose from the dead and appeared to them. Then, His promise, ***“but you will see me,”*** became clear. But, I’ll bet that they struggled with the first part of what He said: ***“Yet a little while and the world will see me no more.”*** Why not? I’ll bet they urged Him to go to the Jewish leaders... and to Pilate and Herod. ***“Show yourself to them! Then, they’ll believe in you. All Israel will believe in you!”*** But, He didn’t. After He rose He only appeared to those who believed in Him.

Faith is difficult when God doesn’t do what you would like... and especially when He does the opposite of what you think would be best. It is difficult enough to believe without seeing. It’s even tougher to trust God when what you do see – a pandemic, for instance, and great harm to lives and livelihoods – is contrary to what you are thinking a good and loving God would do. Jesus put an awful lot on the shoulders of His disciples by not showing Himself to His opponents. And after He ascended into heaven, they also saw Him no more. They were left with this message: through a man who is God, and yet was crucified but then rose, God forgives our sins and changes our lives forever. How much more impact could that message have if it could be confirmed even by people who had opposed Him! So it would seem.

God’s ways are not our ways. This makes it especially difficult to believe... to trust Him. And, frankly, we often fail to do so, don’t we? When confronted with fears and sorrows and temptations, we question... we doubt... and, sometimes, we despair of God’s ways and do our own thing. His disciples did the same. Peter wouldn’t speak up for Him, and denied even knowing Him. The others ran away. Weak and doubting... that’s what Jesus disciples were.

We deserve that He reject us. And yet, Jesus died for us weak sinners, bearing our sins Himself and forgiving them. He then rose, and showed Himself to weak sinners like Peter and the others.

Focus on this! When you are confused and troubled... when your faith is tested and you are doubting... focus upon what you know about Jesus. He died and rose for you. He held nothing back – not even His own life – from you! How can we ever doubt

Him? Don't! He is worthy of your trust! His will for you, even when you are confused by it, is surely good... is nothing but good. Believe this!

***“Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.”*** What a wonderful promise this is! The day of Christ's resurrection was for us as well as for Him! Life – His victory over sin and death and eternal life – is ours! We can look forward to living again, and with Him forever, after we die!!

***“In that day you will know,”*** Jesus says. Easter confirms His promise. Because He lives, we also will live! And that impacts everything.

We live in an often distressing world. Sicknesses and injuries... doubts and fears... arguments and anger... the questioning and doubting of God; of one another; and even of oneself... all of these things confront us. Perhaps you ask at times, *“Why, Lord? Why don't you return now? Why can't we live with you in heaven now?”* When you feel this way... good! Life with the Lord in heaven will be infinitely better than even the best of days here. If the difficulties of life this world and your own struggles of faith make you yearn to be free from it all and with God in heaven, great! One of the main reasons God allows hardships in our lives is to fan into flame this desire within us.

And, thanks be to God, He doesn't just create this desire in us. He fulfills it! ***“In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.”*** You may feel rather alone right now because of the current social isolation. You may feel far from God because of your sins and doubts. But, no believer in Jesus is ever alone. Jesus has not only given His Holy Spirit to live within you (a great gift given to you in your baptism); Jesus Himself, and the eternal Father, with Whom He is one, comes to live within you as you hear and believe His Word. ***“I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.”*** And so, your worries and fears... your hardships... your sins and failures... these are not only completely known by your God, even if you don't speak of them; He is with you to help you bear them. The Lord Jesus, who experienced the worst of this world and our sin when He was crucified... who rose to life again in triumph over them... He lives within you. And so, His power over sin and death... His strength to endure every opposition... His love of and obedience to His Father... all of this is yours! Yours, for He lives within you as your life.

Your Lord lives within you to help you and strengthen you and bless you! And not only for your own good, but also for the good of others. This is made clear in something you may not see clearly in Jesus words, because you have them in English. They are clearer in Greek, the language in which the New Testament was written. ***“I am in my Father, and you (all) in me, and I in you (all),”*** Jesus says; “you” is plural.

The Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, lives in every person who believes in Jesus. And so, your fellow believer, with all of his or her faults, and quirks, and ideas and ways that are not only different than yours but which sometimes irritate you – Jesus is meeting you in and through that person! You are dealing with Him as you deal with

that person. This must make a difference in what you think of and how you deal with others!

***“Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me,”*** Jesus says. ***“And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”*** Love: Jesus makes clear that it is far more than just an emotion, a feeling. It is obedience. It is work. It is sacrifice. Love for Jesus is embracing Jesus and His work.

Think of the love that is promised in marriage. So often weddings appear to be all about beautiful gowns and happy people and gushing over the couple’s love. But, really, hard work is at the heart of a wedding. Husband and wife promise to have and hold each other for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, and to love and to cherish each other until death. That will take work! The work of forgiving... of each bearing with the other’s faults and failings... of giving to the other before self... and so much more.

Such is the love of Jesus. A bloody crucifixion and a spear in His heart could not hold Him in death. A huge stone could not keep Him in the grave. A locked door and fear could not keep Him from His disciples. Do not let your doubts and fears, or your own desires, keep Him from you!

***“Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me.”*** What commands did He give us? Just one: to love each other as He has loved us. And, remember, as you do so... especially as you serve and help and forgive and honor your fellow believer... you are loving Jesus, for He dwells within.

Who is up to this? You are! Christ has not only called you to this. He has forgiven your every sin and filled you for this. ***“He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”*** Your Lord – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – is with you to renew you with His love as you share His love.

Jesus lived this great work of love. It culminated on the cross... but did not end there. He rose to bring forth His love to you. By His Word and Sacraments He comes to dwell within you and make you an instrument of His love. ***“Because I live, you also will live... I in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.”*** Make this evident in our lives, Lord! To the glory of Your name and the blessing of us, Your people. Amen!