

## **5 Easter: A Way of Being, Not a Place**

*Acts 7:55-60; 1 Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14*

The Rev. Paul D. Allick, The Church of the Advent, May 10, 2020

Jesus isn't going anywhere, but I want to follow him there. Jesus isn't going anywhere, but I want to be there with him.

In the Gospel today we hear from what is called the Farewell Discourse. Jesus is preparing the disciples for the trial they are all about to endure. He is going to be taken from them in a very violent and troubling way. But he assures them two things: First, he is going to prepare a place for them to be with him. Second, they will never be alone. The Holy Spirit will come after to lead them into the whole truth.

He assures them, "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Believe what I have taught you about the Father and myself. In God's home there is a dwelling place especially prepared for each one of you."

Thomas, who seems to be the designated questioner, you know the person who asks what everyone wants to ask but doesn't, asks, "Teacher unless you tell us where this place is, we cannot join you."

Ah, but dwelling place of God is not a place. Jesus "isn't going anywhere." The dwelling of God is a state of being.

Yet, like many concepts in Holy Scripture, the Dwelling Place of God means more than one thing. The Psalms and the Revelation to St. John tells us that the Dwelling Place of God is the or a Temple. (Psalm 11:4/Rev 7:15) The belief being that God actually dwells in the Temple.

And yet in Exodus where the Ark of the Covenant and the Tent of Meeting is established, we are told that the earthly temple is a replica of the true heavenly one. (Exodus 25:8-9)

In 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter of John Jesus refers to himself, his body, as the Temple, the Dwelling Place of God. He informs the people that the Temple of God will be torn down and in three days it will be rebuilt.

Our dwelling place was prepared for us in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the glorified humanity of Jesus where we are invited to come and dwell with God. His "Father's House" is not a place. It is the divine communion of love we share as glorified humans with the glorified humanity of Christ.

This is how Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. When we go to Jesus and stay with him no matter what the obstacles, trials and temptations, then we dwell in God's house.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> Chapter of John, after John the Baptist identifies Jesus as the Lamb of God, two of the Baptist's disciples follow after Jesus. He turns to them and asks, "What are you looking for?" They ask him where he is staying but, in the Greek, it also implies, "where are you remaining or being." Jesus invites them to come and see. Come and see where I live and move and have my being. (vss. 25-39)

Jesus is not calling us to a far away place in the clouds where we go after our bodies expire to live in some undefined bliss playing a harp. He is calling us right now in in this moment to come and see where he dwells, where he remains and has his being where the Kingdom of God is set in motion.

This is a way of life, a way of being the human God meant for us to be from the beginning. This Dwelling Place, this Kingdom is a place of reconciling love and healing.

As St. Peter exhorts us, "Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood."

Our eternal life is now. When we stop looking for a place and start dwelling with Jesus in prayer, contemplation and scripture we will find our room in that spiritual house. When we regularly dwell with Jesus, we regain our freedom to love, to create, to discern and to live in harmony with God, each other and all creation.

The more we intentionally dwell with Jesus the more often we are reminded that our mission is not maintain an earthly institution but to reconcile all people to God and each other in Christ.

Resource used:

*The Gospel of John: Catholic Commentary on the Scripture*  
Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI 2015  
Beginning at pg. 240 in Kindle Edition.