Easter 6—Year A
Acts 17:22-31
Psalm 66:7-18
I Peter 3:13-22
John 14:15-21

Change is a coming. You can feel it in the air. We're still in *the same night* we were in last week. The night *before* Jesus would be taken into custody, tried, and crucified. He's gathered for that intimate meal with his closest friends. He's made known that he knows what's up; he knows one of his circle will betray him. The disciples are distressed trying to figure out who it is that would sell Jesus out, but mostly they're distressed at the thought that they might have to live without him.

Think about that. He's been their teacher for three years. They've been with him every step of the way—eating and sleeping and traveling with him, watching him preach and heal, watching him challenge the authorities when those authorities chose rigid interpretations of the law over human beings in need. For three years, they've been listening to him teach the crowds; they've gathered in smaller, more intimate circles to unpack those teachings. They've seen him tackle situations that surely would have thrown them for a loop. They've watched him thread the needle and navigate that elegant third way. They've seen what compassion looks like, witnessed the depths of mercy, discovered what it means to *trust*, to place your life, truly, into God's hands. They've learned about drawing your life from the **deep well**, and *trusting* that there, indeed, lives within us a spring whose waters never fail. It's been quite a three years, and now, and now, *he's going to leave? What will happen to them?*

On this night, Jesus is trying to do one thing—reassure his closest friends and disciples that, though he goes, **they won't be left alone.**

Into that thick night air that was as heavy as their hearts, **Jesus says, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."** And what is the heart of his commandments? He's just told them in the previous chapter, **John 13:34-35: I give you a new commandment, that you *love* one another. Just as I have *loved* you, you also should *love* one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have *love* for one another."** You see, it's really not about the great sermons Jesus gave, or his amazing teachings, or his power to heal. All of that pales in comparison to ***the quality of his love***—the ***love*** he gave to his friends and disciples, and the ***love*** he now calls them to give to one another.

Jesus continues, **"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another *Advocate,* to be with you forever. This is *the Spirit of truth,* whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You *know* him, because he *abides* with you, and he will be *in* you.**

"I will not leave you *orphaned*; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will *know* that I am *in* my Father, and you *in* me, and I *in* you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who *love* me; and those who *love* me will be *loved* by my Father, and I will *love* them and *reveal* myself to them."

Jesus promises his friends and disciples then, and he promises his friends and followers now, that **he won't leave us orphaned**, he won't leave us *bereft*, he won't leave us *without guidance*. Oh my goodness—as a 6 on the enneagram, that is my absolute fear.

Do you all know about enneathoughts? Enneathoughts are little snipets perfectly suited to your enneagram personality type that you can sign up for that will then be delivered every morning to your email in-box—for me, they are often a little daily dose of humiliation, as if someone has been reading my inner thoughts that I'd just as soon not be known by anyone. So, here was my enneathought from yesterday: *"It is fear that drives us deeper and deeper into restrictive, painful ego states and away from a direct experience of our True Nature. How is your fear of being* ***without support*** *or* ***orientation*** *manifesting today?"* OR, as Jesus might ask, *"How ya doing with that fear of being* ***orphaned****?"*

And I know that you other enneagram types have *your own fear of being orphaned.* It might look a little different from mine, but it's there. Where do you *fear standing all alone*? How does *fear manifest* in you? Where do you feel *orphaned* in your life? Tap into that feeling, and you've just tapped into the energy of that *Last Supper night*.

But Jesus is promising us, **"*I won't leave you orphaned*. You've had me these last three years in the flesh, but God will send you an *Advocate,* a *comforter,* a *counselor,* a *consoler, the Spirit of truth*. And *that Spirit abides with you,* lives *inside* of you; you will be able to access this *intuitive wisdom,* this *deep sense of knowing* that will *guide* you and *orient* you. And as you *grow in the ways of love,* I will *keep on revealing myself* to you."** Jesus is saying, **"Dear disciples and friends, I am on the move. I am moving from being an external authority in your life to being an inner *abiding* authority deep in your hearts and souls. It will take some practice, but with patience and stillness and attentiveness, you will be able to hear and draw upon that wisdom."**

And **Paul** recognizes that this desire not to leave us **orphaned** is actually built into the structure of the universe that God created. Listen again to what he tells the **Athenians in front of the Aeropagus**: **"The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would *search* for God and perhaps *grope* for him and *find* him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For 'In him we *live* and *move* and *have our being'*; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we *too* are his offspring.'"**

God made the world and everything in it. God's fingerprints are all over creation. **God gave us our breath**, not just some of us, *all of us*. We bear divine DNA; we have a built-in homing device that **ignites our desire to search for God**, and though sometimes, we are **groping** our way through the darkness, we will **find** God. **God's not far from each one of us. "In him we live and move and have our being."** And Paul recognizes that the Athenians knew this intuitively, *too*.

The thing about Jesus is that *Jesus* ***understood*** *that his DNA was divine*. He *operated* from this place of alignment with **his deepest being that lives and moves in God**. We've *never* been **orphaned**, but so many of us don't know this! So, Jesus comes to *show us what it looks like*

when we *know* who we are at the deepest levels of our **being**. After three years, the disciples were beginning to get it, and so, the fear of losing that model, that icon, just undid them.

But brothers and sisters, it's time. Our goal in the spiritual life is always *to grow up, **to grow up into the full stature of Christ***, to fully embrace and grow into the **divinity** *imprinted* into **our very being**. *It's time,* and we can trust that Jesus isn't going to leave us floundering. **The Advocate, the Spirit of Truth**, is going to keep on stirring in our heart and whispering in our ear and **guiding** us as we **grope** our way in the dark.

We have all we need, if we but trust it.

On this **6th Sunday of Easter**, breathe deep. Change is coming. Change is always coming if we are alive, but we won't be **orphaned**; we won't be flailing away without any direction.

God has imprinted *the way home* in our very being. ***Jesus*** has been showing us the *way* in his flesh, and ***the Spirit of truth, the Advocate***, will continue to teach us this *way* from deep within.

This is the essence of the **Trinity** itself. We are surrounded by, wrapped up in **guidance—**this **guidance** is woven into our *creation*, has always been *saving* us, *calling us into greater wholeness*, and continues to *inspire* us. All we need to do is ***trust*** it, ***live*** it, ***move*** with it, and let this divine wisdom that lives deep within our ***being*** **guide** us into the deeper places of **love**. Amen.

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May 21, 2017