

“Spirit of Truth”

John 14:15-21

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

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.”

Spirit Of Truth

John 14:15-21

May 10, 2026

Mother's Day

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I.

This morning I would like to invite all of you to shift your paradigm; to change the model or standard by which you understand your world. Today's sermon text comes to us from a larger section within John's Gospel, which is commonly referred to as the Farewell Discourses. Easter has already occurred, and now Jesus is preparing the community of believers, the church, for his imminent departure. Whereas once their faith was grounded in the ability to actually see, touch, and speak with Christ, in the future their faith would need to be grounded in how the community of believers perceives itself, acts in the world, and speaks the Word of God. Here in John chapter 14 we find Jesus speaking to the community of believers so they may begin to prepare themselves for the changes which are about to take place.

II.

As a general rule, we human beings do not do very well with change. Oh, we put on a good show telling each other, and ourselves, that change is good, and about how the only constant in life is change. However, when we get right down to it, the real truth of the matter is that we enjoy the comfort of habit and prefer the ease of a good old fashioned rut. Imagine, if you will, how difficult it was for the early church to begin to wrap their minds around the realization that Jesus would soon leave them?

As always, though, Jesus is able to read the room. He has his finger on the pulse of the church and is well aware that the church is comprised of stiff-necked and worrisome folks just like you and me. People who are in need an assuring pat on the back and a little hand holding every once in a while. Or, much more than every once in a while.

III.

Hence, here in today's reading Jesus offers three promises to the church. First, that through him God would give the advocate, the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, which is to be with them forever. Second, that because Jesus lives we too shall live. Third, that Jesus and God's own self will come to them and make their home with them. 2000 years later, we in this church are the heirs to those promises.

We make note, however, that these verses in John chapter 14 contain a very interesting qualifier about how the Spirit and the church, the community of faith relate to each other. It seems that the world cannot receive the Spirit because it does not recognize the church for what it is, neither does the world know the power which is working through the church and its people. The church, though, knows the Spirit because of their faith in the one through whom the Spirit was sent: Jesus Christ.

IV.

Or, said more simply, the church is being given the Spirit so that it may have the Power to proclaim the Word of Jesus Christ. Now comes the critical part of the story, though. Are you ready? Only when the church grasps their responsibility to **Proclaim** the Word, do they experience the **Power** of the Word. The power of the Word is the knowledge of Christ, and the knowledge of Christ is the knowledge of our own existence in him. Just before he left this world Christ presented us, the church, with the possibility of coming to know our *own* authenticity. Do we, through the Spirit, really want to be ourselves? Not existing from, or depending on our *own* resources or for the *sake* of ourselves, but from *God's* resources and for *God's* sake. Do we, as individuals and as a church, affirm we want ourselves to be what we *already* are in Christ? Are we willing to exist, to live and to act in such a way that we make Easter our own? Well, here is our chance.

V.

We come here every Sunday to profess our faith in Jesus Christ, and the new life won for us on the cross. We profess that death can no longer claim us. We profess that Jesus says to us, "I will not leave you orphaned, I am coming to you." However, do we as a *community* really have the faith that *this* church, the one right here on the Park in Canton, NY will continue to be resurrected to new life? Not metaphorically, but in *actuality*? Do we have the

resolve to believe that no matter how acute the world's troubles and no matter how persistent our own, that somehow we will pull together, and that through the power of the Spirit God will sustain this church and, along with it, the larger community? Will we have the faith to allow this church *buildings and people*, to be witnesses for the Word of God to a world which does not understand it? Is it possible for us to shift our paradigm, our way of looking at the world, so as to allow the possibility and embrace the promise that *even now* God is coming to make a home here among us?

VI.

We began today's sermon by making note of the changes that were taking place on either side of Christ's final ascension. Whereas the faith of the early church was originally grounded in their ability to actually see, touch, and speak with the flesh and blood Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, the future would require their faith to grow so as to be grounded in how the community of believers *perceived* itself, decided to *act* in the world, and spoke the Word of God to others and to themselves as well. This, as I noted earlier, was a paradigm shift in how the early church would, or could, believe in Christ as Messiah (or Christ as Lord and Savior, if that language is more appealing to you).

While I believe this to be the case, still, I find my mind drawn to the question of what, exactly, would it look like to live in such a promised home with God here among us? More importantly, what would it *feel* like? I can find no better answer to this question than the assurance and comfort of a mother's warm embrace.

VII.

In an effort to acknowledge and to thank all the mother's here today, those in the sanctuary, on the stream, and those who abide by in our hearts, I would like to end by offering a reading of A Little Parable For Mothers by Temple Bailey. Owing to recent events, and the cumulative effect of 32 years of ministry, I know I do not have it in me to make it through this without weeping, so I am going to ask for some help. Because, that is what we do in the church. We ask each other for help when we need it.

A Little Parable For Mothers

by Temple Bailey

The young mother set her foot on the path of life.

“Is the way long?” she asked.

And her guide said: “Yes. And the way is hard.

And you will be old before you reach the end of it.

But the end will be better than the beginning.”

But the young mother was happy, and she would not believe
that anything could be better than these years.

So she played with her children,

and gathered flowers for them along the way,

and bathed them in the clear streams;

and the sun shone on them, and life was good,

and the young mother cried, “Nothing will ever be lovelier than this.”

Then night came, and storm, and the path was dark,

and the children shook with fear and cold,

and the mother drew them close and covered them with her mantle,

and the children said, “Mother, we are not afraid,

for you are near, and no harm can come.”

And the mother said, “This is better than the brightness of day,

for I have taught my children courage.”

And the morning came, and there was a hill ahead,

and the children climbed and grew weary, and the mother was weary,

but at all times she said to the children,

“A little patience and we are there.”

So the children climbed, and when they reached the top they said,

“Mother, we would not have done it without you.”

And the mother, when she lay down that night,

looked up at the stars and said: “

This is a better day than the last,

for my children have learned fortitude in the face of hardness.

Yesterday I gave them courage. Today I have given them strength.”

And the next day came strange clouds which darkened the earth
- clouds of war and hate and evil,
and the children groped and stumbled, and the mother said:
“Look up. Lift your eyes to the light.”

And the children looked and saw above the clouds an Everlasting Glory,
and it guided them and brought them beyond the darkness.

And that night the mother said,
“This is the best day of all, for I have shown my children God.”

And the days went on, and the weeks and the months and the years,
and the mother grew old, and she was little and bent.

But her children were tall and strong, and walked with courage.

And when the way was hard, they helped their mother;
and when the way was rough, they lifted her,
for she was light as a feather;
and at last they came to a hill,
and beyond they could see a shining road
and golden gates flung wide.

And the mother said: “I have reached the end of my journey.

And now I know that the end is better than the beginning,
for my children can walk alone, and their children after them.”

And the children said, “You will always walk with us, Mother,
even when you have gone through the gates.”

And they stood and watched her as she went on alone,
and the gates closed after her.

And they said: “We cannot see her, but she is with us still.

A mother like ours is more than memory.

She is a living presence.

A God like ours is more than memory.

She is a living presence

that is the Spirit of Truth for our lives.

And the people were heard to say, “Amen.”