

Sermon May 10th

John 14:1-14

“May the words from my lips and the meditations of our hearts always be pleasing to you O God”

Today’s Gospel reading from John is part of what is called the final discourse. Jesus has washed the disciples feet and Judas has slipped out into the night, betrayal in his heart.

Jesus is left with his closest disciples and begins to speak words of comfort and reassurance. They have no idea how badly they are going to need these words. Jesus will soon be seized, brought before Pilate, tortured and put to death on a cross.

But that is for tomorrow. Tonight is about reassurance and knowing God and prayer.

“In my father’s house there are many rooms....this phrase is used frequently at funerals and memorial services to comfort the grieving. These promises are profoundly comforting in the face of a death of a loved one. It does give comfort. Jesus is telling the disciples that it will be ok. He is going where they cannot yet follow but he is going to

ensure that there is a place for them. These are words of comfort and reassurance that we often need as well. This section of John is often used to talk about life after death or eternal life - the life we are promised because of our belief in Christ.

But I think there is a great deal more that we can glean from this section of John's Gospel. This is not just a text about life after death it is about our lives here and now. Jesus assures the disciples and thereby us - those who are following the way that we will not be abandoned. Jesus was all they needed. Jesus is all we need.

I once used this reading at a commencement service at an independent school. I stressed that even as the graduates were about to leave and go in different directions that no matter where they went or what they did there would always be space for them. They would always belong.

And perhaps that is a message that we need to hear. There will always be space for us for the love of God is limitless. The kingdom of God does not run out of space - there is always room at the inn. We belong. We are God's precious children and there is room at home.

Jesus continues the discourse by telling the disciples that they know the way. That they know God because they know Jesus. We know the way - we too know God because we know Jesus.

There is room for all of us.

God has space for us and God has time for us.

God's promise to love us, to make room for us to know and be known by us never ends. Therefore our hearts need never be troubled.

We are troubled by the fact that the gift of mortal life does not last. We hope for, we long for the promise that Jesus gives. Believe in God, believe in me. You know the Father because you know me. I am going ahead of you to prepare a place.

The promise of eternal life is an important note in John's Gospel.

The bond of love and trust between Jesus and those who believe in him cannot be broken.

Jesus is the way to God and therefore is the way of discipleship.

Eternal life is participation in the very being of God.

Eternal life another name for God.

AMEN