

John 14:1-14: Jesus' Farewell Discourse

Children's Message:

What are your plans for summer?

I have a question, will Jesus be with you during the summer? Even when you do not come to Sunday School every week?

Absolutely!! Jesus promises to be with you today, and tomorrow, and on your last day of school, and when you are riding your bike, and when you are swimming, and even when you have to clean your room. Jesus promises to be with us today and tomorrow and every single day for our lives – even after we die!

Jesus' disciples were scared because they wouldn't be with him every day after He died. But Jesus tells them "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Believe in me and believe in God" and he promised them that he would be with them wherever they went and during whatever they did. Even when they were afraid.

Have you ever heard of Flat Stanley? Well, today we have Flat Jesus. Flat Jesus can go with you wherever you go this summer and I would love it if your parents took a picture of you with your flat Jesus so we are reminded that Jesus is with you every where you go!

Parents – if you would take a picture (or multiple pictures) of your child with Flat Jesus this summer, and either email them to me, or text them to me or put them on the First Lutheran Children and Youth Facebook Page, we would love to display these on our screens during summer worship so that everyone is reminded of the promise that Jesus is with us wherever we go. We also will post these pictures on a bulletin board throughout the summer so that when you come back, you can see how Jesus was with all your friends this summer too!

So we are sad that Sunday School is over, but we hope that you will still come to church this summer because church isn't the same without you here! Tell your parents that you want to come to church – and Wednesdays this year, out at Maria Chapel, You can bring a picnic blanket to sit on and have church out by the lake, and then there is going to be fun games to play and activities for you to do – every single Wednesday this summer starting next week! And you can roast your own hot dogs and s'mores over the fire too!!

ADULT SERMON: John 14:1-14

What is your deepest fear?

My oldest daughter Adelyn has just started developing “fear”. She’s 2 1/2. At bedtime, she tells me that her room is scary, that she is afraid of the dark, that there are monsters that she doesn’t like, and begs me every night, “Mama...please don’t go!”. Ultimately, underneath these fears that are really real to her, Adelyn’s deepest fear perhaps is not wanting to be alone.

I might guess that some of us here might share that fear with my 2 year old.

What is your deepest fear? Death? Leaving this world with unreconciled relationships? Is it Rejection? Criticism? Losing Control? Change? How about being inadequate or disappointing someone? What is your deepest fear?

In our Gospel story today, Jesus is telling his disciples good-bye in what has become to be known as the “farewell discourse”. Jesus is telling them that he is leaving this earth...leaving them. Fear is in the room. The disciples fear that they will be alone AND that they will be inadequate. Inadequate to live without Jesus by their side.

And this fear – this fear of inadequacy – makes them question Jesus....makes them beg Jesus to show them the way to where He will be after Jesus tells them that he is going to prepare a place for them and will be back! “A road map please!!”, begs Thomas, “so we can find you!” This fear makes them not able to comprehend what Jesus is really saying to them...what Jesus is really talking about! Even when Jesus tells them that he is leaving them to go and prepare a

place for them so that they can DWELL with him forever – the disciples can only feel alone...scared...and inadequate.

Jesus tells them, “Do not let your hearts be troubled! Believe in God, believe also in me!”

But Fear has taken control.

What is your deepest fear?

But perhaps our deepest fear isn't that we are inadequate at all! Perhaps, in fact, our deepest fear, much like the disciples, is that we are powerful beyond measure as a child of God!

A Poem, by Marianne Williamson

(Play Slideshow...STOP SLIDESHOW AT 1:30)

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light not our darkness that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous?

Actually, who are you not to be?

You are a child of God.

Your playing small does not serve the world.

There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other

people won't feel insecure around you.

We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.

It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.

And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

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people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

When you are in your most severe crisis and fear has consumed you...inadequacy has swallowed you...can you hear Jesus' words? Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.

When you are in the hospital waiting room pacing back and forth in a room full of strangers whose faces suggest they are carrying the same burden you are and you feel there is nothing you can do...do you hear Jesus' words? Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.

When the funeral is finally over, the ground all covered or the ashes scattered, the prayers recited and the hymns sung. When you are left in the living room, platters of food everywhere, flowers in every corner, notes on every table and it's over. You are sitting with a dull ache or maybe it's a searing pain in the heart place where she-he-once lived. The future? Impossible to imagine. Inadequate to continue on, yet fear of letting people down or showing weakness. Can you hear

Jesus' words? Even if they are just a whisper? Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.

Jesus' assurance is hard to hear and often we don't hear it, or believe it. But people, this is not a human word - this is God's word for a troubled heart. God's word is not a momentary escape from pain, but a gift that allows you to live with eyes open and with courage.

"Let not your heart be troubled," Jesus says. "Believe in God, believe in me."

Jesus is with us, is preparing a place for us and will always be with us. He talks about us dwelling with God... not a place to dwell, but dwelling, as in having an intimate relationship with God, the one who created and loves you!

We hear a lot about the power of Jesus' resurrection, and there is power in that...but Jesus takes it even one step further here. Jesus says, "there is even more than the resurrection!" There is ascension! That's where Jesus ascends up to heaven to live with God forever, and promises that we will join them one day too!

So let us live as ascended people! No we are not ascended yet, but we will be. There is more to this life! We have the promise of Christ – to live eternally and to DWELL with Christ forever!

And Jesus tells his disciples – tells us – if you believe this...if you believe in me...you will also do the works that I do and in fact you will do greater works than these. He wants us to entrust our lives into God's hand and then to allow the fruit of our lives to be made visible in deeds that point toward God here on this earth.

To live as ascended people...means to be passionate about teaching our young children about Christ's love all year (thank you Sunday School teachers)...it means to welcome in the new members today as if they have been part of our family forever...it means to take seriously the promises that we make as a congregation when a young one (like little Grayson) gets baptized into Christ...it means to give gifts you have been blessed with to enhance our worship space...it means to go out in the world and work for justice and to love others and to not judge even when every ounce of our being wants to do just that.

We are powerful beyond measure because Christ dwells in us...because Christ has prepared a dwelling place for us with God, and we will live with Him forever!! And because of the gospel message for today, we are free to live as ascended people...bold, powerful, full of life and pointing to Christ's Love with every ounce of our being...through our fears and all. God is with you. You are free to live as an ascended people today!

Thanks be to God.

Amen.