

Sermon May 14, 2017 – The Rev. Jamie Samilio – SPBX – Year A

**As many times** as I have read this Gospel in the last year -- mostly in the context of **funeral planning** -- I had **never asked myself** what **Jesus** was trying to **convey** to the disciples using the words, *“In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places...I go to prepare a place for you.”* What was **at the root of Jesus conveying** this message to his disciples?

When I worked as an **airline manager**, I had to **investigate accidents and incidents**. One of the **main portions** of the **report** I had to **research** and **articulate** was, the **root cause of the incident**. **Why** did it happen at this time, this place, and involve these people? **What** caused it? **What** was at the **root** of this happening? **Who** said what to whom?

**I decided to investigate the Gospel today**, and try to get to the **root of the message** Jesus was giving the disciples, and **why He** used the **metaphor** of a **house with many dwelling places**, being prepared for us.

*Jesus said, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.”* **Jesus does not want us to worry – do not be troubled, but believe in God and believe in Jesus.** **Thomas** then asks **earthly questions**. The disciples just **do not get** the meaning of the metaphor. **Thomas asks**, *“Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”* **Jesus said to him**, *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”* **Did that clear things up?** Do the disciples now understand? **If you were there, what would you think?** I am pretty sure if I were there I would **NOT be thinking**, Oh, no worries then, Jesus is taking us all to his **Dad’s house** to hang out **forever**, and apparently he has a **map!**

**It was not clear to Philip either who then asked**, *“Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.”* **Jesus said to him**, *“Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?”*

**If I said to you all right now, the Father is in me**, I imagine you would understand that I am saying that **God dwells in all of us -- easy, done**. But, imagine you are **hearing** this for the **first time ever**, and without the **benefit of knowing** of the birth, life, **death, resurrection, Gospel writing, church formation, Christian formation, Bible study**. God is **incomprehensible** for the human mind, and **Jesus is describing the Trinity**. He is trying to explain the **incomprehensible nature of God**. Jesus goes on to say, *“The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves.”* **Jesus knows this is complicated**, but the disciples have seen amazing things, can they at least **trust their own eyes**.

**Jesus is telling them**, “You have **seen** what I have done, and **you are also part of me**, and if that is too difficult to comprehend, then **believe, because you have seen** miracles first hand.” *“Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.”*

**I am not sure**. To the **uneducated ear** it **still sounds like** Jesus is going to go tell his **Dad to make everything all right**. If I were a **disciple**, I bet I would **not be thinking** in **divine terms** about

everlasting life. **I would be thinking** in terms of finally getting to see the **awesome castle** where Jesus' dad lives in his **kingdom with a huge undefeatable army**.

**The best description of the Trinity** I have ever heard, **did not come** from the **Bible**, or even a **religion teacher**, or a **book or a class**. It came from **song lyrics** written by **John Lennon**. I read about the lyrics, and as it turns out, **he was contemplating Jesus and Dylan Thomas when he wrote the song**. Tell me if you know it. ***"I am he and you are he, and you are me and we are all together."*** Does anyone recognize these lyrics? They are the opening line to *I am the Walrus*. ***"I am he and you are he, and you are me and we are all together."***

Frankly, these words are a **really good explanation of Jesus' relationship to the Father, and our relationship to Jesus**. ***"I am he and you are he, and you are me and we are all together."*** The words **clearly illustrate** the **interconnectedness** between God, Jesus, and us. God is in all of us, and **we are interdependent on each other – our relationships matter**.

**We human beings are amazing creatures**. We come in a **wide variety** of beautiful **colors and shapes**, we have **talents and abilities that compliment each other**, and given the opportunity, **we create some awesome things**. As amazing as we are and as much as we are **created in the image of God**, we often **fail** to understand that **if God is in everyone and everything, then there is interdependence between everyone and everything**.

**I did look at more references than Beatles lyrics** to craft my message today. In fact, I recently read about the idea of interdependence in **The Book of Joy**, by his Holiness the **Dalai Lama** and Archbishop **Desmond Tutu**. In the book the **Dalai Lama spoke eloquently of our interdependence on each other**. He said, ***"When many people think about death, there're very, very afraid. Usually I tell them that you should accept the death is part of our life. There's a beginning and there's an end... So once we accept that it is normal and that sooner or later it will come, our attitude changes."*** As if to say, ***"Do not let your hearts be troubled."*** because, **death is merely part of our cycle of life**. Life itself is a **series of changes**, and we **spend all of our lives** in a state of **change and transition**, so there is **nothing to fear**.

The **Archbishop continued the discussion** saying, ***"The fact that because God is God, because God is infinite, because none of us who are creatures will ever fathom the infinitude that is God, heaven is forever a place of new discovery."***

**In the Gospel, Thomas asked the way** to the Father's house with many dwelling places. **Following the way means that we love God, and love our neighbors as ourselves – the two greatest commandments that Jesus gave to us**.

Loving God and each other is **the way** we reach the kingdom.

**Our interdependence on each other, our relationships, and our words and actions all matter. Be kind, be considerate, and love everyone**.

Most of all, **have faith** in God, and **do not let your hearts be troubled. Amen**