

August 8, 2021, the Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B)

**Don't Go In That Room!**

Ephesians 4:25-5:2

<sup>25</sup>So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. <sup>26</sup>Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup>and do not make room for the devil. <sup>28</sup>Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. <sup>29</sup>Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. <sup>30</sup>And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup>Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, <sup>32</sup>and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

<sup>5:1</sup>Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, <sup>2</sup>and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

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Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God**

According to the Geneva Bible translation of the Gospel of John Jesus says, “John  
<sup>14:1</sup> Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> In my  
Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to  
prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and  
receive you unto myself, that where I am, there may ye be also.” He might have added  
that in Shawnee Church’s manse there are many rooms and Darcy and Jil have  
prepared a place for you, we have two spare bedrooms, a couch, and an inflatable  
mattress. Visitors, however, will be expected to deliver a children’s sermon if they stay  
the whole weekend. In the CE building there are many mattresses where you have  
prepared a place for skiers. All of this underscores our mission of hospitality. In  
Canterbury England there is a building called the Hospital. No beeping life support or  
rushing nurses are found there. Instead there are long tables with benches upstairs and  
clean stone paving below. This was where pilgrims stayed when they came to venerate  
Saint Thomas a Becket. His death at the hands of King Henry II’s rabid supporters  
touched off the American idea of separation of church and state. Well not directly, but

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one thing led to another. So, people were wont to go on pilgrimages there, as Geoffrey Chaucer tells us. Standing in what we would call a hostel I wondered if any ancestors slept in that space after walking from London.

The chambers in our buildings, some welcoming and others forbidden vaults, naturally led people to think of other kinds of spaces. So by extention, in your head there are many chambers. You have prepared them as places for various inhabitants. Some were invited and others came through the transom. Any of you have a transom? In the days before air conditioning My mother had a glass wind chime hanging in front of the transom which proved a tinkling announcement that a breeze was on its way. In this past year of being stuck at home open plan housing has lost some of its attraction. How can a person work at the same table with all the kids doing homework and the spouse on a Zoom call? Anyway we don't seem to have open plan heads. I've heard people spout an idea that seems to come from one room and then moments later say something from another room. For instance the notion that the government cannot be trusted because those people are incompetent and the government cannot be trusted because they are a secret cabal of humans and advanced alien visitors must come from separate rooms through a very long hallway.

Anyway, there are rooms in your mind that you do not care to enter. Sometimes this is for your sanity and others because only time will make it possible to go there. But, there is this room all decked out and fancy with a very big fireplace because you have to keep it warm for the occupant. This border prefers red and sulfur scented incense. You try to keep the door locked but he always finds a way to go roaming about in your head, showing up in places you thought were pleasant to spend time in.

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The only way to prevent this unwanted visitor from doing a great deal of damage is not to keep the doors locked, he will get in. It is to visit even the hard to enter parts of you thoughts, face the reality that abides in each room. Do not fear, you won't have to go alone into the dark basements or up the night time stairs. We Protestants jettisoned the idea that a person must confess to a priest. Ignoring the idea that all believers are priests, we have reduced confession to an occasional group prayer followed by a blanket pardon. Our founders erred in making confession a statement of total depravity generally destroying all hope of improvement. Actually it is a way to tour your house, your life, your head in the company of God who loves you. You can show God that dark basement as well as the welcoming front porch. God will go with you into the kitchen where you have lovingly prepared gifts of food and into the locked vault where you store all the wrongs people have done to you.

Know that God has already been in all those places, even the one where you try to keep the devil locked in, and yet God loves you. In that company you can open your house, sweep it out, discover forgotten treasures, do all the things to keep your life oriented toward the light, the good.

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**Closing Prayer:** Lord allow us the grace always to do and think what accords with your purpose; so that we, who cannot exist without you, may be able to live according to your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.