

Coffee to Go | 5th Sunday of Easter

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Dwelling places, Jesus, experience, God, disciples, heaven, joy, The Way

SPEAKERS

Karin Peter, Blake Smith

Karin Peter 00:27

Welcome to Coffee to Go where we center ourselves in the seasons, scriptures and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter. I'm here with Blake Smith. We're your hosts, and we welcome you on our journey together. So this week is the fifth week of Easter. It begins on the fifth Sunday of Easter. Easter is 50 days. So where are we in Easter with Jesus? What is Jesus doing this week? What did the Scriptures tell us this week? So we are in the season of joy, the Feast is greater than the fast so we have been in a season of joyful allelujahs following a 40 day fast of preparation. And this cycle of fasting and feasting, grief and joy is embedded into the Christian seasons of the Christian calendar. It's meant to be there, the great hope, the deep sorrow, the exuberant celebration, and the deep mystery. There's an author, spiritual guide and author Joan Chittister says that this cycle of joy and sorrow is like a roller coaster up and down, up and down, to remind us to both spray and play. That's her little quote there. And it reminds me a little bit of the rule of Saint Benedict, which is to work and pray that you you break your time up between being and doing but this is even different this is you pray, and contemplate and try to be as spiritually engaged as you can. But you also get that kind of spiritual formation in your play and your celebration and your joy. So I love that about her quote.

Blake Smith 02:20

I just want to say that you know that I really liked that perspective as well, to look at that. Because I like to play so. Yeah, but to see that roller coaster is the time for for pray and play like that.

Karin Peter 02:32

Pray and play. So here we are in the fifth week, and we're with Jesus as He is preparing the disciples for his departure. He has to leave. And the reason he gives is that he's going to make ready, a great welcome. So he's on an errand of hospitality. He's preparing a great welcome. Dwelling places is a term that's used in the scriptures, for those who follow Jesus. So let's hear the Scripture and we can determine which part of the roller coaster ride we're on here.

Blake Smith 03:09

And it depends on your perspective. Yeah, we pick up with this at John chapter 14. It's not the immediate passage following what we dealt with last week, in John chapter 10. But it continues that idea of Jesus being The Way and so something for us as disciples and followers to figure out what Jesus means by that. So here's the Scripture again, from John, chapter 14, the first 14 verses. "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 what I've 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've maybe also and you know, the way to the place where I am going." And Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you're 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." Philip said to him, "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. 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. 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 will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name, you asked me for anything, I will do it." So here we have another passage that is a favorite. People like to quote from this passage, but it's also quite often misused. It's a passage that can easily, like that one from John chapter 10, be used to exclude others, because Jesus says, "I am the way." And, if Jesus is the only way, then what does that say about all of our brothers and sisters in other faith traditions or world religions, who are faithful disciples. So in other words, unless you're a Christian, according to some readings of this passage, you don't get to experience the peaceable kingdom, you have to be Christian. But I hear it in a different way. When I hear it, "I am the way" it's more, I am the path, I'm a way of being. And if you follow it, if you live the same kinds of messages, relationships, if you have compassion, then you too will experience God's realm, as I experienced God's realm... as heaven, or as the way whichever, I mean, because even how we define heaven may be different. When you read the passage, it says, I'm going to another place in my Father's house, doesn't really say, heaven. But we have read that into the passage. I hear in this passage also, that there are many dwelling places in the same way, lots of different kinds of them. There's primitive tent camping for some, perhaps, or resplendent halls or others, fancy hotels, duplexes, multifamily dwellings, yerts. There are so many ways to be with God, Christian, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, whatever. We all experience the Divine Presence differently. And that's okay. That's part of this many dwelling places. God's realm is broad enough for all, it's broad enough, even for me. And for you.

Karin Peter 07:45

That is, that is a wonderful way to look at that particular passage, that I am the way, I am the way of being. Follow this way of being. I love that. So I'm thinking about the fact that all through the Easter season, Blake, we have been hearing scriptures about the way we started on the way to Emmaus, and then they walk the seven miles back to Jerusalem, to talk to the disciples. So we have been on this way with Jesus going somewhere. And we don't quite know where that is yet. But the journey at this point with Jesus is what's important. So this week, and maybe a way to experience that in our own lives, is to spend some time walking a way... a way... so walk a labyrinth this week. If that sounds appealing to you, you can go on Google and Google will help you find where a labyrinth might be near you, and go and walk that. And as you do, contemplate what the way of Jesus is to you. As you walk, how do you understand Jesus as the way? Or even, you could just take a nature walk, you could ask a friend or a

family member or neighbor to go with you. And as you walk, you can think about who made that path that you're on? And how are you connected to that person spiritually because you are walking their way that they created in nature? What does that mean to walk someone's way? So I think two good ways to experience being on the way this week.

Blake Smith 09:30

So I want to say just a quick thing about the labyrinth. And with this, I want to speak to the people who are like me that are not mystics. Let me just say it is an incredible experience. And I am so far away from that kind of thing, I think, usually, but I have had some incredible experiences. So if you're thinking oh, that's not for me, I encourage you to give it a try. And really allow yourself to engage it, because it's a it's an incredible practice. So some questions that come to mind right at the beginning, because as I mentioned earlier, we may define heaven differently. So a question to ask this week is, what is heaven? Is it a literal dwelling place? Is it a spiritual place? Or is it being engaged in a community or network of relationships? As a church, Community of Christ has begun to understand Zion in a much broader perspective. So we might ask ourselves, Is it time to do that with our understanding of heaven? If I were to picture a divine dwelling place being readied for me, what would it look like? Maybe you're a tent person...

Karin Peter 10:50

Okay, I just need I just need to respond here to this question. No, it's not a primitive camping spot is not a yurt, it's not even an RV? No, it's that fancy hotel you mentioned the first time around. Yeah.

Blake Smith 11:04

So roughing it for you is a Hyatt hotel or a Hilton?

Karin Peter 11:12

Yeah, the Comfort Inn

Blake Smith 11:14

Yeah, so yeah, the Comfort Inn is the really roughing it. So those are just some questions, I think. Because God meets us where we are, it's okay for our dwelling place to be different. So think about where might that dwelling place be. What might it look like? So our blessing for today is, "In your dwelling place, May you experience wholeness, happiness and abundance? May it be a safe and sacred space for all who enter and may all you visit, feel the peace of the Divine Spirit rest upon them. Amen."

We thank you for joining us again today. And I invite you to join us as we continue our journey here on Coffee to Go through the liturgical seasons and the holy days of the Christian tradition.