

Coffee To Go | Sixth Sunday of Easter | Year C

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Easter season, Farewell Discourse, Jesus' teachings, Holy Spirit, Advocate, Divine Presence, community, love one another, peace, teaching and reminding, gathered community, individual practice, God's presence, Spirit alarm, liturgical seasons.

SPEAKERS

Karin Peter, Blake Smith

Karin Peter 00:27

Welcome to Coffee to Go, where we center ourselves in the Scriptures, seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter here with Blake Smith, and we welcome you on the journey. We are in the Easter season, as we've been talking about the past few weeks. And Easter season lasts from Easter Day the 50 days until Pentecost. And during this time in the Scriptures, we see Jesus in post-resurrection appearances. He offers last teachings, or last words, if you will, and promises the people that the Spirit or the Comforter or Divine Presence, however you want to phrase that, will always be with them. So this week, we are still listening to Jesus in what's called the "Farewell Discourse" or the final words he offers before he departs the earth. And we were there last week, and we got the important farewell comment of love one another, which was basically the whole point of that portion of Scripture last time. And so let's hear what Jesus has to say this week.

Blake Smith 01:44

So, yeah, this passage is kind of the, you said last week I think, was the paraphrase, now go do it and this passage is more the disciples are going, 'Yeah, but how?' And, alright, here's how.

Karin Peter 02:01

Yeah. that's good, yeah.

Blake Smith 02:03

And it comes from the Gospel, according to John, as you said. And it's the 14th Chapter, part of this Final Discourse, and it is the 23rd through the 29th verse.

Jesus answered him, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine, but it's from the Father who sent me. I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, 'I am

going away, and I am coming to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.

So why does this matter? Well, if we take a really close look at what it actually says in Verse 26 about the Advocate, we might come out with a different understanding of what advocate means. I think, Karin, you've mentioned that advocate for you, and I would completely agree, that an advocate is a person who goes and speaks on your behalf and is there to support and all of that. But the Scripture says, the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom God will send in my name, will teach you and remind you.

Karin Peter 04:04

Yeah, that's a little bit different feeling there. It's almost like that relationship with the Advocate is going to take a little bit of work, which I didn't think was involved in this. I thought the Holy Spirit just shows up and advocates for me. That's a wonderful, warm relationship I will have with the Holy Spirit. But if it's going to teach me stuff and then remind me what I'm supposed to be doing, that's a whole different deal.

Blake Smith 04:29

Yeah, so I think we could, if we wanted to, and I think we probably have, dig into it, we could say, well, the next verse says, "Peace, I leave with you". Well, that's the Holy Spirit, that's the Peace, that's the Comforter. I, in this reading today, as I was reading it, it's like, okay, the Holy Spirit will be there to teach you and to remind you, I'm leaving you peace that's in you and with you. I'm giving you peace. The Holy Spirit is going to remind you. It's going to be that Apple Watch on your arm, or that notification on your phone, that says, hey, this is where you need to be. This is what you need to do. This is what I have taught you. So, Jesus offers comfort in an advocate. Yes, and when we think of advocate, we think about that as being someone who will advocate on our behalf. But this advocate definition is different.

Karin Peter 05:31

Yeah, this Spirit's got a whole lot more going on here. It's a bigger investment in my relationship with the Holy Spirit than I anticipated.

Blake Smith 05:40

Absolutely. So, the comfort comes from the knowledge that this Spirit or the Advocate or Comforter, however we frame that in our own journey, is the Divine Presence with the people. We're always talking about the fact that God dwells with us and among the people, that is the presence of the Spirit. And there is comfort in that, but the key role, as portrayed at least in this passage, is that of being a teacher and reminder. Jesus is the one who speaks of receiving peace. And as we have also mentioned before, this peace is not the absence of conflict. It is the presence of the Divine that calls the disciples to action, not only as individuals, but also, and we've talked about this as well in gathered community, the journey that we are on as followers and disciples of Christ is one done in community. And so, even though a lot of these things have implications and commands, if you will, for our individual practice, it is always done in the context of community. The community expression of peace is essential to the teachings of Jesus,

and that's why we've been talking about for the last couple of weeks to love one another, that commandment being so important.

Karin Peter 07:08

Yeah, it's not just love one another like have good feelings towards the other. The love one another includes the feeding, and the caring, and the walking with, and the protecting, and all of the other aspects of love that Jesus modeled. It's not just sitting around saying that I love everybody, which by the way, I don't always. And so that Advocate reminder pokes at me and a little vibration goes off in my wrist when I'm not focusing in the way that Jesus calls us to focus as disciples.

Blake Smith 07:42

Right. And we kind of harp on this a lot, because it is so difficult for us to love the other. And you acknowledge it, I acknowledge it that there are people that it is really, really hard. And I don't, if I'm being honest, always love them. But I'm really trying, and we are called to continue to work toward that end. So some questions that we might ask are, In what ways do I find comfort in gathered community? Let me quickly just acknowledge that, for our introverts, your immediate reaction would be I don't get comfort in gathered community,

Karin Peter 08:23

That was going through my mind. When I leave the gathered community and go home by myself, that's when I find comfort. But even for me as a like hyper introvert, there is something about gathering in community as long as I don't have to hug a bunch of people that I'm good with that is comforting. There is the whole idea of gathering together for God's good purposes in the world,

Blake Smith 08:57

Right. Absolutely. So another question is, Of what parts, part or parts, I guess, of Jesus' message, does the Advocate most need to remind me? Say that one again, of what part or parts of Jesus' message does the Advocate most need to remind me where are the places that I tend to forget?

Karin Peter 09:25

I have too many choices. Having a hard time narrowing it down to one. So let's just say I've got several.

Blake Smith 09:33

Alright, maybe for you or for others, just stick with the part of Jesus. Start with one. And finally, a question would be, How does the Holy Spirit as a reminder inform my understanding of how God is present with me? So looking at that new understanding or different understanding of Holy Spirit as reminder, how does that inform my understanding of how God is present with me?

Karin Peter 10:06

Yeah, so I'd have to say when I do my like, looking back at the times when I've really solidly felt with a huge certainty that whatever was happening or whatever was occurring in my brain, really was God's presence with me. It has always been in that kind of a reminder mode. It's always been in that kind of

prophetic mode of what the the prophetic words say to the people who are deviating from the plan. And that's really how the Holy Spirit works with me. It's like, hey, Karin, you're deviating from the plan. Or even there are times it's like, you know what is wrong with you. You're supposed to be over here doing this the way that God's Divine Presence has been with me. It has always been that kind of a reminder, a calling back to the purpose. Because I'm, you know, my last name is Peter. I'm a lot like Peter. I get distracted, and I have to be called back to center. So a way to experience this, this week, this Advocate, this reminder, it's pretty simple, but let's give it a shot. Set an alarm, set a reminder for each day this week, and when it goes off, in that moment, take a moment to think what the Spirit might remind you of in that very moment. So set it for a time when you can take that, you know, a couple of minutes to think that way and just see what that does for you to set like a Spirit alarm on your watch, or your phone, or your computer this week.

Blake Smith 11:39

Okay, and our blessing is by Meta Herrick Carlson, it comes from Blessings for Loving Yourself, and it's called, "For When It's Time".

There will always be one more thing to start, to finish, to dabble in before you are satisfied. Transitions are hard and some ache for permission to be released with love. There is grief in change or letting go. When it's time, bless the thing you have been tending to. It may not be just as you wish, but there is grace in knowing you are enough. It is time. This momentum is already making you brand new.

Well, thanks for joining us here at Coffee to Go this week. We invite you to join us next time for the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.