

# Sixth Sunday of Easter

## THE PROMISE OF PRESENCE

John 14:15-21

## Sixth Sunday of Easter

## Analysis by Kris Wright

15 If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. 17 This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. 18 I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. 19 In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21 They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.

---

## DIAGNOSIS: Orphaned

### **Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem)** – *Out of Sight*

The disciples fear that when Jesus departs they will be left behind like orphans without comfort-without advocate or counselor-at the mercy of the dangerous powers of the world. Look at the questions they ask in 13:35-14:5, like children left alone at home when their parents go away. Literal-minded as they are, they fear that with Jesus out of sight they will lose their way, and their embryonic faith will not withstand the vacuum left by his absence. The forces of the world will rush in to

fill that vacuum. Will they become like “the world” that has never been able to see Jesus. Is this how it all ends?

### **Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem)** – *No Seeing, No Knowing, No Believing*

It seems their fear is well-grounded. The world says, “Seeing is believing,” and these soon-to-be-orphaned disciples say the same: “Unless I see, I will not believe,” says Thomas (20:25). But if faith is the “assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1), then faith that requires physical sight is, in the end, no faith at all. Those whose belief depends on their own myopic vision are, indeed, left home alone-especially on Good Friday and after Jesus’ ascension. No seeing, no knowing, no believing, no hope.

### **Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem)** – *Left Behind*

Those without Jesus and without faith are left sightless, orphaned, abandoned, bereft. They are “without Christ, ... strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.” (Eph. 2:12) Without Christ they are left behind to worship “an unknown God” (Acts 17) in whom there is no comfort, no advocacy, no counsel, no life.

## **PROGNOSIS: Promise of Presence**

### **Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution)** – *Another Advocate*

Jesus will not leave his followers orphaned (v. 18). He does not abandon those the Father has given him. He gives the promise of another Paraclete, the Spirit of truth who testifies to the redemptive work of Jesus. “We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not ours only but also for the sins of the whole world” (see 1 John 2:1ff). The Spirit is Jesus’ appointed advocate, encourager, comforter, and will open their eyes to see and their hearts to love. They will know that in his going, his death and resurrection, there is life – his and theirs. “I will

come to you and you will see. Because I live you will also live" (v. 19). In his going and coming there is a shared life, the Trinity. Jesus in the Father, the disciples in Jesus, and Jesus in them by the power and presence of the Spirit he gives.

### **Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Problem) – *Believing Is Seeing***

The Spirit Jesus gives does not leave any behind, she abides and works faith in those who receive her. Only through the Spirit "not by our own understanding and effort, we believe in Jesus Christ our Lord," (Small Catechism, Third Article of the Creed), and we come by faith to the One who has come to us and revealed himself to us. Now faith-filled and Spirit-ed, we come to see, to know and to love Jesus personally and intimately. So we can sing, "Have you seen Jesus my Lord? He's here in plain view; take a look, open your eyes!"

### **Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) – *To Know Him Is to Love***

With Jesus present with and in believers, they become his promise-bearers to a world still wearing blinders. The world looks to Christians whom they can see to reveal Jesus whom they can't see. And we believers, in turn, reveal his Presence and Promise by keeping his commandments: "And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another as he has commanded us" (1 John 3:23). And not just any love, but "we know love by this, that he laid down his life for us – and we ought to lay down our lives for one another" (1John 3:16). Believe, love, serve. Filled with the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sends his disciples then and now into a waiting world.