

Sixth Sunday of Easter

LIVING AND LOVING IT, WITH JESUS

John 14:15-21

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Analysis by Michael Hoy

15“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. 17This 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. 18I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. 19In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. 20On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21They 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: Dis-Connected in Lovelessness

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) : *Not Loving, and Not Really Living*

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” Those “commandments” can be more succinctly framed in the Johannine gospel: love one another (even as Jesus has loved you). Keep in mind the context of Jesus’ sharing, in his farewell discourse. He is about to be subjected to powers that do not love, but are mean, cruel, and indifferent. Sounds a lot like what we may encounter as present-day disciples. And the fear of the mean,

cruel, and deadly world leads us to be much less than obedient to the “commandments.” It’s everyone for themselves! What kind of life is that? Apparently, the one we’ve got.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) : *Without Sight*

Jesus predicts that the world “will no longer see me,” and even “cannot receive” the Spirit (v. 3). And we, like the loveless world we live in, find ourselves following or obeying some other idol that eventually enslaves us. The idols today include living in fear and anxiety, hiding behind the flag, seeking “rightness” in personal or family values, and failing to truly confess our faith in our loveless, sightless treatment of one another—even our neighbors. All of these idols point to one central malady: we do not trust Jesus above all else. We do not even truly see Jesus, just as the world does not see Jesus. And without that seeing, we see only what the world sees: nothing, at least nothing worth holding on to.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) : *Orphaned, Desolate*

The only images the world is left with when it fails to see Jesus are images of oneself—alone, isolated, dying; which means that all the vain-attempts to preserve what little bit one has leaves us, as Jesus said, “orphaned” (or desolate, v. 18). Sooner or later, death comes knocking at the door. The disciples of Jesus were afraid of this even after Jesus had died (20:19, 26). In our own time we have a sense that we do not belong, that we don’t have any connections, not even with God—or at least, not a God worth having. What kind of God would leave his people abandoned? Yet what if the silence of the answer only points us back to our faithlessness and failure to love?

PROGNOSIS: Good Connections in Jesus’ Love

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) : *One Coming for the Orphans*

Jesus says to his disciples, “I am coming to you” (v. 18). That

is what he does, already, even in this time of announced farewell. He saw that his departure actually would serve to bring us closer to him, and to his Father. Jesus takes on our orphaned state of being on the cross precisely as his way of coming to us and connecting with us, and bearing the full, eternal weight of our desolation. Why does he do this? Because he loves us, with the very love of God that will not leave us orphaned. He come to us, beyond the locked doors of our lives, with his resurrected presence.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (External Solution) : *Advocated-Sight*
Seeing as Jesus sees comes by way of the Advocate Jesus sends to us for our benefit, “the Spirit of truth” (v. 17). Having this promised Spirit of truth, which we have as our eyes (of faith) are focused on Jesus, is how Jesus “reveals” himself to us (v. 21); through the Spirit, Jesus reveals to us what his cross and tomb and resurrection mean for us: We are no longer orphans. We are God’s own kids, God’s own people. That is how the Holy-ing Spirit gifts us to see Jesus and his love, by faith.

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution): *Living and Loving*
And here is where real living begins: “because I live, you also will live” (v. 19). Such life beginning in the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of his love, is not spirit-ualized; it is lived. It’s lived by living with love. Even as Jesus is living and is raised from the dead, we are alive in his Spirit and raised with him beyond the grave. And living, means loving the world—the same mean, cruel, indifferent world, caught up in its orphaned state of being; we love the world and see that we love it, even as Jesus has loved us. Now there’s a life that’s worth living!