

The Sixth Sunday of Easter

JESUS TAKES US TO WHERE HE IS GOING

John 14:23-29

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Analysis by Timothy J. Hoyer

Jesus answered [Judas (not Iscariot)], “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. 24Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

25“I have said these things to you while I am still with you. 26But 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. 27Peace 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. 28You have 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. 29And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.”

DIAGNOSIS: Where Are We Going?

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) – *Do As You’re Told!*

The world is always trying to get people to do what they’re told. The rule of law tries to get people to do what they’re

told. Children are told what to do by their parents, and then aged parents have federal and state regulations tell nursing homes how to care for them. Occupying armies try to get people to do what they're told. Police are the reminders that people need to keep doing what they're told. As long as people do what they're told, then they have nothing to fear from the police, the occupying army, or the law, or God (so we think).

>From all this being told what to do, we might surmise that people need to be told what to do because they won't do it on their own. To get people to do what they're told, they either must be bribed with a reward (money, approval, love, goodness), or threatened with punishment. All this being told what to do is God's way (law) of preserving and protecting people. Christians will take this attitude of being told what to do and say that Jesus tells them what to do. Christians are to keep Jesus' word (v. 23; see also John 8:31; 13:34; 14:15, 21; 15:1-11, 12).

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) – *If You Love Me, Prove It!*

Since one is good if one does what one is told, then it is also follows that one is loved when others do what they're told. Love is turned around from being a gift to another and twisted into being the demand of, "If you love me, you will do as you're told." Which really means, "If you want my love, you will do as I want." Because the bribe of "love" is given to those who do what they're told, people will do things in order to be loved. If people want the Father's love (v. 23), if they want the Father and Jesus to make their home in them (v. 23), they will follow Jesus' teaching (14:21). Why, Jesus even says that the Holy Spirit will "teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you" (v. 26). People feel so reassured that they will know what to do because they will be told what to do. It's almost a guarantee. Do as you're told and you get peace (v. 27), your hearts won't be troubled (v. 27), and they won't be

afraid (v. 27). Thus, people's trust is in what they do. They trust that their behavior, their obedience is their warranty for getting love from Jesus and the Father.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) – *Don't Take My Word For It!*

Trust and faith have now been put into one's obedience. That is something "unclean" to God (see the second lesson for this Sunday, Rev. 21:27). It is unclean because it is not trust in Jesus, the one who died and rose from the dead. To trust one's own behavior is to practice abomination (Rev. 21:27) because God's sending (John 14:24; see also John 3:16-17; 5:30; 5:37-38; 5:23-24, 30; 6:57; 7:29; 8:28, 42; 10:36; 12:44-46, 49-50; 13:3, 20) of his son Jesus is ignored. To trust one's own actions is a falsehood (Rev. 21:27) because one calls God a liar for declaring that Jesus is the one to trust, which God did by raising Jesus from the dead. No one who is unclean or who practices abomination or falsehoods will enter the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. 21:27). Instead, such hearts will be troubled, without peace, afraid, and will die by God's decree.

PROGNOSIS: Jesus Is Going To The Father

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) – *Jesus Goes Away*

Jesus goes away by dying on a cross. Death is not going to the Father. Death is going away from the Father. Death actually gets one nowhere. Death is a dead end. It is a dead end for trust in one's own actions. Death kills the misguided notion that obedience to the law is a way to enter the heavenly Jerusalem. The cross is the end of reward and punishment, for the cross is the end of all things. The cross is The Last Day, Judgment Day. The cross is the end for all who did not keep Jesus' word. His word was not "Do as you're told." His word was, "This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3). His word was, "For the

words you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me” (17:8). His word is, as John writes, “But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name” (20:31). His word is, “I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I speak, therefore, I speak just as the Father has told me” (12:49-50). Jesus is God’s word, for God raised Jesus from the dead!

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (External Solution) – *Jesus Is Going To His Father And Our Father*

The God who raised Jesus from the dead, who gave him eternal life, who declared him good, is the same God Jesus gives to us. Jesus makes his God to be our God and his Father to be our Father (20:17). Faith in Jesus makes his Father our Father. People, so long used to doing what they are told, are flabbergasted, not yet understanding, and so ask a “Do what you’re told” question: “Then they said to him, ‘What must we do to perform the works of God?’ Jesus answered them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent’” (6:28-29; John 3:16-17; 5:30; 5:37-38; 5:23-24, 30; 6:57; 7:29; 8:28, 42; 10:36; 12:44-46, 49-50; 13:3, 20). That’s it, faith alone. And even that faith is given to us, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you” (14:27). The word of Jesus people get to keep is that he is eternal life for us, thus overcoming God’s decree of death.

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) – *The Holy Spirit Comes To Us*

Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit who teaches and reminds us of all that Jesus said to us, namely, faith in him is our eternal life,

our righteousness before God, and forgiveness from God. We live by what Jesus taught us, and he taught us to love one another, as he has loved us (14:34). His commandment (body of teaching) is to love with his love, to serve with his service, to give mercy with his mercy, to forgive with his forgiveness, to declare others good to God by his goodness. Christians do not tell each other what to do in order to earn eternal life. Christians do not tell others what is the right behavior required to be right with God. Instead, Christians give eternal life to others. Christians make others right with God. They give eternal life and make others right with God by giving others Christ, the Word of God for eternal life. Christians can and may do that because as the Father sent Jesus, so Jesus sends them (20:21).