

Easter 6C; May 26, 2019

Rev. Ken Wratten at St. Luke's

Acts 16:9-15

Paul called by God to Macedonia; met Lydia, who helped his ministry

Revelation 21:22 – 22:5

The New Jerusalem in heaven

John 14:23-29

Jesus' return to heaven will result in the Father sending the HS.

After a few years experience in my first engineering job, I was assigned the design of a SCADA system for Creole Petroleum. That system controlled oil pumps on platforms built throughout Lake Maracaibo in northern Venezuela. After the system was built and tested, I was sent to supervise the installation.

I flew to the Caracas airport, changed planes to a commuter plane flight into Maracaibo. I was met by someone I had met back in the US, who drove for about an hour to drop me off at my hotel. This hotel was a room and a bath in someone's home; behind a gas station, on a single lane road, 50 miles from anywhere. This gas station was the town of La Gunillas. I was dropped off in front of the hotel. I spoke no Spanish. Through sign language I signed in, and was pointed to where my room was.

The room had a cot sized single bed, and a chair. No phone, no desk, no a/c, and I found out the next morning it only had hot water for the shower if you showered in the afternoon – when the sun has had time to warm the water that was stored in a water holding tank on the roof of the home.

I have never felt so alone in my life.

But there are other ways we feel alone sometimes:

When people are all around, but no one understood what is going on in our life

When no one offers to help, when we have more than we feel we can handle

When no one will take the time to just listen to how we feel

Or the alone-ness we feel when both parents have passed away

Have you experienced feeling alone in a crowd?

>>Jesus was at the Last Supper, and was giving his Farewell message to his followers. He knew how alone and confused they would feel when he was gone. Jesus offered them a lasting, divine, peace. He told them that by his ascending to heaven, God would send the Advocate, the Holy Spirit. This Advocate would be his ongoing presence for us. Through the Holy Spirit, his presence, his teachings, his stories about God and the Kingdom of God, would always be with us. Jesus said that through the presence of the HS, we are never left alone; never separated from Jesus and the Father.

In Jesus' human experience he could teach people within walking distance and the range of news travelling by word of mouth. With the Holy Spirit at work, the only limit Jesus has is that he only lives where he is loved.

The HS teaches everything we need to know; through our life experiences, insights, discernment, and knowledge that grows into wisdom.

The HS leads us in how to shape our lives to become like Jesus.

The HS reminds us of what Jesus has said to us: Speaking of himself and the Father, “we will make our home with (those who love me).”

“Peace I leave you.”

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”

“I have told you this... so that... you may believe.”

Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Jesus was delivering an invitation to a new way of life; it is an invitation he still makes to you and to me. It is an invitation to be open to this very intimate relationship with God; being immersed in the presence and the love of God; guided and reminded how to live in the state of Grace.

Jesus taught that this faith we profess is a love-centered relationship.

In the book of Acts, Luke reported an experience when Paul changed his travel plans during his second missionary journey. In his first journey, he had planted new churches around the eastern Mediterranean area. In this second journey, he was retracing his steps to see how those new churches were doing. But then he had a vision. He trusted that vision to be a message to change his plans, and go to Philippi. He went there, and met Lydia. Through Paul she and her family became Christians. With her help, he established a new church in Philippi. Paul was always looking to sense God moving him in a new direction. He was at peace with any changes, because his relationship with God was a love-centered relationship.

>>When you are hit with a feeling of being overwhelmed by life, remember that Jesus promised us his peace, and promised through his HS to always be with us, to teach us, and to remind us about the words we have heard in Scripture, Sunday School, Bible Studies, Christian friends, and our personal experiences of God’s radical love.

Remember that God has given you an invitation to a new way of life.

Remember that God lives where he is loved. You are not alone.

Remember that when your sense of peace seems out of reach, God offers you the power of HIS peace. Amen.