

John 14:23-29

6th Sunday after Easter

May 24, 1992

Sue and I used to wager when we played golf. Not for money, but for something so much more valuable: sleep. The winner got to sleep in, the loser had to get up when our baby awoke. I gave Sue two strokes per hole. She played the best golf of her life. I got up in the morning.

Back in those days I dreamed of the time when our children would grow, and would not require so much time and energy and effort. When they are able to take care of themselves, then life will be easy for me. No more feeding, no more diaper changing, no more struggling to put on snowsuits and sun suits and sleepers.

And when the days of my dreams came, I was wearied by a dozen new things.

Every Lent I tell myself, when Easter ^{is past} ~~comes~~ my life will be glorious. And Easter comes and goes and life stays just as busy, often busier still.

Vacation. I remember waiting for Christmas vacation. I could close the books for a time, have no tests to worry about for two weeks, and just take it easy. Vacation came, and with it a severe headcold. Yet another thing to await its passing.

How easy it is to mark out my life waiting for days of dirty diapers, and weeks of two sermons, and illness to pass. Dreaming of a time of rest and peace, no responsibilities, no pressure. And all the while life is passing too.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the crowds thought the waiting was over. He would be their Messiah, he would destroy their enemies, and bring freedom and peace. They lined the road, put palm branches down before him on his coronation march.

Like the day the troops came home after World War II. The crowds turned out, war was over, peace would be forever.

But in less than ten years our soldiers were fighting again.

On the personal level and on the national level, we dream of peace.
Of rest.

But so often with retirement comes physical pain, surgeries, arthritis, death. Or the pain is in our hearts as our children struggle in work, in marriage, in health. Life won't stay where we want it, no sooner is one challenge met than a new one has taken its place.

Yes, people thought that they needed a Messiah to lead the army. Victory, prosperity, power, these they asked of Jesus.

But on the night before his crucifixion, as he met with his disciples in that upper room, this is what he promised.

"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."

Peace. Not peace out there, the kind of peace armies fight for, soldiers die for, but peace in here. God's Messiah came to bring peace to Israel, he is Prince of Peace for all the world, but not as the world gives peace. Tradition holds that most all of Jesus' disciples suffered violent deaths. Stoning, crucifixion, being skinned alive, they knew no peace in the way the world counts peace. ^{rather peace, speak with} But within. Stephen speaking forgiveness for his murderers even as the stones were breaking his body.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. This ^{is} ~~was~~ Jesus promise.

So much of frustration in life comes from seeking our peace through changes out there.

When things at work change, then I'll have peace.

When the children are gone and I have more free time, then I'll have peace.

When the bills are paid, and there is some extra money, then I'll have peace.

When illness is ended, school is over, work is done for the day.

When I'm out on the lake, when I'm traveling far away, when I have time to picnic.

But rainy days, and a bosses whimsy, a reckless driver, hard times for the nation, thieves and cancer and a thousand other things will rob us of this peace.

And time.

Our Lord has promised his own a peace that cannot be taken from us. A peace not for tommorrow when everything is better, but a peace for today, for every today.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.

Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make out home with them. I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit who the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you.

Jesus promises his peace, his own Holy Spirit to those who keep his word, who abide in his word.

To you.

Set your heart only on Jesus. Trust in him, rest yourself in him.

Daily release your life into his care. ^{Let go and give everything to Jesus} Yourself, your loved ones, the whole world. Release them all into his care.

For he promses, Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.