

Sixth Sunday of Easter – Acts 17:22-31 & John 14: 15-end

God is the One in whom we live and move and have our being

The children were lined up in the cafeteria of a Church of England school for lunch. At the head of the table was a large pile of apples. Someone had written a note and placed it next to the apples. It read, "Take only one, God is watching."

Moving through the line, to the other end of the table, was a large pile of chocolate chip cookies. One little boy wrote his own note and snuck it next to the cookies, "Take all you want, God is watching the apples."

How do I find you God?

Finding God Within and Without

God is Love.

If you have ever loved,
If you have ever been loved,
You have experienced God
from Within and Without

God is Truth.

If you have ever told the truth,
If you have ever discovered Truth,
You have experienced God
from Within and Without

God is Beauty.

If you have ever helped to create something beautiful,
If you have ever witnessed beauty in any of it's myriad forms,
You have experienced God
from Within and Without

God is Good.

If you have ever done or thought something good,
If you have ever recognized goodness in or through another,
You have experienced God
from Within and Without

All of those experiences, those gifts,
of Love, Truth, Beauty and Goodness
were directly from God through you. or to you.
Glad to Meet You God. let's hang out together.

By: Author Unknown

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Jesus, at that supper recorded in the Gospel reading today was promising to do nothing less than to “hang out” with his friends.

He was saying goodbye to his disciples, and saw them sad and upset, because they would soon face life without him, and he promised to ask the Father not to abandon them, but to give them “another Advocate” to be always with them. Jesus called this the Spirit of truth, which would give them encouragement, power, light, love... that descending on them from the ultimate mystery of God. The same Spirit will come to “hang out” with us! There is just one small matter to deal with - We must welcome this Spirit with a simple and trusting heart - to live the truth of the Gospel and to love Jesus by keeping his commands.

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments." It is that little word "if." From our grandparents down to our grandchildren, we have all lived with or kept company with people who talk as though their love for us was conditional. "If you loved me, you would ...” Fill in the blank.

All the post-resurrection appearances strongly suggest that the risen Jesus loved his disciples unconditionally. To the broken-hearted Mary Magdalene in the garden, Jesus simply spoke her name. When the disciples were hiding behind locked doors in fear, Jesus simply stood there among them, sorrowful that they were unable to trust the good news brought to them by the women that morning, “peace be with you”. On the road to Emmaus there were no recriminations about being slow-witted, either! Yet suddenly in today's reading, going back to a time immediately before his arrest in Gethsemane, we have the big "if." There may be absolute, unconditional love for us on God's side of things, but on our side, Jesus poses a condition: if you love me, you will obey my commandments.

The clue, of course, lies not so much in the word "if" but in that other word "obey."

There is a requirement of us here, to **act** as though we know the Spirit dwells within us – and so “love one another as I have loved you”! This means getting in touch with the Spirit within us in the first place! To quiet

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the mind and focus on the true reality which lies within our own nature, becoming totally aware of the divinity within.

This is ancient practice, become quiet and turn off all outside influences and focus on one thing! You slow down your breathing until absolute stillness occurs – where lies the sense of oneness with all life. Of course, first you need to accept the notion that God is inside you. And you need to stop your normal thought pattern; meaning that you need to learn how to free your mind from thinking.

To know the power of God inside you, is to be liberated from any suffering or pain of your past and free you from worrying about the future. Because at this state, your past and future become irrelevant... as you're only concerned about living the present moment with joy and peace.

When we've found the power of God within, we no longer worry about people trying to offend or take away our God.

He who experiences the unity of life sees his own Self in all beings...

– Buddha

In addition to the two classical ways of picturing God—either far away in heaven (transcendent) or living within your heart (immanent) - **Pierre Teilhard de Chardin** (Jesuit priest philosopher) presented a third spirituality which is a much more comprehensive way to view our relationship with God. God is the One **in whom we live and move and have our being** (Act 17.28). This is a way that was recognized in ancient times but never really emphasized by formal religions. Celtic Spirituality promoted it but was side-lined at Whitby.

Teilhard said:

We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience.

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When the text says that God makes his home with us! Surely, God is *always* with us, loving us and caring for us providentially, but that is different from making his abode with us. This implies that God **has** a home! He lives a home life in the Trinity. Father, Son and Holy Ghost loving one another, living in perfect fellowship of friendship with one another, constituting the dwelling place of God. And, when God makes his home with us, he takes us into the blessedness of his presence, and our souls respond to that fellowship, in obedience! “If you love me you will keep my Commandments!!

And our souls thrill with joy at the presence of God.

*My inmost being thrills with joy
And gladness fills my breast.
When I in righteousness at last
Thy glorious face shall see, Thee
To view the glories that abide,
Then, then I shall be satisfied.
When all the weary night is past,
And I awake with Thee
To view the glories that abide,
Then, then I shall be satisfied.
Psalter, 1912 (Presbyterian)*

Fellowship is the Greek word *koinonia*, which literally means partnership and communion. God desires that our heart becomes one with His heart:

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. (Ezekiel 36:26-27)

We are to live in God’s heart - to dwell in him and he in us. ...*truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:3)*

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Living in God's heart is living in His love. Jesus says, *“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.”* (John 15:9-11)

If we don't get this right we will never find peace! And as **Mother Teresa** once said:

“If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.”

Or, as the modern writer **Jeremy Aldana** says:

“Each time a man looks into your eyes, he is only searching to find himself; for he knows already, that he is part of you”

And he might have added:

.... If he has no sense of his own divinity he will have no sense of yours, and treat you accordingly!

As the poet said:

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