

## Sixth Sunday of Easter

### FIRST READING – Acts 17:16-31

#### *Paul in Athens*

**16** Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. **17** So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. **18** Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, “What does this babbler wish to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities”—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. **19** And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? **20** For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.” **21** Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

**17:16** “Now while Paul was waiting (*ekdechomenou*) for them”—in Athens, for Timothy and Silas to join him from Berea. As he waits, his righteous spirit is provoked (*parōxuneto*), stirred up, upset, by a city of idols that have enslaved the people. The passive nature of the verb suggests the Spirit of God working to move Paul to speak. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

Athens had many idol statues and temples. The most prominent was Athena, patron goddess of the city, whose temple was the Parthenon. This wanton idolatry irritated and angered Paul. (TLSB)

**17:17** *synagogue*. As was Paul’s custom, he would first go to the synagogue. With these Jews and *sebomenois*, the devotees, the reverent people, he had a common reference in Scripture. Paul then spoke in the marketplace, where the common people gathered for shopping and, as today, paused to discuss happenings in their city and beyond. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

*marketplace*. Paul also reasoned and debated with those in the commercial hub of the city (*Gk agora*), which archaeologists have excavated. (TLSB)

**17:18** *Epicurean ... philosophers*. Originally they taught that the supreme good is happiness—but not mere momentary pleasure or temporary gratification. By Paul’s time, however, this philosophy had degenerated into a more sensual system of thought. (CSB)

The philosophical fame of Athens is evident. Epicureanism emphasized seeking a pleasurable life, though not merely in a sensual way. Stoicism stressed the rational order of nature and urged people to accept their fate within it. These two Gk philosophies were the most popular of the day. (TLSB)

“Epicurean and Stoic philosophers.” The Epicurean goal of life was pleasure and happiness through moderation and friendships. For Epicureans, God becoming man and suffering and dying would be ridiculous. To the Stoic, the universe is god. Nature keeps what is good and discards what is harmful. The Stoics would regard anything supernatural such as dying and returning once again into human form illogical and contrary to nature. Both speak of Paul in derogatory terms, calling him a babbler, a *spermologos*, a pseudo-intellectual, teaching foreign (*xenōn*) lower deities (*daimoniōn*). Perhaps Paul also proclaimed the mystery of the Holy Trinity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

(341-270 B.C.) taught that the gods are not interested in the affairs of men and that there is no afterlife in which we will be called to account. By the first century A.D. this philosophy had degenerated to hedonism, the love of pleasure: “Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.” (PBC)

*Stoic philosophers.* They taught that people should live in accord with nature, recognize their own self-sufficiency and independence, and suppress their desires. At its best, Stoicism had some admirable qualities, but, like Epicureanism, by Paul’s time it had degenerated into a system of pride. (CSB)

*babbler.* The Greek word meant “seed picker,” a bird picking up seeds here and there. Then it came to refer to the loafer in the marketplace who picked up whatever scraps of learning he could find and paraded them without digesting them himself. (CSB)

This uncomplimentary term suggested that Paul was like a bird picking up seeds of knowledge here and there, but not really knowing much. (PBC)

*foreign divinities.* At least some may have thought Paul was preaching a divine Jesus and a goddess, Anastasia (Gk for “resurrection”). (TLSB)

*preaching Jesus and the resurrection.* This was the heart of Paul’s message, emphasized in Ac (cf 1Co 15:3–4). (TLSB)

**17:19-21** Paul’s teaching was certainly novel to these pagan philosophers. They wanted to know (*thelei*) the meaning or implications of this new teaching. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

**17:19** *Areopagus.* † Means “hill of Ares.” Ares was the Greek god of thunder and war (the Roman equivalent was Mars). The Areopagus was located just west of the acropolis and south of the Agora and had once been the site of the meeting of the Court or Council of the Areopagus. Earlier the Council governed a Greek city-state, but by NT times the Areopagus retained authority only in the areas of religion and morals and met in the Royal Portico at the northwest corner of the Agora. They considered themselves the custodians of teachings that introduced new religions and foreign gods. Since the Greek text does not contain the term “a meeting of ” either here or in v. 22, Paul may not have appeared before the court of the Areopagus, but on the “hill of Ares,” which would accommodate a larger audience. (CSB)

Lit, “hill of Ares.” Ares was a Gk god of war linked with Mars by the Romans; therefore, the location is also called Mars Hill. Early in the history of Athens, citizens met here to govern the city, so “Areopagus” also came to describe the city council. Paul seems to be in the place called the Areopagus, near the Acropolis, rather than at a formal meeting of citizens. He would be in view of the massive Parthenon, dedicated to Athena. (TLSB)

*new teaching.* Since there was at least one synagogue in Athens (v 17), the Athenians likely knew of the OT. But the good news of Jesus’ death and resurrection was new to them. (TLSB)

**17:20** Their openness is reminiscent of the Bereans (vv 11–12), as well as those at Pisidian Antioch (13:42). (TLSB)

**17:21** *hearing something new* – These Athenian philosophers, however, were not so set in their ways that they would ignore new teachings. In fact, Luke points out that in the cosmopolitan climate of Athens in that day, new ideas were a big item. So Paul had a ready-made audience in Athens. (LL)

This parenthetical comment heightens the philosophical reputation and character of the city of Athens, from the time of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle on. (TLSB)

**17:16–21** At Athens, Paul engages the dominant religious and philosophical teachings of the day. The Gospel message is foolishness to people of this world. Yet, God desires to engage all people with His Word and, by the Spirit’s power, to open their hearts and minds to the good news of Jesus and His resurrection. • Father, the Gospel of Jesus is the power by which we are saved (1Co 1:18–25). Guide Your people to engage the world with this message. Amen. (TLSB)

*Paul Addresses the Areopagus*

**22** So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. **23** For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. **24** The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, **25** nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. **26** And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, **27** that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, **28** for “‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, “‘For we are indeed his offspring.’ **29** Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. **30** The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, **31** because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.” **32** Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, “We will hear you again about this.” **33** So Paul went out from their midst. **34** But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

**17:22-31** Paul was presenting Christianity to the leading philosophers of the leading Hellenistic city, a strategic event for the spread of the Gospel among the Gentiles. Paul had been driven from Berea to Athens by persecution, and was waiting for Timothy and Silas to rejoin him, so he was there more by accident than by his own missionary plan (vv 10–16). Yet, characteristically, he made the most of the opportunity. “Athens, although she had long since lost her political eminence of an earlier day, continued to represent the highest level of culture attained in classical antiquity. The sculpture, literature and oratory of Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. have, indeed, never been surpassed. In philosophy, too, she occupied the leading place, being the native city of Socrates and Plato, and the adopted home of Aristotle, Epicurus and Zeno” (F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954] 348). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

**17:22-23** Paul begins to reveal this God, who has been previously unknown to these Athenians. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

**17:22** *the Areopagus* - The Areopagus is a 370-foot-high hill in Athens, between the Acropolis and the Pnyx. The name is classical Greek for “hill of Ares.” In Greek mythology, Ares (or Mars in Latin) was the god of war, bloodshed, strife, and pestilence, the son of Zeus (the head of the pantheon) and Hera. A temple for Ares probably was located on the hill. The hill was the ancient meeting place of a court, whose varied functions used to include trials for murder and other capital crimes. This court’s “traditional power was curtailed with the growth of Athenian democracy in the fifth century B.C., but it retained authority in matters of religion and morals, and in Roman times it enjoyed enhanced power and commanded great respect” (Bruce, p. 352). The court or council used the name for itself even when it met at alternate locations, as it may have in our text. Paul is not on trial in any legal sense; the Areopagus meeting was for

the purpose of discussing philosophy and religion, something the Athenians loved to do (cf. v 21). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

*religious*. Or “superstitious.” The Greek for this word could be used to congratulate a person or to criticize him, depending on whether the person using it included himself in the circle of individuals he was describing. The Athenians would not know which meaning to take until Paul continued. In this context it is clear that Paul wanted to be complimentary in order to gain a hearing. (CSB)

Gk term could have a positive (“religious”) or negative (“superstitious”) meaning. Here Paul most likely speaks positively in order to get a fair hearing. (TLSB)

The term *deisidaimonesteros*, ‘very religious,’ literally, “fearing the divinity,” is a comparative used as a superlative. It can be derisive, as in “superstitious,” or complimentary, as in “religious.” The adjective is used only here in the NT; the noun only in Acts 25:19. The context indicates that Paul meant it in the positive sense. He is putting the best possible construction on what he sees, and establishing rapport with his hearers. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2) (CSB)

**17:23 TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.** The Greeks were fearful of offending any god by failing to give him attention; so they felt they could cover any omissions by the label “unknown god.” Other Greek writers confirm that such altars could be seen in Athens—a striking point of contact for Paul. (CSB)

The Greeks had many gods; this altar was built to ensure no significant deity was missed. Its existence is confirmed by other sources. (TLSB)

“To an unknown god,” the altar being a way to “cover all the bases.” Other writers of that era speak of such altars, though there is no secular evidence of such an inscription in the singular. Ignorance of the true God is not unique to Athenians. Paul says to the Galatians, “Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods” (4:8; cf. Rom 2:14–16; Jn 4:22). Paul speaks to their admitted spiritual condition, employing an opening illustration of their own making. He then tells them he has knowledge of that God for which they are searching. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

It is impossible for those who have the Spirit of God not to know who they are worshiping. The men of Athens struggled and built an altar with the inscription, “TO AN UNKNOWN GOD” (Acts 17:23). But those who have the Spirit of Truth proclaim and confess not just any belief in any god, but belief in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

**17:24 The God who made the world.** Thus a personal Creator, in contrast with the views of pantheistic Stoicism. (CSB)

Dominating the landscape of Athens was the Parthenon whose ruins still stand. It is the temple dedicated to the patron goddess of the city, the virgin Pallas Athene. Paul said, “The creator of the universe does not need anything that human beings might make for him, any dwelling that they might build for him. (PBC)

“The God who made the world and everything in it” stands in stark contrast to the multiplicity of stone and metal idols, as well to the Greek “higher philosophy” of an unspecified “prime mover” or divine *nous*, “mind.” Paul starts with the First Article of the Creed. To Gentiles, who lack the written testimony of Scripture, something of God should still be evident from his creation (Rom 1:20). When Jonah (1:9) spoke to the pagan (Phoenician?) sailors, he described the true God in the same terms. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

*does not live in temples.* Pagans generally built temples for their gods to “live” in, as evidenced by the statues contained therein. The God of creation transcends earth and any structure on it. (TLSB)

The God Paul preaches “does not live in temples built by hands.” This is in harmony with Solomon’s own comment “The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!” (1 Ki 8:27). Yet Paul goes on to allude to God’s incarnation in “the man he has appointed” (v 31). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

**17:25** God is not to be served in a Law fashion, as if he needs something from us and is then obligated to repay us for our worship. Rather, worship stems from the Gospel—from what he has given us. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

God is not dependent upon His creation or anything human beings do. Instead, God is the giver of life to all, as well as the giver of all that we have. (TLSB)

**17:26-27** The description of God’s determination of the course of world history and the movement of peoples brings to mind Genesis 10, the “Table of Nations,” and Amos 9:7. The man who had his Damascus road experience could see that the world’s events are not random, but purposeful: “God did this so that men would seek him.” God’s concern extends to all peoples, not just Israel. Nor is there room for the Greek belief in their own innate superiority over “barbarians,” i.e., all others, or for modern ethnic or racial prejudice. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

**17:26** *he made from one man he made every nation.* All people are of one family (whether Athenians or Romans, Greeks or barbarians, Jews or Gentiles). (CSB)

All people are descended from Adam. (TLSB)

“And he made from one man every nation of mankind.” Paul in speaking this truth will later in v 31 confess that by a man whom God has appointed, he will come to judge the world in righteousness. By one man, we are condemned; by one man, we are saved. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

*determined allotted periods.* He planned the exact times when nations should emerge and decline. (CSB)

*boundaries of their dwelling place.* He also planned the specific area to be occupied by each nation. He is God, the Designer (things were not left to Chance, as the Epicureans thought). (CSB)

God is involved in the lives of all peoples and nations on earth, even setting in order the times and places of their existence. Cf Gn 10–11; see note, Jb 38:4. (TLSB)

**17:27** *they should seek God* – God demonstrated his power and intelligence in creation and in the history of nations so that people would realize that an intelligent and powerful being is in charge of the universe. In God’s intention this should make them see him, reach for him and find him. (PBC)

The goodness and power of God revealed in creation should lead people to seek Him (cf Rm 1:19–21). (TLSB)

“That they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.” “Seek” (*zēteîn*) has the connotation of seeking God through reason. To “feel” (*psēlaphēseian*) is to touch or perhaps in this case grope to God and, eureka, find him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

*feel their way.* Apart from God’s direct revelation, it is like groping for God in the darkness. (TLSB)

*not far.* Chemnitz: “Paul says that God can almost be contacted through these evidences.... Nine proofs are listed [by Melanchthon]: (1) the very order of nature itself, (2) the nature of the human mind, (3) the difference between the honorable and the shameful, (4) the truthfulness of natural knowledge, (5) the terrors of conscience, (6) the structure of human society, (7) the orderly process of cause and effect, (8) the signs of future events, (9) the ultimate purpose of things.... These proofs of the natural knowledge of God can be quite favorably compared with the arguments of Paul by which in his preaching to the gentiles he marshals his argument concerning the natural knowledge of God” (*LTh* 1:52). Cf Ac 14:15. (TLSB)

**17:28** *some of your own poets.* There are two quotations here: (1) “In him we live and move and have our being,” from the Cretan poet Epimenides (c. 600 B.C.) in his *Cretica*, and (2) “We are his offspring,” from the Cilician poet Aratus (c. 315–240) in his *Phaenomena*, as well as from Cleanthes (331–233) in his *Hymn to Zeus*. Paul quotes Greek poets elsewhere as well (see 1Co 15:33; Tit 1:12 and notes). (CSB)

The Stoic philosopher agreed with the idea that God is not far from each one of us. In fact, most philosophers of Paul’s time were pantheists. They confused the creator with his creation by teaching that everything is god. Paul used their mistaken beliefs as a starting point from which to go on and preach the gospel of the true God. (PBC)

His quotations from the Greek writers Epimenides and Aratus demonstrate that Paul was at home in Greek literature. (LL)

To substantiate these claims, Paul quotes from two Greek poets who give evidence of natural knowledge of God “For in him we live and move and have our being” from Epimenides, a Cretan poet, and “We are his offspring,” from Aratus, a Cilician poet. Paul’s citations reveal not only the breadth of his learning, but also his mastery of communicating the Gospel across cultures by appealing to what they already know and accept. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Paul quotes Epimenides of Crete, a seer highly regarded by the Athenians as a reformer of their civil affairs, and from the poet Aratus, a highly regarded stoic poet, to further the point that his dialogue is reasonable. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

*In Him we live.* Paul here refers to pagan poets who, through their natural knowledge of God (Rm 1:20–21), correctly assessed and asserted this truth about the Creator God. c. 600 BC, Epimenides concluded that one god is the creator and sustainer of all life. “In order that God’s creation and work in mankind may be distinguished from the devil’s work, we say that it is God’s creation that a person has body and soul. Also, it is God’s work that a person can think, speak, do, and work anything” (FC SD I 42). SB)  
Chemnitz: “[God] watches over and sustains the order which He has established in nature” (*LTh* 1:167). (TLSB)

*For we are indeed His offspring.* Both Aratus and Cleanthes made this statement c. 300 BC. It agrees with Paul’s assertion in v 26 (cf Ps 8; Jn 10:34–35). (TLSB)

*offspring.* Gk *genos*, similar in meaning to Eng “generation.” Luther: “Natural life is a part of eternal life and its beginning, but it ends through death because it does not acknowledge nor honor him from whom it comes. Sin cuts it off, so that it must die eternally. On the other hand, those who believe in him, and acknowledge him from whom they have their being never die. Their natural life will be stretched out into life eternal, so that they never taste death” (AE 52:55). (TLSB)

**17:29** *God’s offspring.* God created Adam; as Adam’s offspring, we are similarly God’s creation and offspring; see note, v 26. Note that elsewhere Paul and other apostles distinguish the children of God (believers) from the world (unbelievers). (TLSB)

Paul next asserts that since man is God’s *genos*, offspring, it is unreasonable for him to be like gold, silver, or stone idols that are derived from the imagination of man. But this is exactly the problem. Natural man makes up gods from his imagination, not from divine inspiration. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

*art and imagination of man.* We cannot make God in our image or find Him in the gods of other religions. Original sin drives all people to idolatry. (TLSB)

Regarding the folly of idols, Paul speaks from the vantage point of OT sections such as Is 40:18–31, which begins with the searching question, “To whom, then, will you compare God? To what image will you compare him?” The answer, of course, is that God is incomparable. See also Rom 1:22–23, and the hymn “Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise” (LW 451). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

**17:30-31** “Judging the world in righteousness.” Jesus is the righteous one, and through his death he has declared all who trust in this word righteous. This is made certain through his resurrection from the dead (cf Rom 3:21–26). Jesus’ resurrection is the proof that what he says and claims is true, since death is common to all mankind and no one else has returned from it. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 24, Part 2)

**17:30** *overlooked such ignorance.* God had not judged them for worshiping false gods in their ignorance (see v. 31). (CSB)

Cf Rm 2:12–16. With the coming of Christ, God’s revealed Word is sent out into the world. Now it has come to Athens through Paul. Chemnitz: “God by His determination has decided how long He wills to wait for repentance and where He is going to crush wickedness” (LTh 1:211). Cf Rm 2:4; 9:22; 1Pt 3:20. (TLSB)

Regarding “overlooked,” the words of 2 Pet 3:9 come to mind: “He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” The forbearance of God (Rom 3:23–26) is never promoted by man’s sinful “ignorance,” but always and only by God’s undeserved kindness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

God did not immediately punish idolatry in the past. Ignorance was not innocence, but he chose not to destroy the idolaters at once. Now he has revealed himself in Jesus Christ, and he calls on people everywhere to turn from idols to him. (PBC)

*all people.* “No one is an exception who is a human being. This repentance teaches us to discern sin: We are completely lost; there is nothing good in us from head to foot; and we must become absolutely new and different people” (SA III III 34–35). (TLSB)

*repent.* The proper response to God's message is repentance (Lk 3:3; 10:13; 13:3, 5), but it must be His gift and work through His Word (cf Ac 2:38; 5:31; 10:44). (TLSB)

*metanoein*, infinitive of *metanoēō*, "to repent," "to change one's mind," "conversion." Here, the Greek word for repentance is not simply a call to sorrow over sin or to make restitution for one's action. This is a call to total conversion. It is a complete turnaround of the heart and mind. This is possible, of course, only through the power of the Holy Spirit working through the Word. It should be noted, thus, that Paul's calling to repentance is really an announcement of God's gift. Repentance is a gift, courtesy of the Holy Spirit. Paul's message to the world of repentance and a day in which Jesus will judge in righteousness is really a message of joy, not misery. Where there is Law in Paul's message, it is motivated by the Gospel. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

**17:31** *judge the world in righteousness by a man.* Jesus will come again in glory to judge; He will do so in accordance with the righteousness required by God and freely granted through faith. (TLSB)

*the man whom he has appointed.* Jesus, the Son of Man (see Da 7:13; cf. Mt 25:31–46; Ac 10:42). (CSB)

"Appointed" is from *horizō*, used eight times used in the NT, six by Luke. Other significant occurrences include Lk 22:22, Acts 2:23, Acts 10:42, Acts 17:26. The word re-enforces that God has a plan of salvation, that the risen Jesus is Lord, and that God will fulfill his plan for his people. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The Jews tended to stumble over the cross because they expected from God miraculous signs of power. Here the "foolishness" of the resurrection, dominant in the book of Acts and in Paul's sermons and epistles, is the stumbling block to the Greeks, who sought wisdom. The result is illustrated in v 32: "When they heard about the resurrection from the dead, some of them sneered." But this did not deter Paul from proclaiming "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24). While Paul tailored his preaching to his audience to make it as effective as possible, he never sacrificed the content of the Gospel, no matter how unfavorably it was received. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

*assurance - pistis*, "an assurance," from *pisteuō*, "faith," "belief." This is a no-brainer for inclusion in the sermon. Assurance and comfort in our salvation come from faith in our crucified and resurrected Lord. Think of resurrection faith. For instance, think of the difference of Thomas's heart before he saw the resurrected Christ and then after! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 12, Part 2)

*raising Him from the dead.* Paul identifies the resurrection as the event that publicly declared Jesus to be God's Son (cf Rm 1:4) and, therefore, the one entrusted to judge (cf Jn 5:22; Mt 28:18). (TLSB)

## EPISTLE – 1 PETER 3:13-22

*Suffering for Righteousness' Sake*

**13** Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? **14** But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, **15** but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, **16** having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. **17** For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than

**for doing evil. 18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, 19 in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, 20 because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. 21 Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him**

**3:13** *Who ... harm you ... ?* As a general rule, people are not harmed for acts of kindness. This is especially true if one is an enthusiast (“eager”) for doing good. (CSB)

**3:14** *even if you should suffer.* In the Greek, this conditional clause is the furthest removed from stating a reality. Suffering for righteousness is a remote possibility, but even if it does occur, it brings special blessing to the sufferer (see Mt 5:10–12). (CSB)

Whatever trials or sufferings Christians face, they know that Christ grants strength, forgiveness, and life everlasting. (TLSB)

*no fear.* In Isaiah’s context God’s people are not to view things as unbelievers do. They are not to make worldly judgments or be afraid of the enemies of God. Instead, they are to fear God (see Isa 8:13). (CSB)

**3:15** *honor Christ the Lord.*† An exhortation to the readers to recognize Jesus as Lord and trust in him for strength in leading a God-pleasing life. Then they need not be speechless when called on to defend their faith. Instead, there will be a readiness to answer. (CSB)

Christian witness begins with a person’s own faith. We must know what we believe, teach, and confess according to God’s Word. (TLSB)

agiadzo – means to venerate or adore Christ. – The Christian self in you needs to reaffirm its faith every day – everyday rededicating your life to the Lord, every day giving Him honor and glory, every day praying for strength to stand up for the truth, every day listening to the Savior’s voice through His wonderful Word. And when your own heart is full of gratitude for being rescued from death and hell, you will be ready to speak, and your speech will have death and conviction. (PBC)

*being prepared to make defence* – apologia means giving an answer to the skeptical, or derisive inquiries of ill-disposed friends, neighbors or co-workers. – As you look into the future, you know that in the months ahead you will have opportunities to share your faith. Think about what you might say. (PBC)

Gk *apologia*. Positive testimony and witness to the truth of the Gospel. Christianity stands up to scrutiny and investigation because it is true. Christians are to be prepared to tell others about this truth whenever they have the opportunity. (TLSB)

*reason for the hope* – Stoekhardt says, “even a simple Christian, in whom dwells the Holy Spirit, is able to hold up before unbelievers some clear texts and principles of Scripture which they cannot contradict. – When you talk to people, you don’t have to argue with them, struggles to make the perfect sales pitch, try to make God’s ways logical or reasonable, be clever, or take the burden of converting them on yourself. Just tell the truth. Just tell what happened, and how you know these things.

Others notice the Christian's faithful response to adversity, which may cause them to seek the reason and thus hear the Gospel. (TLSB)

*with gentleness and respect.* The Christian is always to be a gentleman or gentle woman, even when opposed by unbelievers. Our apologetic ("answer") is always to be given with love, never in degrading terms. – Meekness and a reverent fear. (CSB)

Defending the Gospel should not be done with arrogance or militance; God calls for a gentle witness to the truth. (TLSB)

**3:16** *having a good conscience* – Given to us in our Baptism (v 21). (TLSB)

*in Christ* – The good conduct is caused by faith in Christ. Unbelievers can live a life of "good" conduct and do many helpful things but it is not motivated by Christ and his love.

*May be put to shame.* Because it is shown to be obviously untrue and because the believer's loving attitude puts the opponent's bitterness in a bad light. – Insulters will be ashamed when they observe the humility and godliness of the good witness. This shame is good for them. By the grace of God it can lead to their repentance. (CSB)

**3:17** *suffer for doing good* – For Christians, suffering is not harmful but gain. It is not to pay for sin. It is to honor God. Through it God disciplines the individual. Luther says, "for where God's Word is preached, accepted or believed, and bears fruit, there the blessed holy cross will not be far away. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

God may put us in difficult situations to chastise, strengthen, draw us back into His fold, or to benefit others. He will never give us more than we can bear. Luther: "Here St. Peter again presents the Lord Christ to us as an example and always refers to the suffering of Christ... Christ was righteous. For doing right He also suffered for us, who were unrighteous. But He did not seek the cross. No, He waited until it was God's will that He should drink the cup. He should be the model for us to imitate" (AE 30:110). (TLSB)

Peter maintains that when we are zealous to do good, we rob our opponents of any real reason for treating us badly. (LL)

**3:18** God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit worked together in the cause of our redemption. (TLSB)

*once for sins.* See Heb 9:28. – These words proclaim the gravity and finality of Christ's words on the cross, "It is finished!" (John 19:30). (CSB)

Our sufferings do not atone for our sin; Christ made atonement for us by His cross. His resurrection gives absolute certainty that His sacrifice was effective. (TLSB)

*the righteous for the unrighteous.* Peter, like Paul in Php 2:5–11, refers to Jesus as an example of the type of conduct that should characterize the Christian. We are to be ready to suffer for doing good (vv. 13–14, 17). The thought of Christ's suffering and death, however, leads Peter to comment on what occurred after Christ's death—which leads to tangential remarks about preaching to the spirits in prison and about baptism (see vv. 19–21). – This should be motive for Christians to comply with the preceding exhortation to bear up well under suffering so that they, where possible, convert their opponents. (CSB)

*made alive by the Spirit.* Referring to the resurrection. Elsewhere the resurrection is attributed to the Father (Ac 2:32; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:20) and to the Son (Jn 10:17–18). (CSB)

Christ’s human spirit and body, separated in death, were reunited in His resurrection. Luther: “We are one sacrifice with Him. As He dies, so we, too, die according to the flesh; as He lives in the spirit, so we, too, live in the spirit” (AE 30:111). (TLSB)

**3:19–20a†** Three main incorrect interpretations of this passage have been suggested: 1. Some hold that in his pre-incarnate state Christ went and preached through Noah to the wicked generation of that time. 2. Others argue that between his death and resurrection Christ went to the prison where fallen angels are incarcerated and there preached to the angels who are said to have left their proper state and married human women during Noah’s time (cf. Ge 6:1–4; 2Pe 2:4; Jude 6). The “sons of God” in Ge 6:2, 4 are said to have been angels, as they are in Job 1:6; 2:1 (see NIV text note). The message he preached to these evil angels was probably a declaration of victory. 3. Still others say that between death and resurrection Christ went to the place of the dead and preached to the spirits of Noah’s wicked contemporaries. What he proclaimed may have been the gospel, or it may have been a declaration of victory for Christ and doom for his hearers. (CSB)

The weakness of the first view is that it does not relate the event to Christ’s death and resurrection, as the context seems to do. The main problem with the second view is that it assumes sexual relations between angels and women, and such physical relations may not be possible for angels since they are spirits. A major difficulty with the third view is that the term “spirits” is only used of human beings when qualifying terms are added. Otherwise the term seems restricted to supernatural beings. (CSB)

A better interpretation is that Christ in his glorified body “went and preached to the spirits in prison [hell]” to declare his victory over death and all evil forces (not to offer them a second chance)—especially to those further described. The absence of an article before “disobeyed” (v. 20) indicates that the spirits who refused to heed Noah’s warning were among the spirits in prison, but were not the only ones to whom Christ preached. They are a prime example of the unbelievers of all times. – (CSB)

**3:19** Christ descended into hell to declare His victory over death and all evil forces. His power surpasses all others. Scripture does not teach that He offered these spirits a second chance for salvation. “It is enough if we know that Christ descended into hell, destroyed hell for all believers, and delivered them from the power of death and of the devil, from eternal condemnation and the jaws of hell. We will save our questions <and not curiously investigate> about how this happened until the other world. Then not only this <mystery>, but others also will be revealed that we simply believe here and cannot grasp with our blind reason” (FC Ep IX 4). (TLSB)

**3:20** Noah preached to these spirits (unbelievers), who failed to hear and believe God’s Word. Thus they perished and remain in hell until the final judgment. (TLSB)

**3:21** *baptism which corresponds.*† The flood is a counterpart to baptism in that in each water saves (Noah and his family by the flood; us by baptism). The flood was a figure of baptism in that in both instances the water that spoke of judgment (in the flood the death of the wicked, in baptism the death of Christ and the believer) is the water that saves (see Ro 6:4). Baptism is a means of salvation, a means through which the Holy Spirit produces faith as a gift of God because of God’s grace (see Eph 5:26; Tit 3:5 and notes). –The flood delivered the 8 souls from the destruction all around them. They were brought to an earth that was rejuvenated. Baptism transports the Christian into a new and glorified world which comes forth from the fiery judgment of the Last Day. Baptism is not putting away of the filth of the flesh which accumulates daily, but an inward cleansing and thus absolving the conscience from condemnation. (CSB)

The flood is a figure of Baptism. In each case, water saves. The world was cleansed when Noah and his family were lifted up by the flood. Baptism cleanses and raises us to new life. By grace, Baptism is a means of salvation through which the Holy Spirit produces faith (cf Eph 5:25–27). Luther: “Now baptism is by far a greater flood than was that of Noah.... Baptism drowns all sorts of men throughout the world, from the birth of Christ even till the day of judgment.... [Noah’s flood] was a flood of wrath, this is a flood of grace” (AE 35:32). (TLSB)

*now saves you also.* † Believers are saved by what baptism effects through Christ’s death and resurrection. (CSB)

*appeal to God for a good conscience.* † “Response” is a better translation than “pledge.” Baptism should result also in a commitment on the part of the believer in all good conscience to make sure that what baptism effects will produce a sanctified Christian life. (CSB)

We are forgiven and holy because of Christ. That forgiveness is applied to us in Baptism. (TLSB)

*through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* † In the final analysis people are saved by the supernatural power of the resurrection. (CSB)

The life we are given in Baptism was earned by Christ. (TLSB)

**3:22** *gone into heaven.* See Ac 1:9–11. (CSB)

*at the right hand of God.* See Heb 1:3; 12:2. – Jesus can and will vigorously guard and uphold his small flock upon the earth during the many hardships they have to endure. (CSB)

Not a physical place but a description of supreme authority. “Now He has ascended to heaven, not merely as any other saint, but as the apostle testifies [Ephesians 4:10], above all heavens. He also truly fills all things, being present everywhere, not only as God, but also as man. He rules from sea to sea and to the ends of the earth, as the prophets predict [Psalm 8:1, 6; 93:1–4; Zechariah 9:10] and the apostles testify [Mark 16:20]. He did this everywhere with them and confirmed their word with signs. This did not happen in an earthly way. As Dr. Luther explains, this happened according to the way things are done at God’s right hand.... ‘God’s right hand’ is no set place in heaven, as the Sacramentarians assert without any ground in the Holy Scriptures. It is nothing other than God’s almighty power, which fills heaven and earth” (FC SD VIII 27–28). (TLSB)

Romans 8:31-34: “<sup>31</sup> What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.”

*angels, authorities and powers.* See Eph 1:21; 6:12. (CSB)

Christ is Lord over all things and all creatures. (TLSB)

*subjected to him* – He declared victory in hell. Now everything is subject to him. Stoeckhardt says, Believing Christians, despite the fact that they still have much to suffer, are much better off than their adversaries, the unbelievers, who just because of their unbelief have an evil conscience and who, as it were, step after step see the sword of God’s vengeance poised above them.

**3:8–22** In the midst of trials, we may be tempted to feel self-pity and despair. But God calls us to something greater. Jesus Christ is our Savior. He suffered and died for us. He rose to give us life. His power and authority is above all others. Our powerful Lord forgives us in our Baptism and gives us His life. He places us in the Church, where we may support and bless one another. And He blesses us by allowing us to tell others about the life we have in Him so that they, too, may share in His blessings. • “Almighty eternal God, according to Your righteous judgment You condemned the unbelieving world through the flood. In Your great mercy You preserved believing Noah and his family. You drowned hard-hearted Pharaoh with all his host in the Red Sea and led Your people Israel through the same on dry ground. By these events You prefigured this bath of Your Baptism. And through the baptism of Your dear Child, our Lord Jesus Christ, You consecrated and set apart the Jordan and all water as a salutary flood and rich and full washing away of sins. We pray through Christ for Your boundless mercy that You will graciously behold us and bless us with true faith in the Spirit. Then, by means of this saving flood, all that has been born in us from Adam and which we ourselves have added thereto may be drowned in us and engulfed. May we be separated from the number of the unbelieving, preserved dry and secure in the holy ark of Christendom, and serve Your name at all times fervent in spirit and joyful in hope. With all believers may we be made worthy to attain eternal life according to Your promise; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen” (TLWA, p 364). (TLSB)

## GOSPEL – John 14:15-21

*Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit*

**15 “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. 18 “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21 Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”**

**14:15** love ... keep. Love, like faith (Jas 2:14–26), cannot be separated from obedience. (CSB)

The fruit of faith is to obey. “Agape love” - the love of intelligent comprehension and devotion - is what is expressed here. Jesus urges his disciples to examine their love for Him and to keep on loving Him. Are they obeying Him? They will want to guard, cherish, and hold as a treasure His commands. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

Christ’s Word, including not merely ethical mandates but all His teaching (cf. vv. 21, 23-24). (TLSB)

Those who believe in Jesus will naturally love, and that love will show itself. Believer’s pay careful attention to Jesus’ commands and observe them. (PBC)

*tas entolas*, “commandments,” are not commandments in the sense of the Mosaic Law, but rather describe an office or allocation. When a person is converted to Christ (first loved by God), the result is that he loves (1 Jn 4:19). Such a condition is characterized by the concept of *tērēsete*, “keep,” which means watchful care, to cherish something that is considered a treasure and is always looked after and protected. We know from 14:23–24 that what the Christian cherishes cannot be reduced to a laundry list of dos and don’ts, but is rather the very Word of Christ. *agapate*, “love,” is not an emotional love, but a deliberate love. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

**14:16** *the Father . . . will give you.* The first of a series of important passages about the Holy Spirit (v. 26; 15:26; 16:7–15), the gift of the Father. (CSB)

*another.* Besides Jesus. (CSB)

*helper.* Or “Helper.” It is a legal term, but with a broader meaning than “counsel for the defense” (see 1Jn 2:1). It referred to any person who helped someone in trouble with the law. The Spirit will always stand by Christ’s people. (CSB)

A worthy translation of *paraklētos* is difficult. KJV’s “Comforter” conveys the tone of our pericope, but does not catch the sense of advocacy in the word. NIV’s “Counselor” works, especially in the sense of a lawyer, properly called a “counselor at law.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

“Another Counselor” suggests a division of labor in the Trinity. If the other counselor will be the Spirit, who is the first counselor? 1 Jn 2:1 uses *paraklētos* to refer to Jesus: “We have an *advocate* (RSV) with the Father.” The NIV of 1 Jn 2:1 spells out the legal connotation of *paraklētos*: “We have one who speaks to the Father in our defense.” This role of Christ is described in Rom 8:34; Mt 10:32; and in today’s Epistle (1 Pet 3:18): “Christ died . . . to bring you to God.” The classical author Xenophon used *prosgō*, “bring,” for admitting a person to a favorable audience with the king, and in Josephus it means “negotiate peace, reconcile” (*BAGD* p. 711, 1. b. *a.*; see also the noun *prosgōgē* in Rom 5:2). Thus the Son is our advocate before God the Father. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

The Holy Spirit advocates God to us, counseling us on what God’s grace in Christ means for the specifics of our life of love in response. The Spirit’s role is spelled out a few verses later, in 14:26: “The Holy Spirit . . . will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said.” Similarly, Jesus says the Spirit “will testify about me” (15:26) and “will guide you into all truth” (16:13). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

The disciples are already lovers of Jesus and so receive the promise of two great gifts. The Paraclete, called to the believers’ side to give aid, will come as well as the indwelling of the Father and Jesus. The Holy Trinity works together for one end. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to be with the disciples. The job of the Spirit is to lead them to the Father. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

However, such a life of love cannot be sustained without the Lord’s help! Christ’s great gift to his Church is the Holy Spirit. He is called *allon paraklēton*, “another Helper,” who continues to do what Christ did while on earth with his disciples; he will be with the Lord’s disciples forever. He is a helper in the sense of an advocate or defender. To call the Holy Spirit a mere “counselor” probably takes us too close to contemporary notions of psychological counseling. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

This is someone who appears on another’s behalf (“advocate”). (TLSB)

Jesus does not leave us alone to do His will, however. He told the disciples that He would ask the Father to give them another Counselor to be with them forever. The Greek word for “Counselor” literally means someone called to a person’s side to help, so “Helper” or “Counselor” are also appropriate translations. The term applies particularly to help in legal matters. (PBC)

**14:17** *the Spirit of truth.* In essence and in action the Spirit is characterized by truth. He brings people to the truth of God. All three persons of the Trinity are linked with truth. See also the Father (4:23–24; cf. Ps 31:5; Isa 65:16) and the Son (14:6). (CSB)

The Holy Spirit imparts the truth found in God and His Son, who speaks truthful words. (TLSB)

The Spirit will guide people to the truth, for He shall not speak of Himself. He is the bearer of divine and saving truth. His residence is not merely “with you,” but “in the midst of you.” Actions display the presence of the Spirit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

The Counselor is the “Spirit of truth” (also 15:26; 16:13). Dictionaries may define truth as the “genuine article.” In John “truth” is a rich and multi-faceted term. Twice it is linked to the grace brought by Christ (Jn 1:14, 17). Often it denotes the words spoken by Christ (Jn 8:40, 45, 46; 16:7; 18:37), which are words from the Father (14:10, 24; 17:8); the word of the Father, too, is “truth” (Jn 17:17). The “Spirit of truth” will lead the disciples into “all truth” by relaying God’s words (Jn 16:13). The “truth” sanctifies (Jn 17:17, 19) and frees (Jn 8:32), enabling the right worship of God “in Spirit and in truth” (Jn 4:23–24). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

Therefore, “Spirit of truth” means that the Spirit will work through the “truth,” that is, through the words from the Father spoken by Jesus. In this way the Spirit will bring to us the “truth” of God’s freeing grace in Christ, and lead us to the proper worship of God “in Spirit and in truth.” See also Eph 4:21, where the truth in Jesus Christ involves putting off the old self and putting on the new, and in Gal 2:14, responding to the hypocrisy of Peter in Antioch, Paul says Peter was not acting in line with the “truth of the Gospel,” which gives Christian freedom. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of *tēs alētheias*, “truth,” because he imparts true knowledge of God, which consists of the saving realities of Jesus Christ. He reveals and interprets the saving truth. While the world is incapable of receiving him, disciples of Christ receive him, since he remains *par*’, “with/at the side of” them, and will be *en*, “in” them, in their very hearts and souls. By his help, faith and love stay living. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, whose essence is the divine truth in its purity and its fullness. He is therefore the possessor of truth, He shall be able to lead us unto the truth and effect in us through His gracious activity that we shall know the truth. (Ylvisaker)

*The world.* Which takes no notice of the Spirit of God (cf. 1Co 2:14). But the Spirit was “with” Jesus’ disciples and would be “in” them. Some believe the latter relationship (indwelling) specifically anticipates the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Ac 2; cf. Ro 8:9). (CSB)

*he dwells in you* – This leads us to think of Jesus’ own presence with the disciples. Jesus was with them, and Jesus’ Spirit was with them. Now the Spirit of Jesus dwells in each believer’s heart. (PBC)

**14:18** *I will not leave you as orphans* – An orphan is the most helpless of all people, even more than a widow. – The disciples on Maundy Thursday were experiencing a sinking feeling in the pit of their stomachs, for everything that had believed in, hoped for, and counted on seemed to slipping away. Many times people experience that same sense of anguish, of things falling apart. A seemingly good marriage crumbles. A promising young life is snuffed out in an auto accident. A woman is suddenly widowed. Nothing holds together. One’s world and everything one held onto is collapsing. It’s like being lost in the supermarket and no one comes to claim us. It’s like being orphaned. (LifeLight)

After leaving the disciples, Jesus will come back to them. Jesus’ death means a return to a higher and richer union with the disciples. The disciples will have both Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. They will not be left as orphans. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

*I will come to you.* The words relate to the coming of the Spirit, but Jesus also speaks of his own appearances after the resurrection and at his second coming (see vv. 3, 19, 28; 16:22). (CSB)

After His resurrection they would see Him again. (TLSB)

He came as the baby Jesus. He came again in the Resurrection and Pentecost. He will come again on the Last Day. Where the Holy Spirit is, there is also Jesus. – This is the first way in which He will not leave them orphaned. A second way He comes to them is in the Lord’s Supper. (LifeLight)

Because of the Holy Trinity in unity, Jesus comes with the Holy Spirit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

**14:19** *the world ... but you.* The cross separated the world (who would not see Jesus thereafter) from the disciples (who would). (CSB)

*Because I live, you also will live.* The life of the Christian always depends on the life of Christ (cf. 1:4; 3:15). (CSB)

The disciples will behold Jesus by faith. The world does not behold Jesus for lack of faith. They will live in possession of the truth, regenerated and connected with God through Christ. They have and will continue to have eternal life even now. Life is theirs through Jesus’ incarnation and redemptive death. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

After Christ’s crucifixion, Jesus would be visible only through the spiritual eyes of faith. Death, however, cannot interrupt or affect his life. The present tense of *zaō*, “to live” (in application to Christ), would lead to the disciples’ future possession of the same. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

Christ’s resurrection is the basis for the new life that Christians begin to experience now and will receive fully on the Last Day. Cf. 5:24; 11:25-26. (TLSB)

Jesus would suffer for the guilt of our sins. But then He would rise, and sin and death would no longer rule us. So His life now counts for our life, just as His death counted for our death. And by Jesus’ Spirit we believe and live that life now. (PBC)

**14:20** *in that day you will realize.* The resurrection would radically change their thinking. (CSB)

Hebrew expression meaning “then.” (TLSB)

This is reference to Pentecost. On that day the disciples will know two things. Jesus Christ is God, and He is one with the Father. They are in Jesus. They are bonded to Jesus spiritually in the mystical union by His grace. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

“In that day” refers to Pentecost, leading to realization of the three *en* prepositions. The first describes the mystery of the Godhead, the perfect union among Father, Son, Holy Spirit; the second and third describe the mystical union between the Lord and the believer. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

*I am in my Father* – We are not God, but our relationship to the Father is as close as is the relationship between Father and Son. This is way the disciples could be so courageous beginning with Pentecost.

Christ dwells in His people so that they have intimate communion with Him and His Father. (TLSB)

**14:21** *has my commands* – To “have commands” is an unusual expression, emphasizing not just obeying but also internalizing, as with the indwelling in v 20. This reminds us of the main point of Mt 7:16–20: “You shall know them by their fruits.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

*loves me...keep mt word.* Love for Christ and keeping his commands cannot be separated (see note on v. 15). (CSB)

God loves and reveals Himself to those who love and believe Christ - a love shown by obedience to the Word. St. Bernard of Clairvaux: “Make yourself known then and seen beforehand, lest you be unknown for glory and known only for punishment. If Christ recognizes you in the (present) strife, He will recognize you in heaven” (SLSB, p. 191). (TLSB)

Where you have breath, you have life. Where you have fire, you have heat. Where you have love for Jesus, you have obedience to His commands. (PBC)

The third way He does not leave them orphaned is that in love they are connected to Him and live in obedience to Him. (LifeLight)

*my Father will love...my our home with him.* The love of the Father cannot be separated from that of the Son. – All relationships here on earth have to end at sometime. They often are tentative. But the presence and relationship of the Trinity with the child of God is constant and will never end. (CSB)

The disciples’ love for Jesus will meet with a blessed response. The one who loves Jesus guards and treasures everything that is Jesus’. Now the third-person singular is employed. WE love because He first loved us. The risen Lord will be a spiritual presence to those who believe. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

A man and his lawyer squared off in court against his opponent and two lawyers. "I want you to hire another attorney to help with my case," he told his sole counselor. "The other fellow has two." "That's not necessary," replied his attorney. "I can defend you by myself." "I still want a second person," the defendant insisted. "When one of the plaintiff's lawyers is talking, the other one is thinking. When you talk, nobody's thinking."

Researchers at Johns Hopkins University reported that 30 years ago, the greatest fears of grade school children were: 1) Animals, 2) Being in a dark room, 3) High places, 4) Strangers, 5) Loud noises. Today, kids are afraid of the following: 1) Divorce, 2) Nuclear war, 3) Cancer, 4) Pollution, 5) Being mugged.

*emphanisō*, “I will manifest,” is not about glory, fanaticism, or subjectivism, but practical manifestations such as being perpetually enabled to live a life of love toward Christ and our neighbor. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)