



5/10/2020

“A Home of Many Blessings”

Scripture: John 14:1-13 (NIV)

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Festival of the Christian Home / Mother’s Day

Theme: As we celebrate Mother’s Day and Festival of the Christian Home in these troubling and challenging times, it’s good to know that we can still affirm our faith in a loving God, who blesses our homes in many ways.

Although this just might be the most unusual Mother’s Day any of us have celebrated, we can still give thanks for the many mothers and other women who have demonstrated the loving protection, care and guidance that we hope for and from them.

I found it interesting when again this year I looked at the purpose provided in the United Methodist Program Calendar for Christian Home Month, which we will again observe from Mother’s Day through Father’s Day. It says, “To foster family worship in the home, in worship and in program planning.” Well, we are certainly fostering family worship in the home this year!
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Just as moms, and some dads, are busy using new ways to foster learning and other activities at home during this pandemic, I hope that you have been using the children’s activity pages from the online bulletin, Bible verses and stories, and other resources from our bulletin, online, or at home. And yes, while it may not be me leading them, I am sure you can do it – maybe even better! ☺

And as we worship at home, while we may be limited to immediate family members at this time, we can remember that Jesus also worshiped at home at times. As he promised, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst.” (Matthew 18:20). And even if you are alone in body, remember that the Holy Spirit is with you, and Jesus is in your midst as well. God is surely with you!

Even in these difficult times of loss in various ways for various people, we can still know and feel God’s blessings.

Our gospel reading from John 14:1-13, records the time the night before Jesus is taken for trial and eventual death on the cross. It is the evening of the Last Supper, after he has washed their feet, giving them an example of servant love and commanding them to love one another as he has loved them.



So, let us consider the words of Jesus, how we can be sure God is with us, and some of the many blessings that fill our home when God is there. Feel free to open your Bible and read along as I refer to the verses.

† **First, your home can be blessed with comfort.**

Jesus said, *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.”* (John 14:1)

God knows there are many hearts that are troubled in these days. With conditions as they are, and uncertainty at least for the near future, perhaps your heart is troubled. You, or someone you know, may have lost a loved one. Maybe you or a family member is struggling financially. Perhaps you are troubled over those in harm’s way caring for others. Remember to have faith! Trust in God, and trust in Jesus.

Hear his words to his disciples before he left them:

“My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.” (14:2-4)

The devotional reading from *The Upper Room* for today (5/10/20) was very appropriate for our current circumstances, or any time. Karen Young of Texas sights this passage and writes . . .

“Three days before Thanksgiving I was feeling the full effects of my chemotherapy treatments. My mother called, full of excitement that my husband and I were coming home for the holiday. I told her how awful I felt, but she told me she would prepare my room for me and give me the best medicine in the world — a mother’s love. Two days later my brother called to tell me that Mother had died in her sleep. When I arrived at my parents’ house, I found my room fully prepared just as my mother had promised. In the kitchen the ingredients were set out to make my favorite pies. My mother’s last acts on earth were finding ways to comfort me as I endured my battle with cancer.

“In today’s reading, as Jesus was about to face a horrible death, he reassured his followers that he would prepare a room for them. Our parents’ love for us can be a reminder of the loving sacrifice Jesus made for us. I know that Jesus has a room prepared for me, and I know that my mother is there waiting for me. As I celebrate Mother’s Day this year, I will worship my Savior and remember my mother and her great love for me. I will also remember that Jesus has prepared a room for us all.”

She prays, “O God, thank you for human families and the love we can share. Most of all, thank you for your son, Jesus Christ, who taught us how to love. Amen.”

In these troubling days, we can be blessed by God’s comfort!



† **Second, your home can be blessed with hope.**

It might at first be difficult for us to have hope in such a widespread condition as a pandemic. Like a world war or natural catastrophe that covers a large part of the globe or affects a vast population, we may even lose hope.

But God gives and restores hope! Hope for individuals, for nations, and for the whole world.

God restored the hope of salvation for all who would believe and follow Christ. By his death, resurrection and ascension into heaven, Jesus shows the power and glory of God in the fulfillment of God's plan for all humankind.

As John records (vs. 5-7) . . .

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."*

God can bless us with hope by showing us the way to new and eternal life. When we have seen Jesus with our hearts, we have seen God the Eternal. When we know Jesus with love and faith, we know our Eternal loving God and Heavenly Father.

Friends, you and I can have hope that God is still with us. And by the Holy Spirit, God is guiding the knowledge and skills of professionals, giving insight and wisdom in the ways of dealing with this crisis and searching for further resolution.

When we know and see God at work in our lives, we have hope for tomorrow as well as today. So, take heart! Let your home be blessed with hope in the living God -- blessed with hope in a brighter, better day ahead.

† **Third, your home can be blessed with peace.**

As much of a blessing that faith-filled hope can be, we know that faith does not always come easy to us. It is often clouded or distracted by our own preconceived notions or expectations, as it no doubt was for Philip, who said (vs. 8-11) . . .

"Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus answered: *"Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves."*



We, like Philip, may want to have all the answers and all the cures right now. We may want to “see” results of everything going back to “normal”, meaning the way that it was for us several months ago. But the reality may be quite different than that. The good news is that we can still have peace, regardless of our understanding or circumstances, because God is still with us!

Jesus repeatedly came into homes and other places saying, “*Peace be with you,*” If invited, he will also come into your home with words of peace.

† **And Fourth, your home can be blessed with promise.**

Before leaving his disciples, Jesus promised a few things. Along with his resurrection, his ascension, and his eventual return, he promised the coming of the Holy Spirit – to be with them and within them.

And by the Holy Spirit they would do wonderful things. Just as Jesus did marvelous works in the sight of those around him long ago, he promised they would do them also, even greater. Some of them had already demonstrated the power and works of the Holy Spirit when Jesus had sent them out into the country and villages before him (Luke 10). In the days to come, even greater things would be accomplished.

We will hear again of some of those things in the season following Pentecost. Yet too, Jesus is still working miracles today. Sometimes they are unexplainable miracles of healing. More often, they are wonderful acts of kindness, love, and compassion. And, I believe, sometimes they are wonderful workings of new understanding and knowledge gained in such difficult times as these.

As Jesus said to his disciples that night (vs. 12-13) . . .

“Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”

So, friends, pray. Pray that God will lead us all with loving wisdom, courage, and strength. Pray that God will give you or strengthen your faith in his Son, Jesus. Pray for the health, financial security, or other needs you may have. And trust in the blessing of God’s promise.

And as you celebrate Mother’s Day or observe Festival of the Christian Home, remember and give thanks for your many blessings. Especially remember and give thanks for the comfort, hope, peace, and promise given you by Jesus Christ.

To the glory of God Eternal, in Jesus’ name! Amen.