

May 14, 2017
Fifth Sunday of Easter

“No Doubt”

John 14:1-14

It's graduation time. For high school and college seniors it's exciting and celebratory...and pretty terrifying too. Some graduates might have pretty clear goals and others don't have a clue what's going to happen next, but they all have a large amount of uncertainty about how things are going to play out in life. If you ask them where they will be in life thirty years from now they might paint you the desired picture, but there is no certainty.

This should not be the case with the people of God considering their eternal future. And I guess if you want to find the law in this sermon to drive you to your knees in repentance, this is where you'll find it. God's people doubt their salvation. In a way sin boils down to us looking at ourselves first, and we do that even with our salvation. We doubt, because we think we're not good enough. We doubt because we know we're not holy enough. We doubt because we want to be in control, and we know that if we are we've messed things up exponentially.

Don't doubt. It's not you. Jesus says, *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life.”* He didn't mention you. He does say, *“No one comes to the Father except through me.”* But that's not you, because you're here for Jesus. You're His disciples, like these disciples He is speaking to the night of the Lord's Supper. And what He says is all good news that gives us hope. And not just hope that kind of says “what if...” Jesus gives certain hope; hope we know is founded in the man who has gone to death ahead of us and for us, and risen in victory over it that we will have resurrection...for sure.

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”

Jesus says this the night before He goes to prepare our place by means of His innocent suffering and death to pay for our sins. He did that. Done deal. And He rose again, came back to His disciples that they would be witnesses for us that the deal was done!

Now ultimately, of course, when Jesus says *“I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also,”* He is talking about the Last Day—that day when He returns to judge the living and the dead, when all bodies are raised and united with their eternal souls and those who are His disciples dwell with Him in paradise forever. This is our certain hope.

But this is not all that He has left us in the meantime. The Last Day is not the only time He comes back to us. He also promised His disciples, *“I will be with you always, to the end of the age.”*

Certain hope—He gives it, you got it. He told His disciples, *“Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”* I just pronounced this forgiveness by Christ's authority a little while ago. Jesus comes again to you in His Word, not mine, that where He is you may be also; certain hope.

Certain hope—*“This is my body...this is my blood of the covenant shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.”* Jesus comes again to you in His body and blood, that where He is you may be also; certain hope.

Certain hope—we just had a baptism, the baptism commanded by Jesus Christ of which Peter preached, “*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins,*” of which Paul says, “*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ,*” and “*...all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death.*” Jesus comes again to you daily in your Holy Baptism, that where He is you may be also; certain hope.

Look at these ways Christ promises the deliverance of His forgiveness, life and salvation. Does the Word, the Supper, the washing of Holy Baptism, does any of it depend on you? Is each not all simple promise and gift of God? Yes! Certain hope.

Jesus Christ proclaimed very simply, “*Repent and believe the good news.*” The good news is simply that Christ has come, still comes and will come again, that where He is you may be also. It’s all gift and it’s all Him. Don’t doubt.

This is a short and simple sermon, because that’s the short and simple message. If I keep talking I’ll probably just make things more complicated than they are. So here is the simple truth: It’s not you. Jesus is the way and the truth and the life. Jesus comes to you in His Word, in His baptism of you, in His body and blood. All of it is Him, completely Him, by His cross and empty tomb, saving your body and your soul, that on the Last Day your body and soul will dwell with Him forever.

He did death and resurrection Himself on Calvary. He comes and does death to sin and life to Him on you on a regular basis in His Word, Baptism and Supper that where He is you shall be also! He’s God. He promises it. He did, does and will do it. Certain hope. Don’t doubt.

Amen.