

Learning to live the “with God” life: Part 2

John 14:1-3, 10-11

Fifth Sunday of Eastertide – May 2, 2021

Tom Mount – Holy Trinity Chico

Scripture: Psalm 27:4, 8 NIV

**“One thing I ask from Yahweh,
this only do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of Yahweh
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of Yahweh
and to meditate in his temple.**

**“When you said to me, ‘Seek my face!’
My heart said to you, ‘Your face, Yahweh, I will seek!’”**

Introduction

1. Psalm 27:4. “Dwell in his house”. The Heb. word for “dwell” is *yashab*: inhabit, remain, abide, to make as one’s abode. Root meaning is “sit”.
2. The purpose of dwelling in Yahweh’s house: “To gaze upon the beauty of Yahweh and to meditate in his temple.”
3. God wants us to dwell in his house continuously! Verse 8: “Seek my face!”, i.e., “Get to know me, spend time with me, let’s be together.” He wants us to get in on the joy, peace, rich enjoyment of divine fellowship.
4. Practically speaking, it means that we learn increasingly to live in a more or less constant awareness of his presence and companionship from the time we wake up to the time we go to bed.
5. God wants to partner with us in every detail of our lives. Wants us to be conscious of his companionship continually through all our life experiences. He created us for this very reason. In Christ, he ritually qualified us to be in continuous relationship with him. In the Holy Spirit, he gave us the means of knowing his heart and enjoying his presence 24/7.

And the most amazing thing is that God takes pleasure in his times with us: our company brings his joy and delight.

Jesus' teaching on being "with God" in John 14

First, Jesus describes how his people will be "with him" in the life to come: vv.1-3a

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ² 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? ³ 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.'

- We will be physically with him in the "Father's house", a physical house or temple where we live face-to-face with him in the coming age during which heaven and earth are merged.
- Living in the Father's house with the Father and Son in the Spirit is what we have to look forward to in the coming life! We now have no fear of death.

Second, Jesus describes how his people will be "with him" in the present life after Pentecost and before his Return: vv. 10b-11a, 16-17, 23

- We are with him in "our house" (our body, his temple): a spiritual house where we can live face-to-face fellowship with God each day.
- We are "with" God in the same way that Jesus and the Father were "with" each other during Jesus' time on earth (Jn 14:10b-11a).

"...it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me."

- We are "with" God through God's Spirit, whom he has given us to be one with himself (cf. 1 Cor 6:17; Jn 14:15-17). The Spirit is the *vinculum caritatis* or "bond of love" between the Father and the Son.

" ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper (*parakletos* – "one who comes alongside to aid") to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you."

- We are “with” each member of the blessed holy Trinity by means of the Holy Spirit living in us (Jn 14:23).

“Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

- That’s the biblical/theological basis for our oneness/fellowship with him. Because it is sourced in the very being of God, it cannot be taken away.

How to live more consciously and consistently in God’s presence

1. Slow your pace

- COVID has given us the opportunity to re-think our priorities. Western 21st century life tends to move far too fast. Dallas Willard advised: “Ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.”
- Hurry pulls us away from what is supremely important and make us slaves to the tyranny of the urgent (cf. Lk 10:38-42).
- Live life at the speed of relationship. Build “pauses” into your day to be “with God” intentionally; punctuate your day with mini-retreats. Program your watch. Use bathroom breaks. Step outside your office into nature. Breathe; fellowship.
- Try the ancient “Jesus prayer” (breathe in and out): “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me”.

2. Learn to talk to Abba and Jesus about everything

- Don’t think of prayer as momentary rituals but as an ongoing conversation. “Prattle” to the Lord throughout each day.
- Share with him your thoughts, feelings, fears, hopes, dreams, concerns. Ask for his wisdom, direction, love, strength, holiness and whatever other resources you need in each moment. Talk about the good and the bad.
- Learn to “pray your experiences”, bringing the whole of who you are to him as an offering of love.

3. Practice being silent with the Lord to simply “be” with Him

- Remember that the goal is to companion the Lord continuously (from Latin *panis* – bread and *com* – together; “to break bread together”). Being silent “with him” is a form of prayer.
- Isaiah 30:15 “In returning and rest is your salvation; in quietness and trust is your strength.”
- Take a walk in nature to take in the sights and sounds. Kneel in a dark room/closet with a candle and a picture or icon of Jesus. Enjoy a cup of coffee with him.

Eastertide exercise for this week

- Continue meeting with the Lord for intentional face-to-face fellowship each morning as we discussed last Sunday. Begin incorporating little “pauses” during your workdays to “be” with the Lord and talk with him about whatever is going on. Check in with him before going to bed. Keep a running conversation with the Father, Son and Spirit throughout the day.

Resources

- *Beginning to Pray*, Anthony Bloom (Paulist Press: 1970)
- *Praying your Experiences*, Joseph Schmidt (The Word Among Us Press: 2008)