

The Rev. Jay Lawlor “Spirit of Truth” Sermon for 6th Sunday of Easter, May 21, 2017

The Rev. Jay Lawlor served as visiting priest on May 21, 2017 at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Franklin, IN

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, US, February 21, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Rev. Jay Lawlor](#) joined the people of Saint Thomas Episcopal Church in Franklin, Indiana for the Sixth Sunday of Easter on May 21, 2017. The Rev. Lawlor preached a [sermon](#) titled "Spirit of Truth" on the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians. Following is a transcript of The Rev. Jay Lawlor's sermon.

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So how can you show love this week? How can you be present, truly present, with someone this week? Knowing we never do this alone. God has given us the Spirit of Truth, an Advocate in the Holy Spirit.”

The Rev. Jay Lawlor

Jesus said to his disciples: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever.” (Jn 14:15a) This week we have a continuation of Jesus’s “Farewell Discourse.” Remember from last week Jesus gave the new commandment that his disciples should love one another.

Love can be hard . . . even for those who practice at it every day. Love for the disciples was about to get a whole lot harder as they experience Jesus’s crucifixion. But Jesus gives the disciples a promise along with the commandment to love one another. He promises that they will not be left alone. Jesus offers a foreshadow that Pentecost is coming – that day when Jesus’s disciples will receive the the Holy Spirit following Jesus’s Ascension.

Jesus says to the disciples he will ask the Father “and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth.” In other words, the Spirit is the very essence of God. As real the presence of God as Jesus was. The Advocate, the Spirit of Truth, is alive in Christ after his crucifixion. As Peter reminds us: He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.

And that same Spirit of Truth, the Advocate, is alive in each and every one of us as much as it was for Jesus! The real presence of God which came to us in our baptisms. The real presence of God every time we gather around the Eucharistic table where common bread and wine become holy. The Spirit of Truth, the Advocate, inviting and encouraging us to see not just the physical, outward and visible reality, but also the inward and graces – inward and spiritual realities of God’s loving, forgiving, liberating, and life-giving presence. The story of the Word made flesh in Jesus, of the very real presence of God in our midst, was not just something of the past. It is a living reality of our present.

The Advocate, the Spirit of Truth, points us toward Jesus’s commandment to love. Not to earn God’s love toward us – God already loves us. God already loves everyone: even those with whom we struggle to love, those who seem unlovable, even our enemies. God’s love is unearned, sometimes undeserved, but always given freely by a loving, forgiving, liberating God.

Paul knew this as he spoke before the Athenians. He spoke to them of the God he knew. Of The God

who “[...] indeed he is not far from each one of us. For ‘In him we live and move and have our being.’”

Remember Jesus told his disciples that loving others is not to earn God’s love towards us but, rather, to show we love Jesus: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” In showing we love others, we reveal of love for Jesus – our love for God. And that love leads us to new life. Not a perfect life. Not a life without troubles, or messiness, or pain, but a life lived always in the presence of God where God is with us every step of the way. Peter was very clear about this when he said: And baptism,[...] 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 [...].”

So the Advocate, the Spirit of Truth, offers the reality of God’s constant presence with us. Jesus’s promise that God never, ever, leaves us. Even when we push God away – or ignore God – God remains to love us, guide us, and deliver us.

As real as God the Father sent Jesus, so to do we receive the Spirit of Truth. It shows us God loves us and will not let us go. In turn, Jesus wants us to show our love for him by loving others when he said: “Those who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me.”

It is about doing something for someone else with love in our hearts. And that something else may even be the gift of presence – offering the ministry of presence.

So how can you show love this week? How can you be present, truly present, with someone this week? Knowing we never do this alone . . . God has given us the Spirit of Truth, an Advocate in the Holy Spirit. And when we love, when we are present, we are revealing the love of God in Jesus. Amen.

This is a reprint of the sermon from The Rev. Jay Lawlor's website at <https://www.therevjaylawlor.com/spirit-of-truth/>

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