

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Seventh Sunday of Easter — May 12, 2024

*“But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world,
that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.”*

- John 17:13 -

The joy of Christ is not just a future promise, it is a present reality. Those who believe in the Son of God have eternal life. It is not the promise of a place we will go one day; it is the promise of the life we live for today. We are stuck between the promise and the reality, yet even here we have the life of joy He has promised. Eternal life is for those who dwell in the word of God.

We are made holy by God’s Word. Our relationship with Christ makes us different. We are not taken out of the world but sent into the world. We must be careful that we do not become like the world; everything we do is dependent on our identity In Christ. It isn’t easy. The world hated Jesus and they will hate us, but we need not live in fear or worry. Jesus’ prayers are heard and answered and He has prayed for us. Through His prayers, Jesus assured the disciples that they were to be part of something much bigger than themselves. We have been assured, along with the disciples, that God will never abandon us.

It might not seem like God will never leave us, especially in times when we feel particularly alone. On Ascension Day Jesus returned to His Father in heaven, leaving behind the world in which He had lived for thirty or so years. He left behind the people He loved, called into service, and taught about the Kingdom. He left them with a promise, but He left them alone and they did not receive the Holy Spirit until Pentecost. For those ten days, the disciples were stuck between the ministry they did with Jesus and the ministry they would do in His name. They may have felt abandoned, alone, and afraid, wondering to themselves how could they do the work without Him?

This Sunday we experience that very brief moment of abandonment with the disciples. Though we know that the promise has been fulfilled, that the Holy Spirit is with us, we also know fear, worry, and doubt when it seems like God has abandoned us. This is when the words of Jesus are such a comfort to us; by His Word we know that we are not alone. We have the life He promised, the life of joy with Him here and now and forevermore.