5-1-16 Table Talk John 14

As we work our way through this Easter Season, even though we bask in the light of the resurrection and struggle to figure out just what that means – everything is flavored by what happened in the days leading up to the resurrection. That is where our reading for today comes from – the days right before the crucifixion and resurrection. We have the privilege of listening in on some very important private time Jesus had with his disciples. Rather than a family gathered around a bed as someone nears the end of their life which is what many of us have experienced (and if you haven't I imagine you will sooner than later) Jesus has those closest to him in someone else's home.

Jesus has washed his disciples feet – they had a meal together (in Jerusalem mind you for Jesus' days are very short) – and it is time for after supper conversation and Jesus has some things to say. You heard them a few minutes ago. A few about love and what love looks like and where Jesus' words come from. A few more about the coming of a Companion – a Comforter – an Advocate – the Holy Spirit who will make sure we are not alone and give us direction. And the last words were about PEACE.

Now peace is word with a million meanings. To this rattled community of disciples who are quaking in their boots, even through they don't really understand what is coming, Jesus speaks words of peace and tells them not to be troubled or afraid. Rather Jesus tells them – you should be happy that I am going!

Enough about the words, lets back up and see what is happening here on a macro level. Jesus is about to die – and die a terrible death. He has his closest friends with

him and **what is Jesus doing?** I mean it – **what is Jesus doing as he is about to die?** With the end of his life very near, Jesus is laser focused on others and their well being. Think back to those privileged times when you have been present as someone's life was ending you may have experienced a very holy and Jesus like moment without even knowing it.

The world Jesus lived in was overflowing with anxiety – and fear – and there was an abundance of troubled hearts. We live in the very same world with the very same struggles as the world Jesus lived in. You don't have to look far or listen long to hear the anxiety and fears of people and those who are fueled on and work their magic out of those places. And troubled hearts – they are a dime a dozen and plenty to spare.

The disciples had Jesus – in the flesh with them. **What do we have?** We have his words and we have his Word. His words are why we read and study scripture. Most of us have experienced times when we are reminded the hard way – if we haven't studied a particular subject it is very difficult to excel or even get by when crunch time comes – maybe it was a test or an interview or a new task at work. The same holds true with the scriptures – if we don't study them it's really hard to know them and Jesus says knowing them is key!

We who have his Word – in the absence of Jesus present in the flesh, we have a rather critical role to play in the world and in bringing the Kingdom of God more fully into the world. We who have his Word are the expressions of God's Love and of a Peace different than the world knows or has. For many, peace is the absence of war –

the lack of open hostilities – and no one dying at the hands of another. Jesus has a very different definition of Peace. The Peace Jesus brought and the Peace we are called to share, is one where people live without fear – where anxiety about safety or food or shelter is no more – where tolerance is not the ultimate virtue, but love is.

In the absence of Jesus present in the flesh this is the world you and I are called to help fashion and the vision to drive our works. Amen.