

Sunday Text Study Notes

Sunday, May 9, 2021
Sixth Sunday of Easter, Year B

Introduction

This Sunday's image of the life the risen Christ shares with us is the image of friendship. We are called to serve others as Jesus came to serve; but for John's gospel, the image of servanthood is too hierarchical, too distant, to capture the essence of life with Christ. Friendship captures the love, the joy, the deep mutuality of the relationship into which Christ invites us. The Greeks believed that true friends are willing to die for each other. This is the mutual love of Christian community commanded by Christ and enabled by the Spirit.

Prayer of the Day

O God, you have prepared for those who love you joys beyond understanding. Pour into our hearts such love for you that, loving you above all things, we may obtain your promises, which exceed all we can desire; through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Readings and Psalm

Acts 10:44-48

The Spirit poured out on the Gentiles

Psalm 98

Shout with joy to the Lord, all you lands. (Ps. 98:4)

1 John 5:1-6

The victory of faith

John 15:9-17

Christ the friend and lover

First Reading: Acts 8:26-40

While Peter shares the good news of Jesus with a Gentile soldier and his family, the Holy Spirit comes upon them. Recognizing that the Spirit works inclusively in the lives of both Jews and Gentiles, Peter commands that these Gentiles also be baptized in the name of Jesus

Christ.

44While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. 45The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, 46for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, 47“Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” 48So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

Psalm: Psalm 98

Shout with joy to the Lord, all you lands. (Ps. 98:4)

1Sing a new song to the Lord, who has done | marvelous things,
whose right hand and holy arm have | won the victory.

**2O Lord, you have made | known your victory,
you have revealed your righteousness in the sight | of the nations.**

3You remember your steadfast love and faithfulness to the | house of Israel;
all the ends of the earth have seen the victory | of our God.

**4Shout with joy to the Lord, | all you lands;
lift up your voice, re- | joice, and sing. R**

5Sing to the Lord| with the harp,
with the harp and the | voice of song.

**6With trumpets and the sound | of the horn
shout with joy before the | king, the Lord.**

7Let the sea roar, and | all that fills it,
the world and those who | dwell therein.

**8Let the rivers | clap their hands,
and let the hills ring out with joy before the Lord, who comes to | judge the
earth.**

9The Lord will judge the | world with righteousness
and the peo- | ples with equity. **R**

Second Reading: 1 John 5:1-6

God's children believe that Jesus is the Messiah and love God by keeping God's commandments. Thus the world is conquered not through military might but through love and faith.

1Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. 2By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. 3For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, 4for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. 5Who is it that

conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

6This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth.

Gospel: John 15:9-17

On the night of his arrest, Jesus delivers a final testimony to his disciples to help them in the days ahead. Here, he repeats the most important of all his commands, that they love one another.

[Jesus said:] 9“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. 10If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. 11I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

12“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. 14You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. 16You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. 17I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.”