

Saint Matthew's/San Mateo Episcopal Church

Easter 5, May 10, 2020

READINGS:

Acts 7:55-60

Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16

I Peter 2:2-10

John 14:1-14

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Who wants to be PERFECT and STEADFAST today?

How about tomorrow?

CAN we?

In our collect today we pray: "Almighty God...grant us so PERFECTLY to know your son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life, that we may STEADFASTLY follow his steps in the way that leads to eternal life..."

To know perfectly, and to follow steadfastly. These are not things that come in a quick moment, at least not for most of us. Knowing Jesus perfectly. Following him steadfastly. For most of us, these things take practice. They take a lifetime!

So, we practice, growing into our relationships with Jesus over time.

Christians in all times and places, throughout history, have always practiced, just like us!

Our reading from I Peter today has encouraging words for some new followers of Jesus in the early church. Christians need nourishment, beginning with baby food, Peter says, to "grow into salvation." In coming to Jesus, they become "living stones" to be built into a spiritual house. "Once", Peter says, "you were not a people, but now you are God's people".

Christians "grow into" their salvation over time. They are built into a spiritual house over time. They become a royal priesthood, a holy nation. Through time and practice and growth, those new Christians in Peter's day became strong messengers of the Good News - a people chosen for that purpose and that task! I think we do the same thing as we practice following Jesus, here and now!

In today's reading from John's Gospel, the disciples are plainly still in their "learning curve", still growing into knowledge of who Jesus is. And, Jesus is plainly still in his "patient teacher" mode, trying to help them really see him.

The disciples are groping around for *a* path, *a* truth, *a* life, and all the time *the* path, *the* truth, and *the* life is standing there looking into their eyes and they can't SEE him! Jesus sticks with it, though. He just tries again.

How do you know the way? Well, Thomas, I'M IT!

How do you see the Father? Well, Philip, SEE ME, SEE HIM!

Listen, my Father's house has plenty of rooms. I will prepare a place for each of you there. No, the attic won't have to be pushed up and the upstairs remodeled when you get there! You are EXPECTED!

You will be part of my Father's kingdom. You will also do the works that I do, and even bigger ones!

A place for each one!

Each one will do the works that Jesus does!

It was okay with Jesus if the disciples didn't "get it" right away.

I think it is STILL just fine with him if we don't "get it" perfectly on the first try, or even the seventieth try. After all, our walk with him IS lifelong. Jesus sticks with it, even when we stumble. He just tries again!

So in our collect for today, we're praying for what we want: to know Christ perfectly as our way, our truth, our life; and to steadfastly follow him!

My dictionary says that "steadfast" means resolutely or dutifully firm and unwavering. Loyal. Committed. Devoted. A steadfast person calmly holds firm, and follows through with determination.

Our psalm today reminds us that we are a people redeemed by God who IS truth, and that our times (and our lives) are in His hand!

So, who wants to take a shot at being PERFECT and STEADFAST today?

Who wants to try again tomorrow?

How about the day after?

We CAN do it, you know!

Why?

Because God is on OUR side!

Because Jesus has asked US to join up: to follow him with our whole selves!

Amen.