

**Obedience...Not What You might Expect**  
**Sixth Sunday of Easter – John 14:23-29**

**“Jesus said to his disciples: ‘Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him.’”**

This statement expresses the expectation that Jesus has for those who call themselves his disciples. We are to be obedient unto his Word, keeping his commandments, and living out God’s Word in our lives.

In our current American culture, the word obedience does not fit well with our notions of rugged individualism and personal autonomy. It implies a submission, a dominance of one over the other. Taken from the Christian, especially Catholic tradition, obedience is a very different word than you might expect.

The word obedience comes from the word *ob-audire* which means “to hear”. It presupposes a willingness to hear the other. Jesus is saying to us this week that obedience to God’s Word is a cornerstone of discipleship which is first and foremost grounded in love. If we love (the other) we are then obedient (open to hear) God’s will through his son Jesus Christ.

Jesus is reminding us today that this task of obedience to his Word is not possible for mere mortals. Jesus reassures the apostles (and us) that **“The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.”**

Jesus promises the coming of this Holy Spirit which will provide peace. Jesus challenges his followers **“Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.”** Just as the darkness of Jesus’ coming crucifixion is upon the disciples in this week’s gospel, darkness may cast its shadow upon our lives as well. Yet, Jesus’ light, love and peace will shine through any evil (including death) through the grace and working of the Holy Spirit.

On our part we are called to obedience in the truth of Jesus’ love. We are called to hear God in our lives and to respond in love to God’s will. In this case, the word obedience is understood not as a word of submission, duty or compliance, but rather, as a word that calls us to listen with the “ear of our heart” to God’s Word, assimilating it into the very fabric of our lives.

Happy Easter,

  
Sue Schettler, PLC