

III EASTER 2014
SERMON - CHRIST CHURCH PARISH
FATHER CRAIG LOONEY
1 ST PETER 2.11 ST. JOHN 16.16

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Saying good-bye to our friends and family we love is a hard thing to do and can make us sad...especially when we know it might be a very long time before we see them again...especially when we know we might not ever see them again.

On the night before he died...at the Last Supper...Jesus said good-bye to his disciples. Saint John records how sad the disciples were to hear Jesus was going away. Every Sunday from now until Pentecost, we will read parts of Jesus' good-bye speech...and we will learn why we don't have to be sad that Jesus went away.

The disciples did not understand what Jesus meant when he told them he was going away for a little while and during the time he was away they wouldn't see him. They did not understand him when he told them he would return, but only for a little while, and then be gone again. They asked each other what all this talk about going away and coming back really meant.

Jesus told them a story that his leaving was going to be like a mother giving birth...at first it would be painful and hard to bear...but then things would get better...and all the pain would be forgotten...because her baby had been born. They did not understand any of what Jesus was saying...and they wouldn't until Pentecost.

Jesus told his disciples earlier the Holy Spirit was coming and he would make everything clear to them. The Holy Spirit would open their eyes...and ours...to the truth about what he had been telling them all along. They would understand Jesus wasn't giving them a lesson in childbirth. They would understand Jesus was talking about New Life available to everyone through his Passion, Death and Resurrection.

The disciples were sad when Jesus was crucified and they thought they would never see their friend again. They were happy when he rose from the dead on Easter morning. He walked with them and talked with them and ate with them. He talked with them about how he was going to leave again...and this time it was for their own good he was going away. Jesus was getting them ready just as we are getting ourselves ready for his final departure on the Ascension Day...and a time of waiting.

All of us spend some amount of time in our daily lives waiting for something...a bus...a train...an airplane. Or we spend time waiting to meet someone for lunch, or to take them somewhere such as a doctor's office. It has often been said the only two things certain about life are death and taxes. We might want to add to that...waiting. Waiting can make us anxious. Waiting can make

us sad. In some cases, waiting can even make us happy.

The disciples were confused and frustrated when Jesus told them in a little while they would not see him...and then again in a little while they would see him...and then again in a little while they wouldn't see him. We are now in our own "little while" time of waiting for Jesus to come back and take us to heaven and we will see him and our friends and loved ones again...and there will be no more "little while" time of waiting.

We don't know when the end of time will take place. None of us can predict when Jesus will return and we waste our time trying to figure out the exact time and minute and second of his return. What we can do is make the best use of this time of waiting by paying attention to what Saint Peter tells us we should be doing...God's will...by loving each other and by doing good works...and avoiding those things that keep us from loving each other and doing good works.

Jesus told the disciples they would at first be sad when he went away, because they would think he would be gone forever. But he also told them their sadness would quickly be turned into joy and gladness beyond their wildest imaginations. And that joy and gladness would never be taken away from them.

We should not be sad because Jesus hasn't yet returned. Far from it! We are glad because he went back to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to guide us and strengthen our Faith as we wait in joyful expectation for his return. Our little while of waiting should be a dynamic and active time of spreading the Good News about Jesus and the joy that comes from knowing him and his promise of eternal life...and Jesus always keeps his promises.

Jesus said good-bye...but only for a little while. We will see him again, just as he promises we will. And so our hearts are filled with joy and gladness...the kind of joy and gladness no one can ever take away from us.

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