

**While Jesus Prepared to Return to His Home with the Father, He Promised Nevertheless to Make His Home with Us Now and to Provide Us with a Future Heavenly Home, Too**

When our "love is demonstrated through obedience," the Rev. Dr. Brook Thelander said in his sermon Sunday, "something amazing happens. Jesus says, 'My Father will love those who obey, and we will come to them and live with them.' (John 14:23) Other translations render Jesus' words, 'We will make our home with them.'

"The word 'home' here is the same word that appears at the beginning of this chapter in John's Gospel," Pastor Thelander said, "where Jesus encourages his disciples by saying, 'Let not your hearts be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many 'rooms' or 'dwelling places'.'" (John 14:1-2)



"No. 38 Scenes from the Life of Christ: 22. Ascension", by Giotto (di Bondone) (1267-1337), *Cappella Scrovegni* (Arena Chapel), Padua. © Web Gallery of Art. This work, painted 1304-06, includes the two white-robed men who are mentioned in this Sunday's New Testament reading.

"If we connect these two uses of the word 'home,' we see that Jesus promises his disciples a 'room' or dwelling place with God *in the future*. But he promises something else. He also promises them that the Father and he will come and make their 'home' with the disciples *here and now, in the present*.

"Now, let's try to wrap our minds around the magnitude of these promises. The idea of us going to dwell with God at some point in the future sets our hearts ablaze. It makes us want to leap with joy, to shout with praise (or at least it ought to).

"If you have trouble with this, pay attention to passages like what we have today from the Revelation. Allow your mind to wander a little, to stray from the things of earth and to wander off to the things of heaven.

"Picture a world where there is no crime, no disease, no poverty, no abuse, and no brokenness. Picture a world where little children do not go to bed hungry at night. A world where hospitals are forced out of business. A world where shelters for battered women are a thing of the past. Picture a world where violence and bloodshed have given way to *shalom*, the peace of God. Picture a world where the crooked has been made straight, the valleys have been exalted, and the hills have been brought low. Picture it, for one day we shall go to dwell with God.

"But in the meantime, we still live now, in the present. Imagining a nice future is great, but is there anything that can help us as we live right now? . . . How will Jesus come to dwell with us, especially when he is preparing (p.2→)

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Sundays

10:00 a.m.: Word & Table service

11:30 a.m.: Refreshments, conversation

11:45 a.m.: Post-service discussion.

6:00 p.m.: (First Sundays only) Evensong, tea, refreshments.

Thursdays: 5:30 p.m.: Evening Prayers. 6:00 p.m.: Singing & discussing hymns.

**Readings, 5/20:** Acts 1:1-11; Ps. 110:1-5; Eph. 1:15-23; Luke 24:49-53.

**5/27:** Acts 2:1-11; Ps. 104:25-37; 1 Cor. 12:4-13; John 20:19-23.

**Prayer Emphases:** China; Church of God in Christ; Living Water Christian Fellowship, Nampa, and the Rev. David Blackwell; St. Vincent de Paul (Boise); parishioners on Chestnut Drive.

**For the poor:** ground beef, chicken, bacon, fresh produce, canned fruits and vegetables, dairy products, cooking oil, pancake mix, syrup, spices, diapers, baby wipes, toilet paper, personal care items (soap, shampoo, conditioner, razors, shaving cream).

**(Sermon, cont'd.)** to ascend to the Father? . . . Through the Counselor, the Comforter, the Teacher, the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus will send to us." We shall one day "go to dwell with God," but "in the meantime, we're still *here*, and it's hard to live today on promises for tomorrow. But Jesus . . . won't leave us alone. . . . While we're waiting and preparing to go and dwell with God, God wants to come and dwell with us—right here, right now. God has made a way for Jesus to be present with us, even in his *absence*."

**Read the full text of each Sunday's sermon on Epworth's Website.**

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