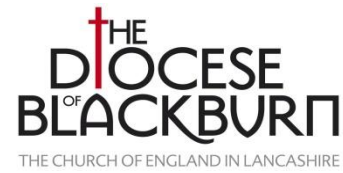


WEEKLY SERMON

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Another Jesus

In this Sunday's gospel reading we are given access to a unique conversation: the farewell conversation between Jesus and his disciples, as recorded in John 14.

Jesus is about to face his death. And he speaks to reassure his disciples who are still struggling to understand all that is happening.

And Jesus says, 'I will not leave you as orphans' (v18). They will not be abandoned and left without a guardian.

Positively, he assures them, 'I will come to you'. Jesus will come to them after his resurrection. He will come again at the end of the age to take us to be with him. But he will also come in the person of the Holy Spirit who comes to live in his disciples as 'another' Jesus.

Jesus describes the Spirit as 'another advocate' or 'counsellor'. The word is difficult to translate exactly – but the point is that the Holy Spirit will be 'another Jesus', one who is distinct from Jesus and at the same time one who is the same kind.

There is a new day coming for the disciples when the Spirit who has been with them will from now on be in them (v17).

He wants us to know that even when he is no longer physically present, the Holy Spirit is all we need to be fruitful and useful and godly in the world.

That's what Jesus is speaking about in verse 21:

"Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him".

Jesus is not teaching that we can only know his love if we love him. If he were, we could never feel secure in God's love. Our love at the best is inconsistent – we fail, we sin.

It's not our obedience that makes God love us. But our obedience is the mark of our love for him, and our obedience is what deepens our appreciation and enjoyment of God's love in Christ.

As we prepare to celebrate the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, may we know more of the Spirit's presence and fullness in our lives and our churches.

Rev Canon Andrew Raynes, Vicar of Blackburn Christ Church

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES