

When God Makes a Home (John 14: 23-29)

What do you do when the ground beneath you shakes? When everything you've counted on seems to be slipping away? When the future you imagined suddenly looks impossible? Those aren't idle questions in a world like ours right now.

And that's exactly where Jesus' disciples found ***themselves*** on that Thursday night in an upper room in Jerusalem. Everything was falling apart. Their teacher—the one they'd left everything to follow, the one in whom they'd invested their hopes for Israel's restoration—was telling them he was heading out. Not just leaving the room, but leaving them ***entirely***. Going somewhere they couldn't follow.

Think about the panic. The confusion. These weren't sophisticated theologians who could parse the mysteries of incarnation and atonement. These were fishermen and tax collectors and ordinary

people who had found in Jesus something worth betting their lives on. And now he was saying goodbye?

But into this moment of crisis and confusion, Jesus speaks words that have echoed through two thousand years of human history: "Let not your hearts be troubled ... Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you."

But the peace Jesus offers isn't just a nice spiritual sentiment to help us feel better. It's a revolutionary alternative to the way the world operates. It's a direct challenge to every system that promises security through power, every authority that demands submission through fear, every voice that says peace comes through domination.

When Jesus says, "I do not give to you as the world gives," he's not just talking about giving different gifts. He's announcing an entirely different world, a new world that captures God's desire

for **all** creation. This new world Jesus is announcing has **entirely** different values and operates by **entirely** different rules.

Fine, but what does Jesus mean when he says he doesn't give "as the world gives?"

This raises the obvious question: What's the world's way of giving?

In Jesus' day, the world's way of giving was embodied in something called the *Pax Romana*—the Roman Peace. Caesar Augustus and his successors had created what they claimed was an unprecedented era of peace and prosperity across the known world. No more wars between city-states. No more local conflicts. Peace at last.

But here's the thing about Roman peace: it was peace at the end of a spear, peace maintained through occupying armies and crucifixions, serving the interests of those in power while crushing

anyone who dared to resist. The Roman historian Tacitus saw right through it. He wrote: "They make a desert and call it peace."

But that shouldn't come as any surprise, right? The world's way of giving peace is always conditional. It's peace for **some** at the expense of **others**.

And isn't this still the world's way? Doesn't our world still promise peace through superior firepower? Security through surveillance? Prosperity through competition? The strong maintain order, and the weak learn to keep quiet. That's the **world's** peace.

But notice something else about the world's way of giving: it's always about what you can do for the giver. Rome gave peace to those who served **Roman** interests. Corporate benefactors give to organizations that enhance their image. Politicians give to constituencies that vote for them. Even in our personal

relationships, how often is our giving really about what we get back?

The world's peace comes with strings attached, with obligations.

Now listen to what Jesus offers: "If anyone loves me, they will keep my word, and God will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them."

Did you catch that?

We will make our home with them.

Not "we will visit occasionally." Not "we will help from a distance."

We will move in. We will take up residence.

This is absolutely revolutionary. Think about what this meant in Jesus's world, where gods lived in temples. They had special buildings, special priests, special rituals. You couldn't just walk up

to divinity. You needed intermediaries, sacrifices, the right credentials. The holy was separated from the common by thick walls and strict rules.

And here's Jesus saying: "Actually, no. God wants to live with **you**. In your ordinary, daily life."

Do you see how radical this is? Jesus democratizes divine presence. He says that every believer becomes a temple, a place where God wants to live. No more need for special buildings or special people to mediate God's presence. The infinite God chooses to make a home with finite, flawed, ordinary people.

And notice the condition: "If anyone loves me, they will keep my word." So, it's not about perfect performance or flawless obedience. It's about love expressing itself in faithfulness, a relationship where love motivates obedience rather than fear demanding compliance.

This is the ***opposite*** of how the world works. The world says: "Obey, and maybe we'll love you. Perform, and perhaps we'll accept you. Prove your worth, and we might give you what you need."

Jesus says, "I love you first. My love for you creates the possibility of your love for me. And your love for me naturally expresses itself in following me."

But Jesus knows his disciples are still confused and afraid. So he makes another extraordinary promise: "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

The word Jesus uses here is *Paraclete*. It's almost impossible to translate with just one English word. It means advocate, counselor, comforter, helper. It's someone called alongside to give aid. In the legal system of Jesus's day, a *paraclete* was the person who stood beside you in court, who spoke for you when

you couldn't speak for yourself, and defended you when you were accused.

Think about what this means for people living under imperial occupation. Think about what this means for disciples who are about to face persecution, excommunication, even execution for following Jesus. The world's systems will put them on trial.

Religious authorities will cast them out. Political powers will hunt them down.

And Jesus says, "You won't be alone. You'll have the best possible advocate standing beside you, speaking for you, defending you, giving you the words you need **when** you need them."

But notice something beautiful: Jesus calls the Spirit "**another** Advocate." Another one, meaning Jesus himself has been their advocate all along. And now, when he returns to god, he's not leaving them defenseless. He's sending another advocate just like himself.

Think about what this means for ***us***.

In a world that constantly puts us on trial—judging our worth, questioning our value, demanding we justify our existence—we have an advocate. When our own conscience accuses us, when shame whispers that we're not enough, when fear tells us we're alone, the Spirit of God stands beside us and says: "This one belongs to me. This one is loved and claimed by God."

This isn't just theological theory. This is the practical, daily reality for those who trust in Jesus. We have an advocate, someone in our corner.

And then Jesus gives them the gift he's been building toward:

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives."

What's the difference between Christ's peace and the world's peace?

The world's peace depends on circumstances. When things are going well, when the bills are paid, when relationships are smooth, when health is good ... then we have peace. But when circumstances change, the world's peace evaporates.

Christ's peace is different. It's not the absence of trouble but the presence of God in the ***midst*** of trouble.

Notice **when** Jesus gives this peace. Not when everything is wonderful and his disciples are feeling confident and strong. He gives it on the night he will be betrayed. He speaks these words knowing that in a few hours he'll very likely be arrested, tortured, and executed. He offers peace to his followers, knowing they're about to scatter in fear, denying they ever knew him.

This is peace that doesn't depend on circumstances, but peace that actually shows up most clearly when circumstances are at their worst. This is the peace that led early Christians to sing hymns in prison and gave martyrs courage to face death. This is the peace that carries people through grief, sustains them through uncertainty, and anchors them when everything else is shaking.

To put a finer point on it: this peace isn't just personal comfort; it's a form of resistance. When the world offers fear and anxiety as tools of control, Christ's peace refuses to be controlled.

When the world says you should be terrified of the future, Christ's peace says the future is in God's hands.

When the world says you need to compete and accumulate and dominate to be secure, Christ's peace says your security is already guaranteed by God's love.

Christ's peace is subversive. It undermines every system that depends on fear for its power.

So the question is: what do we do with a peace like this?

I mean, Jesus isn't offering some Hallmark-card sentiment, an emotional salve for the anxious. This is a peace that rearranges the furniture of our souls—a revolutionary peace that doesn't play by the world's rules.

To live in that kind of peace, we start by letting go of all the illusions. The ones that whisper, "If you just had **this** ... then you'd be okay." A better job, a bigger house, a padded savings account, a partner who never lets you down, the "right" person in the White House. These promises sound nice in the brochure, but they never quite deliver the life they advertise. And deep down, we know that. They're not bad things, necessarily. They're just not **God's** idea of what we need. They can't carry the weight we try to place on them.

Living in Jesus' peace also means remembering who we **actually** are. We're not some cosmic accident—a random blip of consciousness floating through an indifferent universe. We're not defined by our tax bracket or our party affiliation or the number of unread emails in our inbox.

We are, quite literally, where God has decided to move in and hang up some pictures. And once that sinks in—once we realize that the Divine has made a home with us—it reshapes how we see our reflection, how we treat the barista, how we handle being misunderstood. Everything starts to shift.

We love, and we act like it. Not because someone's keeping score or because we're terrified of disappointing God, but because we've already been loved beyond reason. Obedience isn't about passing some cosmic test; it's about living like someone who's been **found**. It's what happens when we've been swept off our

feet by grace and we just want to live in a way that says, "I remember."

Of course, it's not always easy. Some days, the world drags you into the courtroom and puts your soul on trial. You get accused—by others, by your own failures, by that nagging voice in your head. But you don't have to argue your case. You've got someone who already knows the truth and stands by you anyway. The Spirit shows up like a defense attorney who's not afraid of a messy past, someone who doesn't need to prove you innocent to love you.

And if all that is true—if **that's** the peace we've received—then it's not just ours to hoard. It's meant to leak out of us. Into our families. Into our classrooms and boardrooms and checkout lines. Into the places that are unraveling.

We become divine Walmart greeters, saying with our lives what God once said to us: "Come in. You're already home."

The world is desperate for peace. But it keeps looking in all the wrong places. It keeps thinking peace comes through having the world covered in bubble wrap.

Jesus offers something the world cannot give and cannot take away: a peace rooted in the unshakeable love of God.

This isn't escapist spirituality that ignores real problems. It's revolutionary spirituality that provides an alternative foundation so solid that we can work for justice without being consumed by anger. We can pursue change without being paralyzed by fear and hope for the future without being crushed by present circumstances.

When God makes a home with you, everything changes. Your Monday morning commute becomes a sanctuary. Your kitchen table becomes an altar. Your struggles become opportunities to experience divine comfort. Your relationships become expressions

of divine love. Your work becomes participation in God's ongoing creation.

Because when God makes a home, everything broken starts to heal.

This is the invitation of Jesus, the promise of the gospel. This is the hope that has sustained believers for two thousand years: God doesn't just visit ... doesn't just help from a distance.

When God makes a home, God makes a home with **you**.

—Amen.