

**SERMON EASTER 6a: DIOCESE OF BUNBURY: GEOFF CHADWICK: 10/5/2026:
LOVE ONE ANOTHER**

John 14.15-21

15 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. 17 This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. 18 'I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. 19 In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21 They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.'

Today's reading comes from that part of John's Gospel known as the "Farewell Discourse".

This is the long speech that Jesus gives at the foot-washing on the night before Good Friday.

In John, it acts as the final manifesto of the main character. This was a standard literary

device of the time, and is still used today. After reading the story, the main character's

philosophy or reason for being is proclaimed in a final speech. In John it is done by both

words and action. A final act of service, where Jesus performs the menial task of a slave, is

surrounded by words:

'If you love me, you will keep my commandments.' (Jn 15:15, NRSV)

The commandment is made clear:

21 They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me (Jn 15:21, NRSV)

Or more famously in Jn 13:34:

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you also should love one another (Jn 13:34, NRSV).

According to John, the point of Jesus' life is servant love; both in word and action.

John puts this message before the events of Good Friday and Easter.

Unfortunately, our Lectionary can lead us astray here because we hear this speech 5 weeks after Easter day. So, it's easy for us to mis-read it as a post-resurrection appearance to the disciples. But no, the command is given before the betrayal, arrest, crucifixion, abandonment and resurrection of Jesus. It's a stark reality painted by John.

Even after foot washing, even after a new commandment to love; hate, fear manipulation and evil enter the scene. Jesus' final speech, as beautiful and heroic as it was, is quickly forgotten as treachery has its way. The words have fallen on deaf ears!

But then again, maybe not! The fact that John remembered these things post-resurrection means that the lost is regained. The Easter resurrection experience brings the commandment to back to life. The command to love is remembered!

John writing many years after that first Easter day reminds us that all was not lost. Jesus' command to love and be love lives on! And he tells us how.

Jesus promised us an advocate:

¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. (Jn 14:16, NRSV)

Here the word "advocate" is a translation of the Greek word *paraclete* meaning someone who "stands alongside you". It's a legal term referring to a lawyer who will defend you, or promote your best interests. This is an extraordinary promise!

Jesus is saying that the Father will send his Spirit to stand alongside those who would believe.

Imagine that! We have the Spirit of God "barracking for us" (to use an Australian phrase.)

But, there's a bit of a catch! We must be faithful! Nevertheless it is a paradox. We find it difficult to be faithful without the faithful Advocate standing alongside us. Or putting it another way, we find it hard to love with out the spirit of love alongside us!

The Advocate gives us the ability to love especially when we are in the most unloving of situations.

For Jesus it was Good Friday. For us it might be dealing with a person we find utterly obnoxious - when love seems all but lost.

Jesus also describes the Advocate as ... *the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive*, (Jn 14:17, NRSV). It's a curious phrase, setting up an opposition with the world. Nevertheless, he is twinning love and truth together. He is saying that:

“Love without truth is not love”, and “Truth without love is not truth.”

Later in chapter 18:38 We will hear Pilate asking Jesus: “*What is truth?*”

The answer is not philosophical; it's found in the person of Jesus. Pilate has the truth of Jesus before him without realising it!

And so, as Christians we are promised an advocating Spirit to help with our struggles of love and truth. I wonder if you've ever experienced this? Have you ever had a moment when you've been supported without yourself – especially when it's surprised you?

- Words you needed they weren't your own?
- Sudden solutions to a problem you could never solve?
- Just the right person appears when you never expected it?
- A sense of God's Spirit along side you?

I hope you have! I hope you have experienced the work of the Advocate!

I am reminded of a poem by WH Auden made famous in the film *Tuesdays with Morrie*:

"We must love one another or die"

(Auden, WH, *Selected Poems*, September 1, 1939)

May we love one another!

The Lord be with you.

And also with you!