

There's a Place for Us

When I began to work on this sermon and to reread the gospel- a song began to repeat
itself in my head- -in fact- it got stuck there.

How many of you remember the song "There's a Place for Us"-
it's a beautiful haunting song-

In an effort to get it out of my head I finally googled it-
and I learned that it was written in 2010 by David Hodges and Hillary Lindsey,
co-written by Carrie Underwood- a revision of an older song
by the Supremes in 1965.

It was sung in the movie- "The Chronicles of Narnia- "The Voyage of the Dawn Treader."
-which is the second book of the adventure series written by C.S. Lewis.

I had no idea that's where I'd heard the song.

I hope you've all read the Chronicles of Narnia- If you haven't,
run to the bookstore and get started-

The Chronicles aren't just children's stories-
Their symbolism is profoundly Christian.

I'm sure the thing that got me started on that train of thought was the words
from our gospel reading

"I go to prepare a place for you"-

*How many funerals have you been to where that scripture is read?

Almost everybody chooses it.

It takes place during Jesus' farewell discourse in the Gospel of John-

He's preparing the disciples for the time when he won't be with them-
and he lets them know that they won't be abandoned.

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house there are many dwelling places.

If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

And If I prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself,
so that where I am, there you may be also."

Well, we know that the disciples weren't entirely satisfied with that explanation

and they kept on asking questions- first Thomas- and then Philip-
and Jesus continued to reassure them.

Thomas said "Lord, we don't know where you're going- how can we know the way?"

Jesus says "I AM the way, the truth and the life-

no one comes to the Father except through me.

"If you know me, you will know my Father also.

"From now on you do know him and have seen him."-

...and so at that point, Philip can't stand it any longer and he breaks in and says-

"Lord show us the Father."

It's just too much for them to try to understand- And so Jesus leaves no doubt:

"If you have seen me, you have seen the Father-

" believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me

“...the Father who dwells in me does his works-

“the words I speak to you are him speaking in me.”

I don't know how much of that amazing statement the disciples could absorb-

-we have trouble absorbing it ourselves.

Jesus is saying that when we follow his (Jesus') way (of mutual love) as *the Way*,

when we trust his (Jesus' teachings) as *the Truth*,

when we experience Jesus as *the Life* of the Spirit (when we act out his teachings)-

then we come to the knowledge of God that is on a different plane-

-it's a wholly new experience-

That plane is that we're in *relationship*- with Jesus- with God the Father-

through the Holy Spirit-

We're actually in a relationship within the Holy Trinity-

It seems to me that to begin to comprehend this – we need to take a chance

and begin to try to live these ideas- begin to live the teachings of Jesus-

Whether we understand much of this or not-

we know that we love to hear this scripture read

-especially to hear it read at funerals - because it reassures us-

The words tell us that the ones we love are OK- and that we're going to be OK, -too.

-that there's a place for us – a dwelling place _in our Father's house.

(hence the song!)

Actually, throughout scripture we hear about Father's houses and dwelling places-

*Remember that in the Old Testament- Abram (who became Abraham)

was called to leave his Father's house and to go to a place God would show him.

He left his former dwelling place- the house where he had a kinship group.

He was led to a new 'dwelling place'- a new relationship

He was to become the Father of a new nation-

-whose descendants were numbered more than the stars of the sky- and so he was-

In the beginning of the gospel of John, John says 'the Word was made flesh

and dwelt among us'- the Word was/ is -Jesus-

Here John means more than just a place- John is talking about a relationship.

Jesus is talking about relationship. He- the Word- has dwelt here- among us.

That relationship transcends time and place – it is a relationship in our father's house-

-in a kinship group- it's our -dwelling place- we belong there.

We're in relationship- with Jesus- with God the Father- through the Holy Spirit-

We're actually in a relationship within the Holy Trinity.

And even though we may not be able to grasp the depth of those words ,

Somehow we know that there there's a place for us!

**...as the song goes:

"There's a place ...for us

More than just a prayer or anything you've ever dreamed of,

So when you feel like giving up cause you don't fit in ...here

Fear is crashing in, - close your eyes - and take my hand...

...A world where you and I belong

Where faith and love will keep us strong

Exactly who we are is just enough

There's a place for us

...Where your heart is free -and hope comes back to life

When these broken hands are whole again

We'll find what we've been waiting for

We were made for so much more

...A world where you and I belong

Where faith and love will keep us strong

Exactly who we are is just enough

There's a place for us

So- hold on. Hold on

There's a place for us.

The song gets it right!

Amen.