



May 6, 2020: Thoughts on the Bible text

Foto: P. Johanning

“These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full” (John 15: 11). The Bible text for today’s devotional is taken from the farewell discourse of Jesus. Shortly before His crucifixion Jesus once again speaks at length to His disciples to stress to them that He is loved by God and that He in turn loves His disciples. At the same time, Jesus urges His disciples to remain in His love.

Remain in the love of Jesus

To remain in the love of Jesus had nothing to do with the emotional state of the disciples but rather that they kept His commandments: “If you keep My commandments you will abide in My love” (verse 10). Jesus Himself is our example because He keeps the commandments of God. He draws close to the people by standing by their side and leading them into fellowship with God. His love and devotion go even to the extent that He gives His life for them. Through Jesus the disciples learn the will of God. Provided they believe the words of Jesus they will recognise the divine authority that fills His words. The relationship of the disciples with God will thus be defined by their relationship to Jesus. It is in this manner that Jesus is revealed as a mediator between man and God and between God and man.

Remaining with Jesus

Many people came to Jesus and stayed with Him for a while. They saw His miracles and perhaps even experienced His help. Yet at some point they doubted and left Him again, but Peter and the other disciples were different because they recognised

that He had the words of eternal life and that He was the Son of God. That is the reason why we stay with Jesus. We also want to trust in His word, follow Him, and remain faithful to Him in all situations of life.

True joy

To remain with Jesus and put His words into practice is not straightforward and also not always easy. Those, however, who stay with Him are safe and secure in His love. In the situation of farewell and sadness, Jesus speaks of joy: "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you" (John 15: 11). The joy of being secure in Jesus and of doing His will far transcends that which we usually describe as joy, because it incorporates all aspects of life, including grief, parting and abandonment, but also any happiness or success we experience. We can reflect on this joy, which we receive through our fellowship with Jesus, in all our situations of life and draw strength from it. If we succeed in this, then we will be filled with joy.

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