

## **Sermon for Easter 6 2017 (Youth Sunday)**

**Nicholas** : Today we hear Jesus promising never to abandon us, for he will send his Spirit upon and keep us ever in his care and communion by the Holy Spirit. It is a perfect text for today, for a Sunday marking the graduation of a large number of Resurrection youth, for a day to give thanks for the growth, spiritual and otherwise, of the young people of this church. I hate that these kids are growing up and leaving. They will be missed in so many of our ministries and in our life together. They were little kids when I came here and now they are grown. None are going terribly far away and most will visit (and come to church when they do, I hope!) but still their departure can feel like a loss, though a necessary one. How do we make it through all the loses of life, through stages and transitions, growth and change? What does the pattern of God's work in Jesus, who came, ascended, and sent the Spirit among us say about the pattern of well-lived human life? Janie Hughes and Isabel Kinney (who co-wrote the sermon Janie is delivering) have thought about love, presence, and the commandments of Jesus.

**Janie**: As a student going off to college very soon, I can't help but notice the feeling that I'm leaving so much behind. I think back to all the fond memories I've had growing up here over the years and get a little sad to be going away. I sometimes feel as if I'm leaving forever, never to see my friends and family again. When I think about this I feel lonely in the world, like I have no one to turn to. But then I remember that

I am not leaving forever. I will be able to come back and visit. I remember that I am not orphaned when I leave for school. I do have people to turn to. I will make new friends, while keeping my old ones. I will always be one phone call away from my parents when in reality I'm a few hours away. I will always have this community that surrounds me even if I'm hours away. No matter how far I go I can always find a home here.

I can always find a home in God as well. He will never abandon me or leave me orphaned. Even though He is not physically around I still know He is there. He never leaves. That is the beauty of His love, it never leaves. No matter where I go He follows. He will never orphan us because He is our Father. Remembering that makes going to college much easier because I know that He will be there with me.

With graduation approaching in a week, I have had time to sit back and consider some things that I have learned from my parents that I will carry to college with me. Every household has a set of guidelines that everyone should follow. These guidelines have been sort of like commandments. One thing that my parents have always nailed into my brain is "if you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all." This is just one example of many. This does not only apply to me but to everyone. My close friends and I will be going our separate ways this upcoming semester. It saddens me to think about this but I know that there are many opportunities waiting for us to take. That being said, I will be making new friends next

year. This rule that my parents have so graciously nailed into me will become a vital part of blossoming friendships.

In the gospel reading today, Jesus says “If you love me, you will keep my commandments... 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.” Like Jesus, my parents created commandments for my brother and I to follow throughout our lives. Another thing I have thought about during this time of reflection is the materialistic matter of graduation.

With graduation comes Grad parties. I was recently invited to a party for a fellow classmate. As I walked around the room, I noticed a table abundant with presents and cards congratulating this classmate of mine on his accomplishment. A wave of jealousy took over my body. I wanted to have a grad party where there was a table filled with presents and cards for me. After realizing that this was so selfish of me to think, I began to appreciate all of the advice I have received over the course of my life along with the guidelines that my parents set for me. I then realized that these non materialistic gifts of advice and support are far more important than the cards and presents I envied.

**Nicholas:** Thus those who love Jesus are given his Holy Spirit, the Spirit that enables them to love and live in Christ’s power and presence, even after his Ascension to the right hand of the father. They keep his commandment of love and in their obedience,

are signs of his continuing presence, as the Spirit works through them. Like well-raised, well-formed college freshmen, they carry forward what has been entrusted to them, even if their live away from those who formed and raised them.

Jesus, after the Resurrection, didn't settle down in one place among us. He was on the move; he led the disciples back to Galilee; he sent them to proclaim the Gospel to the ends of the earth, and then he ascended to his Father to send the Spirit. The growing of children, the change that feels like loss, the graduations, relocations, and retirements of our lives, all are times in which we can share in the ebb and flow of God's communion with the creation and know that we are never alone.