

6th Sunday of Easter – May 10, 2026

John 14:15-21

Mother's Day in the church is one of the more complicated days to preach on. It's meant to be a joyous holiday, celebrating those in our lives who have loved us, cared for us, held us, walked with us, rejoiced with us, cried with us, taught us, nurtured us... Some of you may have come here today eager to celebrate. Some of you may have come in already carrying a weight, unsure how you'll get through this service. And some of you may not know exactly what you're feeling, just that this day is more complicated than it seems.

And while the day has good intentions, and many of us still celebrate it as such, it's also a day that's complicated with grief. Reminding many of mothers who have passed Or mothers who were harmful or abusive. Mothers they've become estranged from Or the knowledge that they will never become a mother themselves. Or that they are a mother to a child who was miscarried or died too young Grief that many carry with them every day, but is brought to the forefront on this day, where many folks are celebrating.

So as a preacher, I always keep that in the forefront of my mind on days like these. But particularly Mother's Day, which can be like a religious holiday in the church itself. But something I really love about our theology is our willingness to live in the gray. To acknowledge when something can be both/and. That we don't accept that something has to be one way or the other.

Mother's Day can be both a celebration and a time of grief. It doesn't have to be either/or. Because realistically, it is both for many people. And it's ok to acknowledge that.

Our gospel today is a similar thing. We are still in Jesus' farewell discourse like we were last week. Jesus' final speech before he was handed over to his death. So, today's gospel was certainly a time of great grief. However, it's also words of reassurance. Promises of sending an advocate - the Holy Spirit to be with the disciples - and us. Words of comfort that we won't be alone. We will not be orphaned.

In the toughest times, Jesus does not respond with explanations or easy answers. In the midst of grief his comfort is this advocate that remains with us. And I was reminded of that this week. Not in a big, dramatic way. But in a quiet

moment that felt very ordinary, and yet, somehow, holy. This week was a hard one for us as Drew lost a beloved family member with little time to grieve. Typically, he's an outward processor, someone who has to talk through everything, from his to-do lists to his frustrations. But this week, there were no words. And the night before she passed, we just sat out on our back deck. Not really talking about it. Just being together. Because that was all that could be done. Sometimes, just the very presence - no words, no touch - just presence - that is the comfort we need. A reminder that we are not alone.

So often, when someone is hurting, our instinct is to fix it. To find the right words, the right explanation, something that might make the pain go away. But Jesus doesn't do that here. Jesus instead promised his disciples and us presence in his farewell. The disciples didn't fully understand what was happening, but they knew something was ending. There was fear, confusion, maybe even denial. And in the middle of all of that, Jesus doesn't give them a plan or a timeline. He gives them presence. He was reassuring us all that we are not orphaned. But rather we have the spirit of God that remains with us. That sits with us.

It's a reminder for us this Mother's Day as well. The role a mother is to play in our lives - nurturer, comforter, guide - these are traits that we experience in Jesus as well. And reassurances that we are given in the spirit too. That we are never orphaned. Even when we feel most alone, God has not abandoned us. The promise that Jesus gave his disciples and us, this perfect accompaniment, we try to embody for each other.

We try to be examples of this love and presence for one another. In the meals we bring. In the texts we send. In the moments we sit with someone and don't try to fix anything. In the ways we show up, even when we're not sure what to say. Sometimes God's presence looks like a friend who sits beside us in silence. Sometimes it's a moment of peace that doesn't make sense. Sometimes it's the strength to get through one more day when we didn't think we could.

But we're not perfect. No mother is perfect. No friend is perfect. No pastor is perfect. But God is. And wherever relationships fail. Where we experience grief and loss. Our God is there. Our God is the one who stays. The God who listens. The God who refuses to leave, even when everything in us feels broken or distant.

So this Mother's Day, wherever you find yourself - celebrating, grieving, or both/and - remember you are not alone. You are not forgotten. You are not

orphaned. We have the perfect Godly parent who never leaves, never gives up on us, and remains with us always. Amen.