



ST. MARK'S ON THE CAMPUS

Episcopal Church

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The Rev. Christine Grosh
Sermon for the 2nd Sunday of Easter
St. Mark's on the Campus
April 15, 2007

Acts 5:27-32, Ps. 118 or 150, Rev. 1:4-8, John 20:19-31

LET ME RESPOND to the Gospel. Peace be with you. Receive the Holy Spirit. Know your own power. What? The gospel didn't say that!

That's what I think of when Jesus says, "if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven, if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Jesus is telling us we have spiritual power. We have choice to act God-like by forgiving. We don't have to forgive, (...there's that tricky freedom that God gives us!), we can choose to forgive! Many of us have learned that it hurts us to retain sins! Let yourself live in peace.

What are you doing with your spiritual power? I hope you're growing in awareness and wisdom! We can use our spiritual power to live in peace. Here's my recipe: breathe, learn to pay attention to the communication of your emotions and your bodily sensations. Learn to value yourself highly as the temple of the Holy Spirit. You may have to change how you treat yourself. At the same time, know that valuing others is essential. Learn to sense the Holy Spirit. Know that God loves you. Know that you have worth just because you are created. Integrating these beliefs helps us live in peace.

Relationships require another level of the same behaviors. You see, being true to self is required for a good relationship. Then communication about self and relationship is required. There are lots of pitfalls and risks to be true to self and be in relationship. Before marrying, David and I agreed that we would talk things out until they are resolved. This means talking until there's no stomach ache, no tension in the shoulders. Sometimes we agree to write about things to get clear about the issues. Sometimes we set an appointment to talk at a more convenient time. It's not exactly following the Biblical advice of not letting the sun go down on our anger, but it's honoring the idea of it. Keeping this promise of working through our differences helps us maintain peace. Sometimes we're tempted to do the polite covering up of our differences, but eventually we

return to our agreement to be honest and work for the sake of peace, a genuine peace in our home.

Perhaps you wonder how this works on community and national levels? I think the process is the same. I pray for wisdom and courage for anyone who is called to work at any level of community service, whether its government, business, church, non-profits...what ever organization you can think of.

It's not peace at any price, it's not one person prevailing over another, it's hard work to be vulnerable if you're naturally dominant and it's hard work to be assertive if you're naturally acquiescent. You see, God has growth in mind for each of us. We're attracting our opposites so we can grow. This is true in friendships and at work. Perhaps we have more incentive to work out these differences when we're in committed relationships, but God is giving you opportunities to face your fears, and grow in trust of the Holy Spirit and to be true to yourself, each day.

The words that fit for me in recent years go like this: I want to give what I came to give and get what I came to get in this life. I mean this in the sense of knowing the purpose of my life, seeking that through relationship with God. There's a traffic report on a local radio station that closes with the announcer saying, "If anything gets in your way, let me know." Something like that. It's clever, but each time I hear it, I recoil at the sound of entitlement in it...I should be able to go down the road, unimpeded! It's my right! I'm not going to call up the station and complain but I will use that as an opportunity for an attitude check...the people who get in my way just might be God giving me an opportunity to grow! Being conscious of my spiritual power, I pray for peace.