

Scripture:

John 14:1-14

### **“THE HOUSEHOLD of GOD”**

I'm not sure how many people are familiar with the neurological disorder known as Tourette's syndrome.

Anyone familiar with Tourette's syndrome?

For those who aren't Tourette's syndrome is a disorder named after 19<sup>th</sup> century French physician Georges Gilles de la Tourette.

And simply put Tourettes' syndrome is a neurological disorder that causes people who suffer from it to have any number of physical and verbal tics.

Some who suffer from Tourette's have constant facial twitches ----- others have uncontrollable twitches in their arms or legs --- some find themselves having uncontrollable verbal outbursts --- including but not exclusively inappropriate words and phrases.

Oliver Sacks an American neurologist out of New York has done considerable research in Tourette's syndrome and he shares the story of one patient whose Tourette's manifested itself by causing the man to make deep lunging bows towards the ground --- accompanied by verbal shouts --- as well an obsessive compulsive adjusting and re-adjusting of his glasses.

None of which are really all that uncharacteristic as Tourette's can basically manifest itself in any combination of symptoms and uncontrollable actions as you could ever imagine.

But what Dr. Sacks found so interesting about this man who ---- found himself given to deep lunging bows ---- verbal outbursts and fidgeting with his glasses ----- was that despite these tics ---- this man was also a skilled surgeon.

A skilled physician --- who was quite capable of carrying out his surgical duties efficiently and effectively.

Somehow --- and for some unknown reason ---- when this man dons his surgical mask and gown and enters into the operating room ----- all of his tics --- all of the

uncontrollable actions caused by his disease disappear for the duration of the surgery.

Somehow ----- and Dr. Sacks could find no neurological explanation ----- somehow this man loses himself totally in the role of surgeon -- and all of his symptoms vanish completely.

And not only this but as soon as the surgery is finished --- and the mask and gown come off ----- the surgeon falls prey to his old quirks ----- outbursts and fidgeting.

Dr. Sacks makes no spiritual comment on this --- only a medical one ----- which is that there is no neurological explanation for this phenomenon.

However there is also a spiritual lesson in the life of this fascinating surgeon.

Because in him we see what can happen when we lose ourselves in a role --- in a calling.

In this doctor we see what can happen when we define and understand ourselves in particular ways.

There can be a great transformation of our whole lives when we become focused on just one thing.

And there can be a great transformation in our lives when we become focused to the point that bad traits --- disorders ----- neurological and otherwise --- disappear even as the performing of normal tasks becomes all the more meaningful and remarkable.

Part of our goal as Christian as we journey in Christ is to have a single minded focus on becoming more and more Christlike such that it changes who we are and how others experience us.

This surgeon could have simply been known simply as ----- “the inappropriate deep lunging bowing one” ----- who had sudden verbal outbursts as he fidgeted with his glasses.

But he wasn't.

Instead he was known as a very capable and skilled surgeon.

A bit of an odd surgeon no doubt for those who also experienced him when he wasn't in the operation room --- but none the less he was known as a skilled and capable surgeon.

When he lost himself in his surgery he was capable of great medical feats.

When he lost himself in his surgery he was transformed from an inappropriate -----  
- deep lunging ----- shouting ---- fidgeting kind of freakish man ----- into a life  
saver --- a skilled physician.

When we lose ourselves in Christ ---- we too are often transformed.

We go from whatever it is our faults and weaknesses are ----- and we become  
faithful and helpful servants of God.

In John's gospel today Jesus tells us as His disciples to be at peace and find  
comfort.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.” --- He says in verse 1.

And then He goes on to say --- “My Father's house has many rooms; if that were  
not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with  
me that you also may be where I am.”

In other words ----- Jesus tells us that there is a place in God's house ----- in God's  
presence --- that He has prepared for us --- and the He will take us to.

Pause and think on this for a minute.

Think of what it means ----- that there is a place in God's house ----- in God's  
eternal presence --- that Jesus has prepared for us --- and that He will take us to.

This is powerful.

If this doesn't help us!

If this doesn't enable us --- to settle our souls ----- and let not our hearts be  
troubled ----- I don't know what ever will.

Jesus tells us that we have a place in the household of God and that He has prepared that place for us --- and ----- that He will lead us there.

What more could we possibly ask for in life?

Part of what this means --- that we have a place that has been prepared for us in heaven ---- is that we are heavenly citizens ---- far more than we are citizens of this world.

**Part of what this means ----- is that we are heavenly citizens ---- far more than we are citizens of this world.**

The deep lung bowing ---- verbal out bursting --- fidgeting with his glasses doctor - ----- was a surgeon far more than he was one who suffered from Tourette's syndrome.

When we are able to see ourselves FIRST ----- as citizens of the household of God ----- and not all of the other sloppy ----- messy --- human --- sinful --- shortcoming stuff that we also are ----- a great transformation takes place within us --- a great freedom takes place within us.

And that great transformation and freedom gives us the profound comfort that Jesus talks of in the very first verse of our gospel passage today ----- "Let not your hearts be troubled."

And perhaps the very best part of this --- the fact that God has a place for us in His eternal home ---- isn't just that it's there for us ---- like some kind unknown place we have to feel and poke around in the dark for ---- trying and hoping to finally find it one day.

Instead --- the very best part is that --- not only is it there ----- but ----- Jesus has prepared it for us ---- And ----- Jesus will take us there.

**Jesus has prepared it for us ---- And ---- Jesus will take us there.**

Jesus has prepared it for us -----

In other words --- it will not only be suitable for us --- but it will also be custom made for us.

In other words ---- my room in the house of God --- my special ---- Jonathan Tait place in the presence of God ----- the place God has in store for me and only me -- ----- won't be the same as yours.

And yours won't be the same as mine ----- instead they will all be custom furnished --- individually suited and crafted.

Mine ---- or at least --- how I understand mine to be here --- now ---today ----- will have lots of books --- an excellent reading chair with good lighting --- a great big window overlooking water --- and it will be a great vantage point for looking at birds that fly by and perch in the beautiful trees just outside the window ----- and there will be a few extra comfortable chairs for entertaining and visiting with others ----- and there will be good coffee and treats ---- and so on ----- I could go on and on ----- and bore you to death ----- as I indulge myself ----- anyone care to hear more of my little piece of heaven.

But that's my room right ---- others may not see the need for so many books ----- and instead there will be video games or something --- maybe they love cats ---- I don't care for them personally ---- cats ---- and besides I'm allergic to them --- but that's just me --- some people will have lots of cats in there room ----- or other pets ---- you get the picture --- the place Jesus talks about having prepared for us in John's gospel today ----- is custom made just for us.

They are all different --- because we are all different.

And even better than this.

As if there could be much better ---- than having a kind of dream place to reside --- -- full of all the things we love to be around and spend our time with.

As if this weren't enough ----- "I will come back and take you to be with me so that you also may be where I am."

As if that weren't enough ---- Jesus will come and lead us there.

Jesus comes and shows us how to get there.

We're not left on our own to scramble about ---- fumbling around --- helplessly trying to find our way by ourselves.

This is one of the supreme beauties of Jesus Christ --- and of course there are so many --- but one of the supreme beauties of Christ is that He not only tells us.

But He also ---- instructs us ---- equips us ----- energizes --- and sustains us ----- as we journey in faith.

He isn't just a great coach --- or motivator --- He's so much more as well.

And He's so much more precisely because He shows us by example how we are to live such that we please God and bring glory to His name.

He isn't just another talking head ----- He isn't just a wise old nugget dispenser --- providing us with all sorts of pithy little saying that help us live better --- more faithful lives.

He's all this and more ----- because He shows us by example how we are to live in accordance with God's will.

He shows us by example how it is that we are to be human ----- with all of the limitations and quirkiness --- and sometimes even downright ugliness and awkwardness that being human entails --- and still be pleasing to God --- and still bring glory to God.

Think of the people that you respect the most ----- one thing they likely all share in common is that they live what they stand for --- they live what they believe in --- they're not just talkers ----- but they're doers as well.

Well Jesus is the supreme doer.

He doesn't just tell us or advise us how we are to live a life that is pleasing to God and brings glory to God ----- He shows us by example ---- and perfectly.

“I am the way the truth and the life.” ---- He says.

**“The way the truth and the life.”**

**Jesus is the way to God.**

**Jesus is the truth of God.**

**And Jesus is the life that God gives and wants us all to have.**

To know Christ is to eliminate the space between us and God.

To know Christ is to become one with God.

That's part of what we mean when we say Christ is the atoning one

To atone --- is to make one --- to bring together inseparably.

Indeed atone is simply bringing together the words --- at and one.

At --- one ----- atone.

To atone is to make one.

Jesus makes us one with God.

“If you really know me, you will know my Father as well.” ----- Jesus says in verse 7 from John's gospel reading today.

And then He goes on to say ---- in verse 9 ----- “Anyone who has seen me, has seen the Father.”

To know Jesus ----- to see Jesus ---- is to see God as well.

Jesus makes the space between us and God vanish.

God the Father ----- Son --- and Holy Spirit -----is all about relationship.

God is all about the relationship that is Himself --- His Son and His Spirit.

And Jesus comes along and invites us ---- and equips us ----- and prepares us --  
- and leads us ---- into this beautiful Divine relationship.

Sometimes we get anxious ---- and troubled ---- and don't feel as though we're good enough to enter into such a beautiful and holy thing ---- intimate relationship with God.

And along comes the Christ saying ---

**“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”**

**“God has place for you ----- God has a place for you in His house.”**

**“And I know this because I’ve already been there and seen it.”**

**“And not only have I been there and seen it --- but I’ve also helped to prepare your very own special place.”**

**“And by the way --- don’t worry --- don’t let your hearts be troubled because I’m also going to lead you there ---- I’m going to take you there myself --- so there is no way for you to miss out on it --- all you have to do is follow me and I’ll take you there ----- so come on --- now.”**

So --- we choose.

Do we go and follow --- or do we fiddle about wasting our time and gifts away?

We can look at the lunging bowing --- verbal out-bursting --- fidgety one ----- and dismiss him as a neurological disorder --- Tourette’s syndrome weirdo.

Or we can see him as Christ see’s him --- as a skilled surgeon --- who has a few quirks just as we all do.

We make a choice.

Do we see ourselves as citizens of earth and society first and foremost?

Or do we see ourselves first and foremost as citizens of heaven ----- as members of the household of God.

Who we are often matters a whole lot less than whose we are.

**Who we are matters a whole lot less than whose we are.**

We are God’s.

We are children of God.

We are members of the household of God.

And He has a place for us that has been prepared for us ---- just for us -----  
and He will take us there.

That matters far more in life than the fact that maybe we get a little fidgety from  
time to time.

And that matters a whole lot more in life than the fact that maybe we have a few  
verbal outbursts from time to time in life ---- saying and doing the less than  
desirable thing.

That matters a whole lot more in life than the fact that maybe we fall flat on our  
faces from time to time.

We're not defined by the scars on our bodies and in our souls ---- we're defined by  
the one who mends those scars and makes of them something beautiful --- even if  
half the world doesn't ever recognize or understand this.

God knows absolutely all there is to know about each and every one of us --- down  
to the very smallest detail ---- He knows what we do when nobody is looking -----  
He knows what we secretly desire in our hearts.

And He loves us.

We are members of the household of God --- and the door on His house is always  
open.

God loves us and nothing we ever do or don't do ---- will ever --- can ever -----  
change this.

This is as inalienable ---- as inseparable --- and non-negotiable as is our need for  
the air we breathe.

How we see ourselves ---- changes our behaviour ----- and who we are ---and who  
we are becoming.

How God sees us ---- changes our behaviour --- and who we are --- and who we  
are becoming in Christ.

And today --- in John's gospel --- Jesus comes along --- and says ----

“Don't be troubled or disturbed.”

“You are a member of the household of God.”

“You ----- Jonathan Tait”

“You” --- each and every one of us here today ----- “You are my child.”

And I have prepared a place for you ----- and I will take you there myself.

And ---- nothing of this world.

No suffering ----- no evil ----- no difficult or trying circumstance can ever change this --- if you so choose it and come to me and know my Son and live in my Spirit.

And this is the greatest comfort.

And this is the greatest joy.

And this is the greatest thing in the whole of creation.

And ----- best of all -----

Nothing can ever change this.

Nothing can ever change the fact that God loves us ----- and has a place set aside for us in His presence in an eternal way.

But it's easy to forget this sometimes isn't it?

It's easy to lose heart.

And get down --- feel a little depressed --- frustrated ----- weary -----

And so on.

And that's O.K.

We're fallen ----- we're all a little messed up.

We're all messed up to some degree or another.

But --- but ----- more important than this ----- is the reality that God loves us --- and has a very special place set aside for us --- and Jesus is the way to get there.

And Jesus is the one who will lead us to that place.

The reality that we are members of the household of God ----- matters more than anything else in all of creation.

So ----- let not our hearts be troubled.

Enjoy life in Christ ---- embrace life in Christ ----- grow into life in Christ.

Celebrate life in Christ ----- and invite others into new life in Christ.

Wake up tomorrow ---- it's the perfect opportunity ----- a holiday Monday ----- to get up and consider and celebrate what an absolute joy it is to be known and loved by God such that God wants you to be with Him forever in a beautiful place ----- a place free from pain and suffering and all that ails us.

We are all ----- each and every one of us ----- known intimately by God ----- and loved intimately by God.

We are all ----- each and every one of us ----- created in His beautiful image.

God wants nothing more for us than for Christ to take us by the hand and lead us to the special place He has in store for us in His home.

May we follow Him wherever it is He leads us.

Amen.