

Acts 1:1-11
Psalm 47
Ephesians 1:15-23
Luke 24:44-53

Sermon May 29th, 2022

Our Advocate, the Holy Spirit

There are many people in this world who love to put together furniture from IKEA. Now, I am not one of these people. One of the reasons for this is every time I try to put furniture together, I mess up at least one or two steps. It never looks like it does on the box. Another reason is I hate kneeling and bending a lot. Sometimes I wonder if only a gymnast could in fact put IKEA furniture together.

Lego, on the other hand, is fun to put together. I usually can understand the instructions better. I don't need to bend and kneel in awkward positions to put a Lego structure together. And I get to play with it when I am done. Despite my children's protest.

Whether we are building furniture from IKEA or a Lego structure for our "children", we start by taking out the instructions (**Image**). This little booklet that tells us how to turn all these little pieces into a sturdy piece of furniture or a cool Lego structure that we can play with. Without the instructions, we would struggle to build anything close to resembling the picture on the box.

Once we take a good look at the instructions our loved one commissions us to start building. Whether it is our overly excited child who can't wait to get playing with their new Lego toy, or our lovely spouse that can't wait to organize those new books/movies we received for Christmas.

Now, more often than not, we find ourselves needing a little help along the way. Sometimes we can't understand a step, or we can't seem to find a piece, or the structure we are building looks nothing like the picture on the box, or we need a tool we don't have. Sometimes we need help in building the furniture or Lego toy (**Image**).

Well, today we commemorate Jesus' ascension into heaven. Today we reflect on the risen Christ's last words to his disciples, to us. And what we hear from Jesus is instruction, commission, and promise.

Like our IKEA or Lego experience, Jesus points us towards a booklet of instructions. The Holy Scriptures, the Bible (**Image**). Where we learn about what it looks like to live in God's kingdom. Where we learn to live in ways that reflect this kingdom to others. Where we learn how to love as Jesus loves. Where we learn how to live out our faith everyday.

The Bible is our instruction booklet. When we dedicate time to reflect on the stories we hear in the Bible, whether through devotion, or in worship, or in a Bible study, we find ourselves being more able to live out our lives in faith, reflecting God's kingdom in the world. Loving one another as Jesus loves us.

Which brings me to Jesus' next point. After we have received instruction, Jesus commissions us to go and proclaim the good news. To start putting together our furniture. Our Lego structure. To create a community that reflects God's kingdom. A community that is welcoming, forgiving, and healing. A community that is a light to the nations.

Jesus instructs us, commissions us, and then leaves us with a promise. We will not be alone when trying to understand the Bible. We will not be alone when trying to reflect God's kingdom in our community. We will not be alone when trying to live out our faith.

Jesus sees that throughout his time here with us, we struggle understanding the instruction booklet. How many times did he say to his disciples, "Oh you of little faith"? Jesus sees that we struggle to live out the hospitality, forgiveness, and healing Jesus invites us to live out. Remember the stories where the disciples fail to heal someone, or where they fail to show hospitality, or where they struggle to forgive. Jesus sees that we need help in reflecting God's hospitality, forgiveness, and healing.

So, Jesus makes a promise to us. Jesus will give us the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit that will guide us. The Holy Spirit that will help us understand the instruction booklet we call the Bible. The Holy Spirit that will help us get back on our feet when we fail to live out the hospitality, forgiveness, and healing that reflects God's kingdom come. The Holy Spirit that inspires us and empowers us to love one another as Jesus loves us (**Image**).

We are not alone. Jesus helps us. Like the disciples, sometimes we have to wait a little longer than we like. But Jesus helps us.

This is the promise we receive. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus helps us live out God's kingdom come in the world. We bear witness to this promise in the lives of the disciples. We bear witness to this promise in the life of our community (**Image**). We bear witness to this promise in our daily lives.

Jesus instructs us, commissions us, and leaves us with a promise, so that through us, people continue to experience God's hospitality, forgiveness, and healing. So, we too, experience God's hospitality, forgiveness, and healing.

Let us pray, loving God, thank you for your instruction that we receive through your Holy Scriptures. Thank you for the Holy Spirit that gives us the wisdom to understand this instruction. Empower us to live out this instruction in our lives, reflecting your

Kingdom come. Reassure us of your presence through the Holy Spirit when we fall short of this invitation. **Amen.**

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