

## Coming Home

- [Acts 16:9-15](#)
- [Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5](#)
- [John 14:23-29](#)

I wonder what home means to you? It is said that home is where the heart is... is your heart where your home is?

Let's take just a few minutes to talk to one another – find someone nearby to ask what does home mean to you and are your heart and home in the same place?

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For some of us, home is a place of joy and of comfort. For some of us it is where we live and also where we come from; Sarah Chesebro's Mom, Marianne Higdon, always asks me "Are you going home this year?" by which she means, are you going to England? There are several places in the world which feel like home to me, places I have lived and loved. But Los Osos is home now.

For some of us, home is a source of grief. We have left home and friends to move for many reasons – often to do with aging or health but also because of a sense of adventure and hope – and it takes time and energy to build home in a new place. A process made much worse by the presence of the coronavirus. Some of us have not moved but things have radically changed – we have lost a partner or a beloved pet, family have moved away, we are no longer able to do the things that have given us joy.

I bring all this up because Lydia invited Paul to come *home* with her, and Jesus said, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our *home* with them." That's amazing – that God would choose to come and make their home with me. I immediately think I had better rush home and tidy up

and sweep the floor before God arrives. But of course that is taking this far too literally – fortunately God does not care about the standard of housekeeping in our physical homes, but in our hearts.

And actually, God doesn't seem to mind too much about that either because Jesus did not say "Those who love me will keep my word and when they have totally gotten their act together we will come to them and make our home with them." No need to tidy up, just to love and keep Jesus' word.

I don't know about you, but if I have a guest for more than a day or two I do appreciate it if they help with the regular tasks of the home. Together we can get more done quicker, but it's still my home. I think the same thing applies to God – when God makes a home with us, they do so with the hope and intention that we will allow them to fully participate in our lives, not just be an honored guest who sits around and does nothing except eat what's put in front of them.

When we take God home, like Lydia took Paul home, we know that things will change. As God starts to live in the home of our hearts, God's love starts to change the way we do things. As we invite God to help us with the tasks of daily living so we may become less critical, less fearful, less controlling and more able to relax knowing that we will be given what we need. With God in the home of our hearts the serenity prayer becomes a way of life – the serenity to accept what we cannot change, the courage to change what we can and God's wisdom to know the difference.

But it is still our home – we get to decide how far we let God in. Will we let them in the back room – you know, the one where you store all your junk? Or maybe it's the garage, or a storage unit. It can take courage to let God inside the closed doors of our hearts, the doors we have closed because of hurt or guilt or fear. And God does not push their way in. God is always a courteous guest.

But is it enough for God to be a guest?

St Augustine memorably said, "You have made us for yourself O Lord & our heart is restless until it rests in you".

At some point my friends it is time for God's home and our home to become one and the same. God is no longer a guest, God is all in all, God *is* the home. It is no longer my heart into which I invite God but God's heart in which I have my home. God's heart where God and I make our home together.

Jesus said, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them." Those who love me will keep my word.

I wonder what keeping Jesus' word means... Until this morning I always thought of it as obeying Jesus' commandments though he actually gave us very few. But now I think it means something a little different – the Greek verb is "To take care of, to attend to carefully". Perhaps it's more like Mary the mother of Jesus, who "pondered all these things in her heart". To *keep* suggests to put in a safe place, or to incorporate into one's life – those who love me will keep my words, finding them precious and life-giving and pondering them in their hearts.

In the reading from Revelation we heard John's vision of the new Jerusalem – a place where there is no need for a separate temple, where the light comes directly from God and a river of life flows through it. This is a wonderful and inspiring image of life in the fully realized, fully manifest, reign of God. And it is also an image of the heart of God – an image of the heart where God has made their home – the heart of God fully realized and manifest.

People of God, this is our spiritual work, this is our calling – to take Jesus home with us. To allow God to dwell in our hearts and to make us more and more Christlike until we are dwelling 24/7 in the heart of God. From which comes love, light and healing for the whole of creation.