



# Table Talk

By Rev. Timothy J. Swenson • ILT Dean of Chapel

The Day of Pentecost

June 5, 2022

## JOHN 14:23-31

.....  
*"If anyone loves me, he will keep my word..." Vs. 23*



The religious strivers among us hear these words from Jesus as a gauntlet thrown down at their feet. They take up the challenge with various levels of exertion, striving, obedience, and submission. The more ardently the challenge is accepted, the more exertion is expended. This vast enterprise of religious effort holds its truth even as it is expressed across the various religious categories... whether Christian, Jew, Buddhist, Hindu, or Muslim. All of them express their religiosity in a fervor of keeping their God(s) word.

Jesus is after something different here. He is after exposing your religiosity as a conceit. This exposure only happens by the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes to "teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I [Jesus] have said to you" (vs. 26). The Holy Spirit comes to teach you the reality of your human heart: it can't be trusted; neither can it be known by you; only God knows the human heart. The Holy Spirit comes to teach you the reality of your works: they can't be trusted either; for one thing, you don't know the affections of your own heart and so don't truly know the origin of your works. Secondly, you are such a finite creature, you are not able to discern the consequences of your works as they are carried through the generations.

Jesus is after something different here. Jesus is after giving you peace... His peace... Peace is not striving or exerting in the performance of religious deeds. The world only wants to give you peace as the result of achieving. Complete the task, then you can have peace. Achieve the goal, then the world provides peace. Finish the work, then you can rest. This is how the world and all its religions work. Jesus' peace is different.

Jesus' peace is always a gift, never an achievement. You can only receive it and, even then, it's not yours to possess but only to enjoy. Always and ever, it remains Jesus' peace. Jesus gives it to you as he comes to be your life in this old creation. Jesus comes to be the Lord of your conscience... the faith that possesses you rather than the faith you possess... the clean heart you've prayed for but never achieved. You displace Jesus from your conscience... from being your life... whenever your thoughts turn to "I must... I should... I ought." The spontaneity of Jesus as your life is lost only to be replaced by the considerations of your religious striving.

**Table Talk:** Discuss the distinction between a life of faith and a life of religious striving.

**Pray:** Father, hold me in the faith of Jesus. Amen



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**JOHN 14:23-31 ESV**

<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered him, If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. <sup>24</sup> Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

<sup>25</sup> These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. <sup>26</sup> But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. <sup>27</sup> Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. <sup>28</sup> You heard me say to you, I am going away, and I will come to you. If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. <sup>29</sup> And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. <sup>30</sup> I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, <sup>31</sup> but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.



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