

Many of you are aware that I was born and raised in Maine and many nod and say, “Ah, you’ve come back home.” But none of us can ever go back to the way things used to be; times change.

My question for us is this: Where is your home? For most of us blessed with the gift of shelter, the answer comes easily: a street, post office box, city/town, zip code. That location may or may not be a place where we feel at home. There is a deeper experience of being at home that comes to us in some places more so than others. Being at home may involve a particular room or chair, a view, a time of day, a particular season, a workshop, a familiar route, a garden, a retreat center, a trusted friend. It is important to discover when and where and with whom we have a sense of being at home because that is where God visits us. There is a French proverb that reads “God often comes to visit us, but we are seldom home.” The Gospel of Jesus Christ is that God yearns to come into our lives and make a home in us.

Jesus says: In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.

God wants to make a dwelling place in us and live in us. The Gospel is that such loving intimacy is God’s promise to those who open themselves to the divine love.

For us to be at home is to be open to the deep mystery of our being. This centeredness, settledness—call it what you will—is at the heart of what it means to be human. There is so much that goes on around us each day that is fragmenting, hurtful, damaging to our humanity that we yearn to revive and renew our spirits so that we may meet God, the intimate God.

We all suffer from homelessness. Not the lack of shelter which many Christians and people of good will rightly concern themselves; not even the changing configuration of families and households; rather the lack of a sense of home where we meet and are met by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. More than shelter or security, we need to value the times and places and people with whom we can be at home and be with God in loving intimacy.

God is so deeply, inexhaustibly bonded to us in Jesus Christ that the analogy of marriage or close friendship suggests itself quite naturally.

In an article entitled “The One Thing Necessary” the Rev. Judith Smith shared her struggle in learning to recognize God’s voice in her life. She acknowledged that it is difficult to hear the voice of God because there are so many other competing voices in one’s life. But there are some voices that we know very well and easily recognize. For example, she referred to her husband’s voice. *“I can even recognize his cough in a crowded room. I recognize it because I know him so well and I have lived with him so long and I love him so much. The same, I believe, is true of God’s voice. I will be able to recognize it only if I know God very well, if I live with God for a long time and if my love for God is single-minded.”*

Know God. Live with God. Love God. How shall we do these things if we do not know how to at home with God? We need God’s Spirit to help us identify where and when and perhaps with whom we are most at home I.e. most available to God. The basic disciplines of prayer, bible study, worship, fellowship, and service are among the ways that we make our home with God.

Not the least of those disciplines is service. Someone I met recently told me that God had transformed his life by living and working among the poor in Bangor.

Where is your home? Where is Christ standing at the door and knocking and waiting to be welcomed? Are you ever at home when God comes to visit? If not, why not? If not now, when?

The commentators point out that the same Greek word used in John 14 rooms, dwelling places, home can be used interchangeably “there are many rooms in my Father’s house.” I still have an attachment to the KJV’s “mansions.” You and I are those mansions, dwelling places, abodes, rooms where God, in infinite love, comes to abide. God will never force the door, but patiently wants to be granted admission and permission to make our lives his mansions. We cannot begin to desire strongly enough that glory which he promises to provide. But even now, we have a hint when we are at home and can say, “Come, Lord Jesus.”

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St. Thomas’ Church, Camden  
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