

6th Sunday of Easter “B”
2018

As a kid summer days were the best days that God ever created. You get up in the morning and eat a little cereal and settle in front of the TV watching cartoons that make you laugh out loud. You wander into the backyard and soon your friends and you would all be together fighting to save the world. Warm days made lawn sprinklers into water parks right there in your own front yard. You would stay out late – cause there was no school and catch lightening bugs and lay in the cool grass and watch the stars. I miss those days.

Mom was a staple during those days – she would lean out on the back door and say – let’s go to the pool! That would send us into euphoria. A great hot day – AND time with our friends! Life was perfect. Unless she ended the proclamation with a statement like – “As soon as we all clean our rooms!” Hearts would sink – and I would think to myself, “No way! My room was a mess!” It didn’t seem fair.

Mom and Dad had a way of always following up good news with a challenge. “Who wants popsicles?” Well, of course I did – so up my hand would go! “As soon as we clear the dishes.” “Your Mom is having another baby!” Awesome a new brother or sister on the way. “Well, that means she going to need our help so here is a new list of chores!” What? I’m not having a baby – why are my chores being increased. Everything that was great news was usually tied to a challenge that we were expected to rise to as part of a family.

Jesus is offering us the same thing today – good news and then a challenge. The good news is that he loves us. And that’s awesome – cause we all know that at times we can do some pretty unlovable things. We make mistakes – we say some unkind things – we forget our manners with each other. Some times we don’t pray or keep up our end of the conversation. And it doesn’t really seem to matter – Jesus loves us – unconditionally – that kind of love that kisses skinned knees and heals broken hearts. Jesus loves us with a love like no other. And that’s the best news ever. And we should feel good

about that! It should warm our hearts and at times – give us goose bumps.

As Jesus is telling us of this good news – he’s also hanging out the back door with a challenge, “Love one another as I love you!” Wait! What? You mean like a real love – not just politely dealing with each other? It seems like it’s almost a set up for us to fail.

It’s a challenge that Jesus sets before us – and then he asks us to rise to the challenge. He challenges us to actually get involved with the people around us – to engage with each other and love each other even when others make mistakes—even when they do unlovable things. He calls us – challenges us to be like him – to have the kind of love that can look beyond differences in how we look – who we love – ideologies that we espouse and differences in opinion we hold.

This good news and this challenge comes to us from a God who promises to stay with us along the way – when we get it right and even when we don’t. Let us embrace the good news of Jesus’ love even as we accept the challenge to be more loving and tolerant of each other. May we always know the love of God in how we treat each other.

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