



Sunday, May 25, 2025  
John 14:23-29 (Sixth Sunday of Easter)

Ascension Lutheran Church  
Pastor Tony Acompañado

***Christ is Risen!***

*“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.” “Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”*

I hope that you will hold on to these words...and let them take root in you. Let them be the foundation from which you speak and act. Let them be the ears with which you listen, because what I’m about to say to you is grounded deeply in these words.

Each time I begin thinking about an upcoming sermon I start by taking a closer look at *my life, your lives, our community, our country, and our world* to see how the gospel might connect with what’s happening. How might the Word of God guide us? What is it calling for and asking of us? What challenge, comfort, hope, or encouragement is it offering us? And how might we live out the gospel in the current context of what is happening? Oh...and just in case you weren’t aware...that is what we’re called to do...*live the gospel*.

Most weeks that I’m scheduled to preach a sermon can go in any number of different directions. But some weeks something happens, a situation arises, and the decision is made for me – I simply cannot *not* preach about that situation. I feel that by not preaching about a particular situation it would be a betrayal of both my vocation *and* my calling as your pastor.

Well, this is one of those weeks. Because ever since I.C.E officers arrested and detained one of Ascension’s members from our Spanish language community, along with the prayer vigil that was held later that evening, it has many in our community feeling even more anxious, saddened, overwhelmed, and powerless. Some hearts are troubled and afraid. Some are angry. Some are skeptical and cynical. Some are breaking with compassion and some are hardening. But this isn’t a judgment about anyone, it’s simply a recognition of what’s happening in our world and our need for the peace of Jesus. We need his peace within us, between us, and among us.

I wish I could tell you that Jesus’ peace will fix this situation and make everything better. I can’t, because I don’t think that’s what Jesus’ peace does. His peace isn’t necessarily the absence or end of conflict, the resolution of our problems, or unity and agreement. I believe his peace is more about what’s going on within us than what is going on around us.

I think we all want a solution to this situation. For many of us though, a solution to conflict or a difficult situation usually means that *someone else* needs to change what he or she says, does, or believes. However, Jesus’ peace is not about changing someone else, but about changing us. We don’t have the power to change anyone else’s heart but our own. But I wonder if we’re truly willing to let Jesus’ peace change our hearts.

A heart at peace sees the other as a human being even in the midst of conflict and disagreement. When my heart is at peace the hopes, fears, concerns, and needs of others are as real to me as my own. When my heart is at war, however, the other is an object, an issue, an obstacle – and irrelevant to me.

Will we choose to live with our hearts at peace or at war? That’s the question each one of us must answer, and we do. Every day we answer that question in the ways we choose being toward others. How do we want to be toward the other, whether that other is an immigrant, an Immigration and Customs officer, a democrat, a republican, or even our president?



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Sure, we can continue arguing with one another about who's right or wrong and what's the right or wrong thing to do...and where's it getting us? Because the deepest way in which we're *right or wrong* is in our way of being toward others.

That's why we held a prayer vigil this past Tuesday evening at Ascension. Because we want to be right in our way of being towards others. We want to live with a heart at peace. And that's not always an easy task. It means we might have to make difficult changes in our thinking, attitudes, speaking, and actions.

Unfortunately I don't have the perfect answer to this situation. I don't know when, how, or if it will get fixed, but I do know this. Before the people being arrested were immigrants, illegals, or any of the other names with which they've been labelled; before any of that they were, are, and always will be human beings created by and in the image and likeness of the same God who created you and me.

This is also true for the Immigration and Customs officers. Before these men and women were I.C.E agents, employees of the federal government, or any of the other names with which they have been labelled; before any of that they were, are, and always will be human beings created by and in the image and likeness of the same God who created you and me.

And the same applies for every name that has been thrust upon us or those we cast on others...addict, broken, failure, loser, not good enough and every other label that diminishes the wholeness and peace God intends for all. Because before any of that *they and we*...were, are, and always will be human beings created by and in the image and likeness of God.

My friends, no one is immune from the tragedy of this situation. But we all have the choice to decide which side we'll stand on, and I hope we'll choose to stand on the side of humanity. And isn't *that* the call of the gospel? Isn't *that* where *Jesus* stands?

Over and over again Jesus chose to be right in his way of being toward others. He stood with and reached out to those in need. He called the disciples to "*come away*" and "*rest for a while*" because "they had no leisure even to eat". He had compassion on and fed the five thousand when the disciples wanted to send the crowd away to find food for themselves somewhere else. He identified himself with the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, the imprisoned, and said that what we do or do not do for them is what we do or do not do for him. He chose to touch the people that the law declared to be untouchable.

*"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you." "Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."* ***This peace that Jesus gives is a call for us to be peace to others.*** We are called to bring the peace of Jesus into the midst of chaos and conflict, to live with a heart at peace and to be right in our way of being toward others.

What might that look like for you today? Where and with whom is your heart at peace and where and with whom is it at war? What would you need to do or change in order to be right in your way of being toward others – toward the immigrants, the Immigration and Customs officers, and everyone else? Jesus has already given us his peace. Now what will we do with it? Thanks be to God. Amen.