



Sunday, May 10, 2026  
John 14:15-21 (Sixth Sunday of Easter)

Ascension Lutheran Church  
Pastor Tony Acompañado

A church member recently told me about trying to assemble one of those “easy-to-build” furniture kits. You know the kind. The box says *simple setup*, the instructions have no words – only vague and confusing pictures. And somehow when you finish, things don’t exactly line up, you have leftover screws, and the shelf slightly leans to one side.

The person said halfway through the project, they were convinced the manufacturer had left out an important piece. So she did what many of us do in moments of crisis...she called her mother.

Now, mind you, this mother lives three states away and has never *seen* this bookshelf. But within thirty seconds she said, “*Did you check the cardboard flap on the side of the box?*”

And of course – hidden there was the missing piece.

Mothers and mother figures have a way of helping us find what we thought was missing. Sometimes it’s practical. Sometimes it’s comfort. Sometimes it’s presence. Sometimes it’s the voice that says, “*You’re gonna be okay.*”

And that matters, because many of us know what it feels like to believe something essential is missing. Peace feels missing. Hope feels missing. Patience feels missing. Connection feels missing. Sometimes even God feels missing.

And into that uncertainty, Jesus speaks these words from John’s Gospel, “*I will not leave you orphaned.*”

Jesus is speaking to anxious disciples. He’s preparing them for change. Everything familiar is slipping away. They sense difficult days are ahead. Questions are looming. Their world feels unstable. They’re afraid.

But Jesus doesn’t meet their anxiety with denial. He doesn’t say, “*Everything’s going to stay exactly the same.*” He doesn’t promise an easy life free from struggle or conflict.

Instead, he promises presence. “*I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate... You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.*” The Greek word for Advocate is *Paraclete*, and it means comforter, helper, companion, encourager, one who comes alongside. In other words: *You will not be abandoned.*

And that promise matters to us today. Because we live in a world where many people feel exhausted and overwhelmed. We wake up to news of war, violence, political division, economic uncertainty, natural disasters, and so much more.

Families carry burdens behind closed doors that no one else can see. Some are struggling to pay bills. Some are caring for aging parents. Some are having relationship difficulties. Some are worried about their children. Some are grieving losses that still ache many years later. Some are smiling on the outside while quietly wondering how much longer they can hold everything together.

And today, on Mother’s Day, emotions are especially tender.

For some, this is a joyful day filled with gratitude. We give thanks for mothers, grandmothers, stepmothers, foster mothers, adoptive mothers, and all who serve as mother figures and nurture life with courage and compassion.

We honor the late nights, the sacrifices, the prayers whispered over sleeping children, the meals prepared, the tears wiped away, the encouragement offered again and again. But we also recognize that Mother’s Day can carry pain.



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Some are grieving mothers who are no longer here. Some carry strained relationships. Some long to become mothers. Some mothers are carrying heavy worries about children who are struggling, distant, or hurting.

And into all of it, Jesus says, **“I will not leave you orphaned.”** That’s a deeply personal promise. Jesus knows that we fear abandonment. We fear being forgotten. We fear facing suffering alone. We fear that when life becomes difficult, we won’t have the strength to endure it.

But Jesus promises an Advocate — the Holy Spirit — the living presence of God who stays with us.

Not occasionally. Not only in church. Not only when life is easy. But forever. That means when the world feels chaotic, God is still near. When anxiety keeps you awake at night, God is still near. When grief unexpectedly returns like a wave, God is still near. When the future feels uncertain, God is still near. And because God is near, hope is still alive.

*“I will not leave you orphaned.”* That’s not sentimental language. It’s resurrection language. Jesus says these words on the night before the cross. The disciples are about to watch everything fall apart. Yet Jesus promises that even death itself will not sever them from God’s love. That’s the heart of Easter faith.

Not that followers of Jesus avoid suffering. Not that faithful people never struggle. But that God comes to us in the middle of it.

We don’t climb our way to God through perfect faith or moral achievement. God comes down to us. Grace arrives first. Love begins with God. Mercy meets us before we have everything figured out.

Jesus says, “You didn’t choose me; I chose you.” And in today’s Gospel, Jesus says that the Spirit will abide with us, not because we earned it, but because God loves us.

Many mothers and mother figures embody that kind of love every day. Not perfect love, because no human love is perfect – but unwavering love. The love that keeps answering late-night texts and phone calls. The love that sits beside hospital beds. The love that cheers from bleachers and folding chairs. The love that forgives. The love that keeps praying.

And sometimes the people who mother us aren’t biologically related to us at all. They’re teachers. Coaches. Aunts. Friends. Foster parents. Church members. Neighbors. And *that* nurturing spirit reflects something true about God.

God’s love is fierce and tender all at once. And Jesus says that love now lives among us through the Spirit. Which means the church is called to become a community where people experience that same compassion.

And that begins in surprisingly ordinary ways.

Checking on a neighbor. Making the phone call. Listening instead of arguing. Offering forgiveness. Showing up. Trusting that small acts of grace still matter. Because the Spirit of God often works through ordinary people doing ordinary acts of love with extraordinary faithfulness.

And so today, Jesus gives us this promise once more, *“I live, and you also will live.”* Not merely survive. **Live.** Live with courage. Live with compassion. Live with hope. Live knowing that death and despair do not get the final word.

That’s our promise.

That the risen Christ continues to move among hurting people. The Spirit continues to comfort the weary. God continues to redeem broken places. Love continues to overcome fear.

So today, whether your heart feels full or fragile, hear this good news...



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**You are not abandoned. You are not forgotten. You are not alone.**

God is closer than your next breath. Jesus walks beside you. The Holy Spirit surrounds you. And even in uncertain times, hope remains possible.

So, may we leave today carrying that hope into the world.

May we become people who offer peace in anxious places. Love in painful places. Joy in weary places.

And may every mother, every grieving heart, every struggling soul, and every searching person know this truth:

The love of God still holds us. And it always will. Thanks be to God! Amen.