

Devotions for Friday, May 1, 2020
Bread for the Journey
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An Invitation

8Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." 9Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. 12Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. 13I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it. 15If you love me, you will keep my commandments. John 14: 8-15

"I will do anything you ask in my name." If ever there is a verse in the Bible that begs for some context this is it. By itself this verse seems just too good to be true. Who has not read these words and let their imagination run wild, for just a moment — "Anything? I can ask for anything? Well then ..."

These words of Jesus are not a blank check. "In my name" is not a magical formula, or an incantation to unlock limitless wealth, health and the adulation of others. This promise is not a get out of — jail, debt, the hospital, or trouble — free card. Rather it is an invitation.

The context for this invitation is the very long discourse between Jesus and his disciples after Judas has left the supper table, and before Jesus enters the garden where his betrayal, passion and death will begin. In chapters 13-17 of John, Jesus reinforces for the disciples (and for us) what is most important. This invitation, to experience the deep and powerful spiritual life available to those who enter into Jesus' community, is bookended by a new commandment to "love one another" (John 13: 34) and the reminder of the importance of love in this community of grace (John 14:15, a verse I added to the daily lectionary text assigned for today).

What does it mean to "love me (Jesus)", and what are his commandments? I remember him welcoming children into his presence. Who with little power might you carve out some time for? I remember him sitting at table with the socially disadvantaged, "sinners and tax collectors". Who do you encounter that our society treats as worth-less and how might you affirm the dignity with which they have been endowed by our Creator? I remember Jesus instructing us to love and pray for our enemies, and to forgive those who have trespassed against us. Who is one person that you might reach out to this day to "bury the hatchet" of a long standing dispute?

This is the realm in which anything is possible. When we ask Jesus to enable us to love as he loved, *so that the Father may be glorified in the Son* we will discover God's great generosity. A generosity becoming in us a fountain of grace, flowing freely in our lives, through our lives, to water a world dying in a desert of its own misunderstanding, greed and resentment.

In your prayer life, in which you can ask for anything, ask for love.