

## He Lives!

*To Call You To Live For Him*

## A Sermon on John 14:15-21

Year A - Easter 6  
21 - May - 2017

Confirmation Sunday

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JJ<sup>1</sup>

Scott, do you remember back a few weeks ago when we had our exit interview? Remember that we reviewed the different questions I'll be asking you in a few minutes. You, like the confirmands who came before you, were glad to know that all your responses would be printed in the bulletin. Well, what if I told you I was going to add another question. Maybe you'd think that wasn't quite fair to put you on the spot. Well, I'm going to do it anyways. In fact, I'm going to do it right now.

Scott, do you love God?

Whew! Easy question, right? Of course you love God! You wouldn't be here today if you didn't. I also know you love God because I've heard you confess that love in all kinds of ways with the confession of your lips and with the way you live your life.

Today Jesus says to you, and all of us here today: "If you love me, hold on to my commands." Now you know that Jesus doesn't say, "If you love me, try your best to hold on to my commands," or "If you love me, you'll make sure you're at least better than half the people around you." Jesus says, "hold on to my commands." Have you done that perfectly?

No, you haven't. You and I know it's because of our sin. When Jesus says "If you love me" he uses the Greek word that describes unconditional love. He's really talking about the first commandment: *You Shall Have No Other Gods*. In other words, *Love Me First*.

Every time we sin, we reveal that yes, even as believers, we fail to love God perfectly. We reveal that there is a part of us that still isn't converted, and never will be. It's that ugly passenger we carry throughout life—the sinful nature. As you mentioned in your essay you presented last night, you can thank mom and dad for that.

Every parent wants their children to carry their good traits, and prays and works hard to make sure their children won't carry their bad traits. But the sinful nature is more than just a trait. As you mentioned in your essay, this has been a characteristic of humanity ever since Adam and Eve fell into sin so long ago. This sinful nature doesn't just make it so that we have a bad relationship with God when we are born into this world. We have no relationship with him besides being his enemies! By nature we don't even like God, let alone love him!

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<sup>1</sup> JJ is the acronym for *Jesus Juve*, which is Latin for "Jesus Help". It is a short prayer used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the beginning of their work.

Because of this, there is no way would could ever meet God's perfect demands. There was no way we could even keep the first commandment! That's why Jesus says "the world cannot receive [the Holy Spirit] because it does not see him or know him."

But you know that God's plan wasn't to leave you or anyone else orphaned from him for all eternity. What Adam and Eve destroyed in the Garden of Eden, God always wants and always works to restore for all people so that we would be his own forever and love him. That plan began long before today. It started long before you were ever baptized. It started before there ever was time!

Before God even created the world, he had a plan for you—**A PLAN TO CALL YOU TO LIVE FOR HIM.** God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, knew that when he created the world, Adam and Eve would sin. But instead of planning to start all over again, God made a plan to make everything right. You can imagine that conversation within God sounded at least a little like this: God the Father speaks, "God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, our creation is going to turn from us. They're going to ruin our perfect creation, and more importantly they're going to destroy the perfect relationship

with us that we're going to create them with. So here's the plan."

"Son, you're going to go into that world. You, the creating Word, are going to become a part of our creation. You are going to take on their human flesh. And you are going to live the perfect life they cannot. You are going to suffer at the hands of wicked men. You are going to be crucified. You are going to suffer my eternal wrath against sin on the cross. And finally,

you're going to die and rise again three days later. And yes, you're going to do this for all people of all time, each one of them who rejects and hates us by nature. Yes, you will suffer for every one of their sins—every one of them that considers your sacrifice as cheap and insignificant."

"Holy Spirit, we're going to send you to live in people's hearts. You're going to create faith in their hearts

by pointing them to the Son as their only Savior from sin. You're going to shower our spiritual gifts down on them. And yes, you're going to do this for people who in no way deserve it. You're going to do this for many who at first will receive you with joy, then kick you out of their hearts. You're going to do this for those who hold on to their faith, even as they daily soil and stain the sanctuary of their hearts with their sin. But you will purify their broken and contrite hearts of repen-



tance by pointing them again and again to the blood of the Son poured out for them.”

Scott, this is the plan that God set in motion. From eternity, he called you and named you as his own child. Trusting in God’s promises, your parents brought you into this house of worship to be baptized. It was there God spoke to you personally his eternal promise that he would not leave you as an orphan. It was there that God the Holy Spirit planted in your heart, the love of Jesus your Savior. When God looks at you, he sees the perfect love of God the Son and his perfect obedience to all of God’s commands.

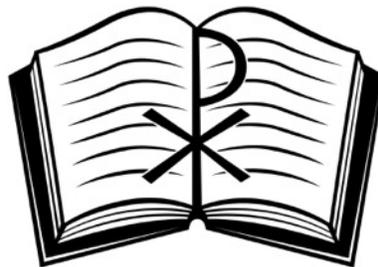
How can you know that all this is still yours today? Jesus says you can be certain of this because the Holy Spirit “stays with you and will be in you.”

And because the Holy Spirit lives in you by faith, Jesus also promises you that “Because I live, you also will live.” Because Jesus is alive, you and all God’s people, will live in blessedness and holiness forever in heaven!

What is our response to this Good News? **JESUS LIVES TO CALL YOU TO LIVE FOR HIM!** Today isn’t something commanded in God’s Word. While it is a human rite/ceremony, it is built on all the things we’ve just talked about and gives you an opportunity to not only express your Christian faith but also to promise before your fellow believers your great desire to

love God and hold on to his commands—**TO LIVE FOR HIM.**

Scott, very soon you will be publicly confessing your baptismal faith which has continued to grow over these last 14 years. Very soon, you will be making some serious and solemn promises, not only to God’s people, but to God himself. But you know what? You don’t have to be afraid. You can be just as confident to answer those questions and make those promises as you were answering my question a few minutes ago: Do you love God?



You can be confident because your confidence isn’t in yourself—how good you are or how great your faith is. You are confident because Jesus lives! You are confident because God the Holy Spirit has made his home in your

heart through water and God’s Holy Word. You are confident because Jesus is your Savior. You are confident because Jesus gives you life and promises to bring you home into eternal life.

God’s peace fill your heart and all our hearts, knowing that Jesus lives! He lives and calls us so that we would live for him. Amen.

SDG<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> SDG is an acronym for *Soli Deo Gloria*, which is Latin for “To God Alone Be The Glory”. This is a statement of humility used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the end of their work to let themselves and others know that it isn’t about getting glory for themselves, but about giving all glory to God.

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