

Dear Friends,

John 14: 18

Jesus says "I will not leave you orphaned".

Who do you think are the most famous orphans? Oliver Twist comes quickly to my mind. Or how about little orphan Annie from the musical. She and the other children in the orphanage sing of how they are living "a hard-knock life". She also has hope. She sings of how "the sun will come out tomorrow". She believes that things will get better.

I wonder how you are, how life is going for you? Is yours a hard-knock life or has the sun come out for you, making everything bright and beautiful? For most of us, it's a bit of both. The sun does come out, but there are plenty of hard knocks as well. We do know that the problems of little people like us don't amount to a hill of beans in this crazy old world, but it is still our hill of beans, they are our hard knocks and we have to handle them as best we can. Quite often we can be warmed by the sun and beaten by the hard knocks at the same time. Happy and sad things come our way together and we don't know which to do first, laugh or cry.

In our passage the friends of Jesus are about to experience the biggest hard knock of their lives. Jesus is everything to them and soon they will think that they have lost him forever. He will be arrested and within hours, he will be put to death. While he's being executed, darkness will cover the whole of the earth. For his friends, the sun will definitely not come out tomorrow.

Jesus knows what is about to happen. He can see the devastation that his friends will feel. He therefore, with great love, tenderness and care, does everything to help them, so that they will not be overwhelmed.

And the promises that Jesus made to his friends then, are exactly the same promises that he makes to you right now. As you face your hard knocks, you can take hold of these promises.

Jesus promises not to leave you as orphans. Orphans are children without parents. In the days of Jesus, orphans were vulnerable; they had no one to turn to; no one to take care of them. At that time, the word orphan was also used for disciples who were without a teacher. Socrates was one of the great Greek philosophers. He had many disciples who followed him, while those in power were frightened of him and his teaching. Eventually he was condemned to death. He had to be his own executioner by drinking poison. After his death his disciples were described as orphans. Orphans were both children without parents and disciples without a teacher.

Jesus promises that you will not be left as an orphan. You will not be left without someone to take care of you, because he will take care of you. You will not be left without someone to guide and teach you, because he will continue to guide and teach you.

Jesus also made another promise to his friends. He promised to ask God to give them a gift. This gift is the treasure in the field, the pearl of great price. It is worth letting go of everything else so that we may be open to receive this gift.

God bless you,

Tony