

Dear Friends,

John 14 1-14

Jesus promises to make his home in you and he asks you to make your home in him. He says, "Abide in me as I abide in you". We pray for this in the communion service when we ask God to feed us so that "We may evermore dwell in him and he in us". Our passage for this week gives us an opportunity to look at this mutual indwelling with God which is at the heart of the Christian life.

Jesus says that in God the Father's house there are many dwelling places and he is going to prepare a place for you. I can remember the care that my Mum would lovingly give to getting ready for any visit that I made with my family. My children still treasure the bits and pieces that she would place in the rooms where they slept because she knew they liked them. And I am still suffering from the hard stare that Kathryn gave me when I suggested getting rid of the Winnie-the-Pooh duvet cover which was hers on those occasions.

As my Mum lovingly prepared for us, I believe Jesus even more lovingly prepares a place for you. He says that he gets it ready so that "Where I am, there you may be also". He makes clear where he is a few verses later when he says, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me". The dwelling place of Jesus is in God. Jesus is doing everything necessary so that your dwelling place may also be in God.

The picture of Jesus dwelling in God is put in another way at the beginning of John's gospel. There it says, "It is God the only Son, who is in the Father's breast, who has made him known". The word translated here as "Breast" is usually translated as "Heart". Heart is pretty good shorthand for what it means, but it's not really what the word is. The Greek word is used in a number of ways. It is the curve in your chest between your arms, your breast, where lovers or babies rest; or it's a cove, a curve in the coastline where children play on the beach and ships weigh anchor and shelter; or it's a kind of pocket, if a sheep needed carrying, the shepherd would puff out the clothing on the top part of their body, put the sheep in the space created and secure it with their belt. God's breast is a spacious place like this. The dwelling place of Jesus is in the breast of God and he is preparing a place that you too may be where he is, that your dwelling place may also be in the breast of God.

God bless you,

Tony