



***“In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places.
If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to
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(John 14:2, NRSV)***

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We have a dwelling place with God. Like the 23rd Psalm this passage is often used as a reading at funerals. Just like the that psalm that’s a great use of it. The notion that we have a place with God which endures beyond death is wonderful. I have often reflected on what that might mean in a funeral service, especially given the Christian conviction that eternal life is re-embodied life and so things like hugs, personality, and conversation endure. We are fully and perfectly ourselves.

This passage is also about our place and relationship with God right now! Right now through the Spirit we have a dwelling place with God. We have been drawn into the relationship Jesus shares with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. There are lots of images of this in the Bible. Jesus is the vine, we are the branches on that vine and God the Father is the gardener. (John 15) Jesus is the High Priest, one with God and one with us, who brings us into the holy presence of God. (Hebrews 4) I could go on. In this image Jesus is the Son who goes to his Dad and prepares a room for us in the house of God. We become children with the same relationship and kind of place that Jesus the firstborn son has. This is true right now! It is not just true for some future time beyond death or when Jesus returns. Through the Spirit Jesus has already brought Heaven to Earth and Earth to Heaven and we already have a place with God.

What does this mean here and now. Among other things it means that we bring the new life of Jesus to all who we come in contact with. We bring the promise of renewal, restoration, and a future. Viruses, old age, global warming and even death do not have the final say. It is worth doing our bit, from social isolation, to recycling, to political action of all kinds and above all building relationships of love and friendship with all, including forgiveness, mercy, and compassion. The Bible uses the imagery of us being like salt, light, living stones, fruit bearing branches, sheep in the flock and so on. We are meant to be vehicles of hope, love, faith, peace, friendship and joy. We have a dwelling place with God. We have a place in God's love, God's love for us, and God's love for all creation.

Lord, may our lives reflect the reality of the living, loving relationship you share with us in Jesus through the Spirit, your love in our hearts, and may that reflected reality bring healing and friendship to our broken ad divided world. In Jesus' Name. Amen

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