

Easter 6, 2009  
Good Hope Lutheran Church  
CONFIRMATION  
John 15. 15

From the Gospel of John, chapter 15. Jesus was speaking and Jesus said, I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing. Instead, I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have heard from my Father.

The Word of God. And we pray:

Heavenly Father, we don't deserve to even be called your servants, but in your mercy you have made us your children, and called us your friends, and invited us to your home forever in heaven. Father, give us grace to follow wherever you lead. Shape us according to your word and will, and for the sake of Jesus who died and rose again let it be, that we become at last all that you want us to be. In the name of the same Jesus Christ we pray, AMEN.

Long ago and faraway, I was a high school junior back home in Kansas. And sometime during that junior year I got my very first, honest to goodness job. I cooked hamburgers at McDonald's. Fifteen, twenty hours a week during the school year, more than that of course when it got to be summer, just having a grand old time there under the Golden Arches, you bet. It got to the point I could make a Big Mac sandwich with my eyes closed, and to be perfectly honest about it, I usually did. Now there were some things about McDonald's I liked, and some things I didn't like—coming home at 2 a.m. smelling like a greasy onion was one of the things I guess I didn't like all that much—but here's one thing I did like. See, all I had to do. All I had to do at McDonald's was show up on time, take care of business, flip those burgers and get them on the bun, and I was fine. I was ok! People working beside me, some of them had problems, ok. And the store managers were always under stress and there were issues. Right? People there had issues, and there were various kinds of problems down at McDonald's—but they weren't my issues and they weren't my problems, uh-uh. I could say, with all honesty and complete sincerity, “Listen folks. I only work here. I only work here, those are my burgers, this is my spatula, that right there is what I have to deal with, what I don't have to deal with is anything else whatsoever. Nothing. I only work here.”

I was a good person then, wasn't I? Just a wonderful heart. Well, maybe not. And maybe I

could've, should've done better, and cared more for those around me, because what I want to talk about now is our life as Christian people. You see, you will notice if you haven't already. You will notice that this old world is filled with the kinds of situations I sort of half encountered down there at McDonald's. The people around us, they have issues. People we meet every day have problems, and they are under stress, and they've reached the breaking point. People around us, they don't know where to turn, they have run out of hope, and they don't know where to go to get more—they have no hope left! And those are just the people we meet every day, under what may be called "normal circumstances"—raise your eyes just a little bit. Raise your eyes and look around in a wider circle, around the wider world, and you will see people with no food, no homes, no friends, no nothing, you will see a planet that is simply coming apart at the seams. People are dying, they have issues, to say the least. Serious issues. And it is awful tempting for all of us to take the rather selfish attitude I had at McDonald's and make it our motto in life—It's not my problem, I only work here. Hey world! Not my problem! I only work here! Sorry!

Tempting, yes, but I'm here to tell you, Jesus Christ is not going to let you get away with that. In the Gospel lesson today, Jesus turned to His disciples *and to us*, and Jesus said "You don't just work here anymore. You're not simply my employees," Jesus said. "You are not just my servants. I have not called you servants, I have called you friends." Friends! Friends with God, that's pretty amazing, it means first of all I believe that our sins are forgiven and our past is erased and our future is guaranteed. It means we have a home forever in heaven, we are God's friends, Jesus said so, we get to go to the party that never ends, the one God has planned in heaven! Yeah.

Ok. But if we are His friends, and not just His employees, we don't get to say to anyone ever again, "It's not my problem, I only work here." You don't get to say that, to anyone, ever, because you don't just work here. You're God's friends, that means you have a higher calling. That means you have a deeper purpose, a deeper love, a deeper commitment. You don't get to blow issues off or brush people aside, that's not what God would do. God didn't brush you aside, God in Christ died and rose again to save you! Christ took your problems and took your issues

and made them His own, Christ loved you that much Christ rescued you! God wouldn't brush someone aside, so you don't get to either. You're His friend now, you get to act like it. You get to act like it, which means there is no issue out there you get to blow off, no pain that you will not take and help heal., you are as Christ was to this world. You don't just work here anymore. Not if you've been made, a friend of God.

On confirmation Sunday, I think God is giving us the chance to look at each other and our 10 young people especially, and to remind each other Hey. You know what this means? You know what it means to be baptized, to be confirmed, to be Christian? It means you don't just work here any more. Selfishness no longer has any place in your life. You don't just work here, and you won't just die here either, you live as God's friend and you will forever, That's His promise! That's His call. Eternal life as God's friends, beginning now. May it be so for all of us, and our confirmands especially, in the name of Jesus Christ, AMEN.