

SIXTHSUNDAY OF EASTER

John 14:15-21

Would anyone who knows us be able to tell that we are a Christian, without us telling them? Well, that's what we are first and foremost, we are Christians who worship in the Anglican tradition.

In our Gospel lesson today, Jesus is talking about a great truth of life, that great truth which says, if someone is a follower of His, that person will keep His commandments. What Jesus is describing is those who, by their words and actions, reveal the values of a true Christian. Can someone tell that we are a Christian by your actions?

The following might well be an accurate self description of a typical Anglican Christian, "unfortunately". A typical Anglican Christian might well say: "I'm a gambler. Oh, not the kind that frequents gambling casinos. You see, I gamble with my soul as the stake. I'm betting that I can live a life of indifference, a life of neglect of those things that are of the Lord, and still receive His blessings. I'm gambling with the souls of my children as the stake. Although I neither live righteously, nor influence them toward unrighteousness, I'm betting their souls on the hope that they will have wisdom to guide their own lives unto the Lord. I'm betting that I can ignore Christ's teachings, that I can fail to give as I am given to by Him, and that He will still bless me eternally; I'm betting I can have a nonchalant attitude toward the lost, and still please God. Yes, I'm a gambler, the most

reckless type: I'm a lukewarm Christian!"

Jesus is asking for committed Christians, ones who show by the action of their lives that they are keeping His commandments.

And the commandments can be summed up very easily, for Jesus only gave two commandments in the New Testament. One is to love the Lord Your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength, and the other is to love your neighbor as yourself.

So, can people tell, by our example, if we are a Christian? Now, being a Christian don't mean we have to quit our job and go to some foreign land as a missionary, in order to be a true Christian, but can they tell by the way we live our every day life here and now?

What would anyone of us have done in the following situation, that happened on live television during a televised football game? The game was tied after the fourth quarter, so the three captains from each team met at the middle of the field to flip a coin, to see who would get the ball first in the over time; this was very important, for the first one to score in the over-time period is the winner. The official tossing the coin had a microphone around his neck. The visitors called tails. The official flipped the coin and it landed with the heads up. The official forgot what the visitors had called so he said "What did you call?" Seeing the coin had landed heads up, one of the captains said, "We called heads". The other team tried to convince the official, unsuccessfully, that the visitors had lied, and one of them turned to the visiting team as they claimed the ball and screamed, "But I thought you were Christians".

This was said because on the evening before the game, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes had held a banquet. Many from that visiting team were in attendance, and gave a witness about how Christ was working in their lives. But I guess in

sports Christ is not as important as the saying of Vince Lombardi, when he said' "Winning is everything".

So, would any of us have told the truth, that we called tails, or would we have done what these self proclaimed Christians did, lied to get ahead? What would we have done?

That question is far more important than most realize, because, you see, the way we live our lives, expresses who we are in Christ. If we leave our Christian faith at the steps of the church when we leave on Sunday, and pick it up again on the way in the next Sunday, then we are not following Jesus' words in our Gospel lesson. Jesus is saying He wants us to be a follower of his each and every hour, and each and every each that we live.

The following closing story sums up the kind of life Jesus is calling us to live. It goes like this: "A farmer raised sheep, but next to him was one who raised wheat, children, and large dogs.

The dogs were always scaring the sheep, and sometimes even killing the baby lambs. The sheep farmer didn't know what to do. He would be justified if he shot the dogs, or poisoned them, he could even be nasty to his neighbor, or even take him to court.

In order to find a proper solution to the situation, the sheep farmer prayed about it. As soon as some new lambs were born, he gave one of the lambs to each of his neighbor's children as a pet. They, along with the sheep farmer, were thrilled. Their father could not longer allow the dogs to run free or they would kill the lambs, so the dogs were tied up. The two farmers became friends. Kindness and love made them winners".

Jesus says: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments". Loving our neighbor is one of the commandments Jesus is talking about. Living in Christ means living each day for Him and our neighbor.

AMEN.