



Youth Sunday



A Sermon By
Ms. Kiara Coleman

May 6, 2018
The Sixth Sunday of Easter
Youth Sunday
Grace Episcopal Church
Silver Spring, Maryland

An audio version of this sermon may be found on the Grace Church website at
<http://graceepiscopalchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/2018-05-06-KC.mp3>.

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Hello, My name is Kiara Coleman I am a senior at Bethesda Chevy Chase High School. My Mother is Kecia Brown, a member of the Altar Guild and Daughters of the King. My sister, Sarah Nia, is a Sunday school teacher. We've been worshipping at Grace for 10 years. Grace is a wonderful place, because of the people who make it. Grace has provided me the opportunity to do outreach to the community in many ways, especially through the homeless ministry.

When Rev. Amanda invited me to preach this Youth Sunday, I thought a lot about what I wanted to share with you this morning. I decided to share some of the things I've learned this year and how I've experienced God through it all. My senior year in High School has been full of surprises. I've experienced tension with my friends over the college application process, participated in protests and walkouts, and learned about diversity in unexpected ways. In all of these experiences, I have learned something about the love of God that Jesus talks about in today's gospel.

One lesson I've learned this year is that God calls us to stay in relationship with people and to love them even when it's difficult. I've discovered this through the college application process. It has been hard. It has been shown that it is harder to get into college ever than before. There is more access to application due to easier applications like the common app or coalition app. You are competing with the world but little do you know you're competing with your friends. People who you love and want to see succeed, but when you and three of your friends are applying to the same school, it is hard. My friends and I made a pact to not get angry at each other and stay friends no matter what. Sadly you sometimes make promises you don't keep. Only one of my friends got into the school. I wasn't as hurt but it was one of the top choices for one of my friends. She didn't get in and I saw it tear the group apart for a while. While in the moment rejection is hard, I have had my fair share, at some point it becomes petty to be angry about what someone had no control over. We have to remember that there are reasons for everything and even if we may not like them we have to see the light that can come from a dark situation. We have to keep loving those who we are close to us and not let outside decisions affect our relationships with people. That is one way to show love like Jesus loved.

Another way to show love for one another, is to actively support our sisters and brothers who face injustice. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their "thus saith the Lord" far beyond the boundaries of their home towns, and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town". This is very important today, whether it is about freedom to be who you are, freedom from being shot in your school, or for anything else you are passionate about. Even though I have not personally been affected by gun violence, I still walked out of school and still went to the march for our lives. I want to support my peers and help spread the word to the masses. Even if I am not the one on the podium speaking just being present shows that you care. I care about my fellow students even if I may not know them. I walked out one day, knowing I would miss most of my classes but as I was sitting in silence for 17 minutes in front of the White House looking at all the students and even adults that came to support us, I knew that we were creating something big and all of our passion and love for one another would make this movement great. That's why we come together, because as King said "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Justice is only possible through love.

Love is only possible through respect and compassion. This is another lesson I learned this year. I saw on Friday night people from all cultures and backgrounds coming out to the 4th annual Diversity night at my school. Minority Scholars Program, of which I am a part, hosts this event. There is dancing, singing, music, spoken word and more. As I was a participant I saw what people can do when they come together. I performed with my schools drumline and I could see people getting excited and dancing in the crowd, Mitchell choreography told a story about gun violence through a hip-hop dance and Camillo shared the stories of those suffering in Nicaragua, the same place where one of my best friends grandmother still lives and wonders if she is going to be safe. Even if our stories were different we could understand each other and relate to something. Loving one another doesn't have to mean being friends with everyone but it does mean having respect for those around you, understanding people, and being able to see through pain.

Jesus told his disciples to make themselves at home in his love and to love one another the way he loved them. Love takes many forms and sometimes the chance to show love sneaks up on us at unexpected times. I've learned that this year. I hope my experience helps you recognize similar moments in your life. Thank you.