

# THE FIRST 15

Tuesday, August 27, 2024

Today is Tuesday, August 27 and we are learning what the Bible says about the House of the Lord.

## OPENING PRAYER

*Oh, Lord, my Shepherd, how I look forward to these quiet minutes of the early morning alone with You. Thank You for Your faithfulness and steadfast love. I relinquish my worries, set down my burdens and rest in the stillness of Your presence. Whatever the upcoming day holds for me, I know You will be by my side, leading my heart and guiding my steps. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE

***Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going. John 14:1-4***

## REFLECTION

In John 14, Jesus promises His followers that His Father's house has many rooms. He says he is going to prepare a place for us. A place for you. A place for me. There is a room with our name on it. A room in eternity. In the Bible study, Epic of Eden, Dr. Sandra Richter offers a deeper insight regarding these words of Jesus to his disciples.

The society of ancient Israel was a familial, tribal system. An individual's link to the structures of society was through the family. A person identified their place in society through the patriarch's household first, then their clan, then their tribe, and finally the nation. The basic household unit of Israelite society was known as the "father's house." The household of the patriarch. This household was what we might call an "extended family" all living together under one roof or maybe in a collection of houses in the same area. An ancient Israelite household might include as many as three generations, up to twenty persons lived together in a family compound, collectively farming the land, raising children, caring for animals and sharing produce.

At the Last Supper, Jesus tells His disciples about His impending departure and the troubles they will experience. The disciples are confused and upset. Peter asks the question on everyone's heart: "Where are you going ... and can we go with you?" (John 13:36-37). Jesus responds with these words, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?" (John 14:1-3).

Jesus explains his Father's house has many rooms. For generations we have imposed our understanding of a house and a household on His words. In the King James Version the translation was "mansions." That is nice to imagine - an entire mansion to look forward to in the

afterlife. There are entire songs dedicated to “mansions in heaven” and the “mansion up over the hilltop” awaiting us when the roll is called up yonder.

But what Jesus is actually saying is far greater and more profound. It is breathtaking to comprehend. Our ultimate destination as the adopted children of God our Father is the family compound. The household of the Patriarch. And Jesus, the firstborn of the Father’s household, is going back to heaven to get a room in His Father’s house ready. Why? “So that where I am, there you may be also.” The goal of eternity is not a marbled mansion, but the joy of dwelling for eternity in the household of our heavenly Father. *(Adapted from Epic of Eden by Dr. Sandra Richter).*

**Ask:** How do I imagine my room in my Father’s House that Jesus is preparing for me? For a loved one?

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Blessed loving Lord God, thank You for the hope of eternal life and the joy of abiding in Your presence forever. Thank You for the promise that believing in Jesus Christ as Your Son and my Savior is the key to unlock the doors of eternal life. Thank You for loving the world so much that You made a way for me and others to dwell in Your house forever. I pray for my loved ones - those who have gone before me and those I will leave behind. May they all find their way to the Father’s House to abide forever in Your love. Amen.*