

"SOME FINAL WORDS AND THE FUTURE"

A Sermon By

Philip A. C. Clarke

Park Avenue United Methodist Church
106 East 86th Street
New York, New York 10028
June 13, 1999

In the shadow of the cross, Jesus could say, "I am not alone, for the Father is with Me". And across the years, His followers have known that conquering presence and power beyond their own. We are never completely on our own. We are also in His hands.

CLOSING

In conclusion, I remember as a 17 year old being introduced to the book, The Imitation of Christ, by Thomas A Kempis....a devotional book of many centuries. Perhaps you're familiar with it. If you've read it, you may remember that soliloquy which he once remembered and wrote down and recorded in his little book. It begins in a fretful and fearful mood when he tried to look ahead at what seemed like a foggy and a dreary and uncertain future.

"Oh" he mused....."If only I knew I would hold out to the last" And his own soul rose up and answered him with scorn. "Look back" it cried. "Has God ever failed you in the past?" And he said, "No."

"Look around you. Is He overlooking you today?" And he still answered, "No!" "And don't you know that that same God who has been, and who is, so evidently sufficient, will be with you every step on to the end, always...as gloriously sufficient for you then as now?" "I had forgotten that" confessed the saint, "And it did make my fears look foolish!"

So say we all. And God bless you all. And thank you for everything. Amen. Amen.

PRAYER

And now unto Him...who by the power at work within us... is able to do far more abundantly than all we ever ask or think...to HIM be the glory...glory in the Church - in this Church - and in Christ Jesus, our Lord....to all generations and in days, months, years to come. Forever more. Amen.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS: Sunday, June 13, 1999

GREETING / VISITORS

- A. We welcome the visitors...delighted to have you with us and we hope that we shall have the opportunity to greet you....either at the door as you depart, or time permitting....please be free in the sharing of your name with us...fill out a visitor card, or sign one of the Guest Books. COME, WORSHIP with us...COME, WORK with us in the...
- B. Doing the Lord's work here at this busy corner....since 1837. Roots are deep....fourth building out of which this congregation has ministered....minister here in the name of Christ and it is in His loving spirit...
- C. Members: be sure to wear your name tags. Greet a visitor...here in the sanctuary, or in the Russell Room. Bend over and greet a child. Get the name...remember it for next time!

PARISH CONCERNS

- A. The parish concerns are "lifted up" for you in the bulletin. Take a moment to review them on your own noting....the meeting set for this coming week:

Trustees: Monday evening, 7:30 pm.

Administrative Council: Tuesday,
7:30 pm

Finance Committee: Thursday, 7:30 pm

- B. Also, note that we have Bake Sale III today as a part of the coffee hour...followed by the annual meeting of the UMW, Third Floor. Choir picnic is scheduled for today at the town house of David and Gail Corvette...West 87th Street...
- C. Be sure to pick up your copy of the monthly news sheet, "A Word In Edgeways"...by the door...on the table...

COUNT DOWN

- A. While today is my last Sunday sermon, next Sunday will be my last Sunday....Ken Halcott will be preaching these last two Sundays of June....I will be here to baptize Heather Kipniss, daughter of Pam and Michael....they will be coming in from Darien, Connecticut.

- B. I've often wondered what I would want to say in my last sermon. There's so much to say and now so little time....both today and next Sunday I am and will be moved...very deeply. These 43 years have been great fun...never a dull moment...and a truly great experience.
- C. I shall be getting settled this week in Portland, Maine....and plan to run up there on Tuesday and return at the end of the week. Again, let me thank you for the wonderful party...farewell party of May 22nd. Further on down the line, I hope to get some thank you notes out to all of you....working on them.

WELCOME BACK

- A. Welcome back to Melissa and Jeff Fons...from California. Melissa was our Adult Fellowship coordinator back in the eighties...and met Jeff here.....are there other friends from former days with us today?

OFFERING

- A. Jesus said:

"It is more blessed to give than it is to receive....".

In this spirit let us now worship God with our morning offering....