

Sermon Notes: April 18, 2021

Focus: where is your upper room?

[Lectionary Readings](#)

Whatever nerdy details I give you in the notes today, my primary desire is to give you a sense of how powerful *we* can be when we gather in faith. Our prayer together is an “Upper Room” referred to in the scripture several times. On this auspicious Sunday, some of us will greet each other on the patio for the first time in over a year! And no less important, many will remain on YouTube to send Upper Room greetings in virtual worship. Both ways embody St. Timothy’s commitment to joint prayer.

The upper room(s) in scripture were real places where the disciples gathered during & after Jesus’ life. Full disclosure, today’s gospel is not specifically about the upper room, but it is about the disciples gathering at critical points so they could strengthen each other. We can make the Upper Room a metaphor for being stronger together. Biblically, the Upper Room is a stage where the Easter drama begins as well as being the springboard for the Holy Spirit showing up on Pentecost.

Corporate prayer helps us grow in ways that nothing else can:

- Yes, you can pray on the golf course, but it does not substitute for joining *together* to pray for God’s revelation. Props to Hideki Matsuyama for winning the 2021 Masters.
- Yes, you can find deep calm in individual meditation, but there is nothing like joining *together* to seek God’s peace.
- Both meditation and the golf course can be part of a spiritual life. Yet, both are incomplete without gathering together.

Thank God for technology. Our corporate Upper Room is bigger than ever. Our room is filled with lawn chairs on the patio, and PJ’s lounging on couches at home!

Now more detail and context

Luke’s Easter Season

(stories that are sandwiched between two Upper Rooms)

I have redacted Luke’s Easter stories below so you can see just the bare bones... no pun intended. The upper rooms (last supper and Pentecost) are book ends to the story.

Luke 24 (shortened for quick reference)

Jesus Has Risen 5 the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the (two) men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6 He is not here; he has risen!....(later) 12 Peter, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away....

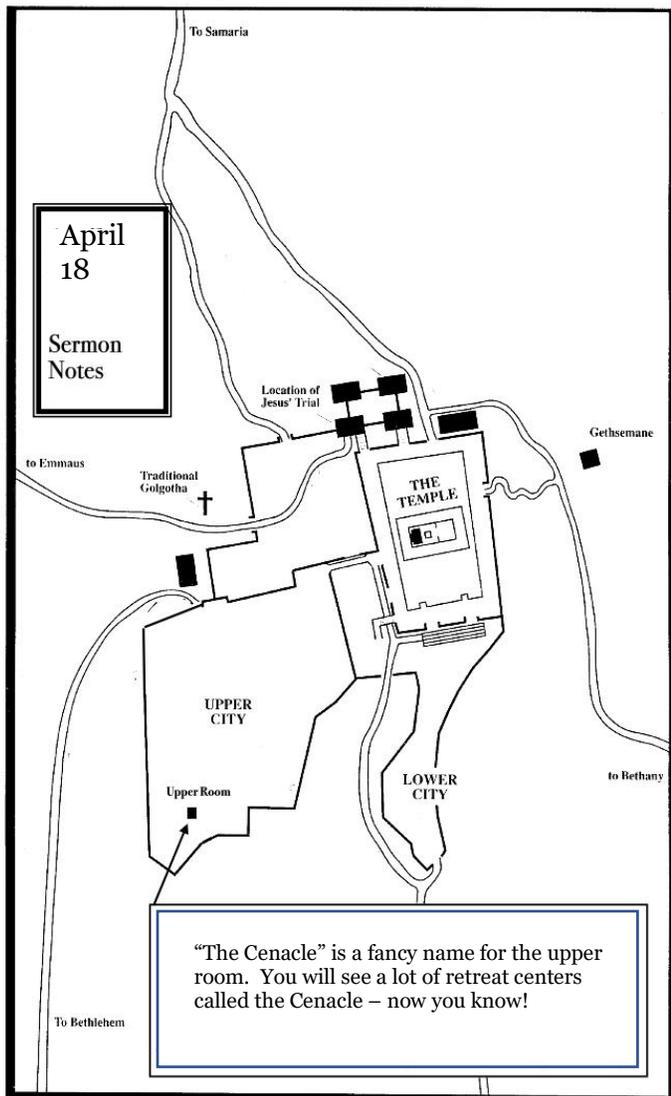
On the Road to Emmaus 13 Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus,.... As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them....30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.....33 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together...

Jesus Appears to the Disciples 36 While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”...41 “Do you have anything here to eat?”...

The Ascension of Jesus 50 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany....he left them and was taken up into heaven. **Pentecost soon after**

Connections to The Liturgy

- Betrayal started in an Upper Room. Maundy Thursday
- Resurrection /Easter Sunday (April 4) – Christ is Risen!
- Easter Season (now until Pentecost Sunday)– The resurrected Christ (in a human body) pops in to see his friends
- Pentecost kicks off in an Upper Room (maybe the same one)



The Upper Room (s) location

The Upper Room's location is not certain. Could have been in the suburbs of Jerusalem. It could have been in Jerusalem proper. What is likely is that there was a supporter who regularly loaned the upper floor of his house for the disciples to meet. The last supper and revelation of Holy Spirit at Pentecost started in an Upper Room.

I believe the Spirit shows up in the upper room specifically to reassure the disciples that none of Jesus' journey was an accident. And maybe their journey with the Spirit stopped and started at the same spot.

Acts 2 says, “a sound like the rush of a violent wind filled the entire house where they were sitting.”

I prefer to imagine the rush of the Holy Spirit not happening in the Temple but near the Temple. (God for the outsider).

Endnote -Everything is so close together. From the Upper Room to Garden of Gethsemane, it is about 10 football fields, as the crow flies (around a mile).

Links about Upper Room
(from a blog)

<https://upperroommedia.org/blog/2019/07/16/the-significance-of-the-upper-room-to-the-early-church>

(from Wikipedia)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cenacle>

Can't wait to see you via YouTube and patio. **Todd**