

**Fifth Sunday in Easter**

**May 3, 2026 • 10:30am**

**Trinity Episcopal Church • New Orleans, LA**

**The Rev. Lex Breckinridge**

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be always acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer.

I'm going to invite you to go away for the next minute or two, to close your eyes and go far away from here. Now, I'm going to trust you to come back, but the place I'd like for you to visit for the next few minutes is the place you call home.

Now, that place is going to look and feel differently for every one of us, but I hope that wherever home is for you, whether it's the place you grew up, or the place you came back to as a young person, or the place you live now, bring back its images, bring back its impressions, bring back its smells, its texture, its feel, and hold that right in front of you, home. It's different for each one of us. The poet Robert Frost said that home was that place where when you show up, they have to take you in.

That's not a bad definition. Home means a lot of different things to me. It's what Zannie and our children, Alex and Barbara and Robert and I, made for one another many years ago in a pretty generic subdivision called Barton Creek West in Austin.

The place where, when I walked in the door in the evening, I felt accepted and held and cared for. There was a single round wooden table in an alcove where we gathered every night to share a meal and talk about whatever needed to be talked about. A place where we shared laughter and sometimes conflict.

A place where we taught each other about life, and I can tell you our children taught us as much about life as we taught them. It was a place where we loved each other. The walls of that generic brick house and that generic subdivision radiated the love of the five souls that dwelt there.

Even when there was conflict, and believe me there was conflict from time to time, there was a deep knowing that even those conflicts were part of the richness of our lives together. A white frame house with a wraparound porch in a little town called Beckley, West Virginia is another place I go when I go home, even though it's been 60 years since I sat on that porch. It was my grandfather's house.

It was a place where a little boy could find some fresh-baked peanut butter cookies, a cold 7-Up and those old-fashioned 7-ounce bottles, and a friendly lap to sit on. Where that little boy could hear stories about long ago Virginia, or listen to a Cincinnati Reds game on the radio with his grandfather. A place where I was always welcome, and it didn't much matter whether I had been good or bad that day, home.

Now some of us might not have such pleasant memories of home. Home might have been cold or abusive or scary, but all of us can imagine, I think, a kind of a perfect home. A home so full of love and joy and peace that anyone and everyone was welcome.

That's the kind of home we hear Jesus telling his friends about in this morning's gospel reading. It's a home that's big enough and spacious enough and wide open enough. A place with so much love and joy and peace that everyone is welcome.

I like the old King James translation of this passage, in my father's house there are many mansions. Suggests the infiniteness of the home that God calls us to. And it's not only that there's just enough space for everyone, it's just the right place for each one of us.

But you know Jesus's friends have a hard time getting this. Thomas and Philip are frustrated Jesus won't give them the information they want. Thomas says something like, hey you tell us about this great place that sounds like heaven, but you won't tell us how to get there, or even you won't even tell us what it's like.

And Philip, well old Philip, he must have been from Missouri. Show me, he says, show me something real. Show me the way to the Father and I'll be satisfied.

I think we sometimes have the same problem the disciples do. They want head knowledge. You know the old saying, knowledge is power.

Give me knowledge, give me information, give me a roadmap. I want to know where I'm going and I want to know exactly the route I'm gonna take to get there. We want to be in charge.

We want to be in control. We want certainty. It's too hard for us to tolerate uncertainty.

But Jesus doesn't offer us certainty. Jesus offers us something different. Jesus offers us himself.

We want a roadmap. Jesus wants our hearts, our minds, and our bodies. We want a rulebook.

Jesus wants all that we have and all that we are. And Jesus says, as you give me that, as you give me all of you, you'll begin to know the Father because you'll begin to know me. The Father and I are one.

Now you notice he doesn't say, I'll show you the way or I'll tell you the way. He doesn't give us a PowerPoint presentation or hand us a roadmap. He says, I am the way.

Believe in me, which means trust me. Fall in love with me. Let me have your whole self, body, mind, and spirit.

If you'll give yourself, if you'll give your whole self to me, if you'll dwell with me, then you'll dwell with the Father. And there, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, is what heaven is all about. Knowing Jesus in that way, knowing Jesus in the way of intimate relationship, we're invited to be as close to the Father as Jesus is.

So this dwelling place that Jesus is preparing for each one of us, for you and for me, you know, it's not so much about a particular place. It's about a relationship. Jesus doesn't offer us a description or a how-to manual.

He offers us himself. And that, stop and think about it, that really tells you something about the nature of heaven and the nature of home, doesn't it? If you think about it, home isn't so much about this or that particular place as it is about relationships with the people who live in the home. Their warmth, their joy, their hospitality, their love, their acceptance of us for better or for worse.

That makes home the place we want to be. You know, it's the same with heaven. It's life with Jesus, and through Jesus, life with God.

That's what we really want, isn't it? Not a roadmap to some abstract place up there or out there. Our deepest desire is to be loved and embraced and accepted with all our faults and flaws and shortcomings by the one who's calling us home. This is one of the most misunderstood passages in all of Scripture.

Let me tell you what it's not about. It's not about making sure you check the Jesus box. It's not about giving mental assent to some abstract set of propositions so you can make sure that you get to some faraway place called heaven when you die.

And it's sure not about fire insurance, if you know what I mean. Not at all. Think about it this way.

God loves you so much that he sent his only son into the world to bring you home. Let me say that again. God loves you so much that he sent his only son into the world to bring you home.

God loves you so much that God has made a place for you in that infinite space where Jesus is waiting for you. So the next time the world feels a little overwhelming, the next time the world feels a little bit out of control, the next time you feel weary or feel lost, maybe even feel abandoned, why not take a minute and stop and reflect on home? The home you love or the perfect home you imagine?

And as you do, as you reflect on home, listen to the voice of the one who is forever saying to you and to you and to you and to you, welcome home.

Amen.