

John 14:1-14

¹⁴“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.

⁴And you know the way to the place where I am going.” ⁵Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ⁶Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” ⁸Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” ⁹Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves.

¹²Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

" How Can We Know the Way?"

John 14: 1 - 14

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La Habra UMC

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I am what some people describe as a “Directionally Challenged” person. If I make two turns in a strange place, whether in a car or on foot, I get lost. I don’t know which direction I am going unless I pause and figure out the East, West, South, and North. So, Thomas Guide was my companion and savior until the navigators come out.

" How Can We Know the Way?" If Thomas did not ask, I’d have asked that question.

The passage we've read this morning is the beginning of a section called, "The Farewell Discourse of Jesus". The Farewell Discourse was not a new concept in the ancient Mediterranean world. It was a common genre of literature.

In the Old Testament, you read several of these farewell speeches.

- Jacob had farewell speech and blessing of his twelve sons in Genesis 49. Joshua had farewell address in book of Joshua chapters 22 - 24.
- King David's farewell and instructions to his son Solomon and the royal court is recorded in the first Chronicles chapters 28 & 29.
- The most extended example of the farewell address is in the book of Deuteronomy. The entire book is actually Moses' farewell speeches to his people.

It is like the summary of all one tried to teach his or her successors. It is like the speech you give your children or grandchildren before they leave home whether to go to college or join the military service or get a job.

You have raised them with good intentions, taught them what you know about life, and gave them tools to survive in the real world. Now you need to them loose in the big world. Just one more time, with sincerity and trepidation, you remind them again what you've taught. Because once they leave home, you can not directly influence them.

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Jesus taught the disciples for the last three years. In a few days he would be crucified. He knew he had to leave them behind. He also knew the persecutions his disciples had to encounter from then on.

His heart was heavy. He wished he could spare the agony for them. But he also knew this was something the disciples had to go through.

The pain of being faithful to what they believed would be like growing pain for those disciples. Through the growing pain, they would become more mature.

Just like children have to leave the parents in order for them to grow up to be fully adults, the disciples had to experience the real world and test out what they had learned from Jesus.

So the chapter starts out with the words of encouragement: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me."

Knowing that the disciples would fear separation from Jesus once he was captured and died, he promised that they would ultimately be reunited with him in his "Father's house." The Father's House was actually to where Christ himself was going to prepare them a place.

This passage is usually read in the funeral or memorial services, with the understanding the Father's house is heaven where we will all unite in eternity. But the Father's house is not exclusively about location.

God's house is also about relationship. In this relationship, as well as in any heavenly dwelling itself, there are many rooms. Jesus, in this very familiar imagery, reiterates his intimate relationship with God. And just like he is intimately related to God, we also will have a chance to relate to God intimately.

In ancient Israelite society, the term "father's house" meant "family." So the double meaning is not just a speculation, but clearly indicated. Not only does Christ go to make room for his followers in the heavenly home to which he is going, he also promises them and us a place in the very family of God.

Every time Jesus stresses the unity between himself and God, you read carefully!! Then you will understand a unity that is available to the disciples and all believers.

Jesus is making a place for us in his Father's house. His Father, Our God, has a room for us in the house. You see, by Jesus dying on the cross, we are adopted into God's own family. Now we have direct access to all divine authority and power through this adoption.

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"How Can We Know the Way?" Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life." You don't need a Thomas Guide, you don't need the Navigator, You don't even need your cell phone because Jesus is the way. Jesus says that he is the way. Not the map, or the directions, but the way itself.

Jesus is the way. (I used to think that means Jesus is like the traffic signs – Stop sign, one way sign, right turn only sign, etc. But I realized he is more than that!.

Jesus says that he is the way. Not the map, or the directions, but the way itself. It became clearer in this scene in a movie that came out about 25 years ago.

Do you remember the The Lord of the Rings movies that came out based on the series of books written by J. R. R. Tolkien. (I borrowed the books from my children, but have not read, yet.) Perhaps I will when I retire.

Frodo is the ring-bearer and he had to carry the ring to the destination. Sam is there to help him. They are struggling up Mount Doom, and eventually Frodo collapses. And Sam says to Frodo, "Come, Mr. Frodo! ... I can't carry [the ring] for you, but I can carry you." And then they proceed together, Sam literally carrying Frodo up the mountain.

That is what it means that Jesus is our way. He is going to get us up the mountain, doing whatever it takes.

Jesus is the truth. Jesus is the way that we learn the truth about our creator. Because he and the Father are one. When we learn about Jesus, we are learning about the creator of the universe. And the more we learn about Jesus, the more we learn about the God who created the heavens and the earth and created us in God's image and likeness. Jesus is the truth, who teaches us the truth about God.

Jesus is the life. Believing in him gives us life. Not just life *after* death, but life *before* death. An abundance of life. A life filled with joy, and filled with peace, and most of all life, filled with love.

Because without love, we cannot live. And without God's love, there is no love.

God is love, and Jesus came to show us that love. It is through that love that we live. Now, and always. Jesus is the life, because his love gives us life.

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And finally Jesus said, We are not just called to admire Jesus' works—we are empowered to carry them forward. The world will see God through the love, service, and faithfulness we live out each day.

Let us step boldly into this calling, knowing that God works through us, accompany us, to accomplish even greater things.

Response to the Sermon:

Heavenly Father, thank You for reminding us of our identity as Your beloved children. Strengthen our hearts to serve others faithfully and to walk in the spirit of love that Jesus has shown us. May our hands and hearts be guided by Your grace, and may all we do bring glory to Your name. Amen.