

SESSION 14 – Going Away Preparations John 14:1-31 (The Beginning of Farewell Discourse)
Jesus the Way to the Father
The Promise of the Holy Spirit

“Old Friends pass away, new friends appear. It is just like the days. An old day passes, a new day arrives. The important thing is to make it meaningful; A meaningful friend – or a meaningful day.” – Dalai Lama

Jesus announces to his disciples that he will soon be leaving them

And of course, naturally they are confused and afraid

Jesus seeks to comfort them by promising the Holy Spirit who will guide them into God’s desired future

Trust in God Trust in Me 14:1

Jesus on and on about how he and the Father are One and here is the kicker – Claims that same unity with/among his disciples – I am in the father and you in me and I in you 14:20

This union becomes manifest in a number of ways

14:7 – Knowing Jesus

14:12 – Believing in his works

14:15 – Keeping Jesus’ Commandments

14:23 – Loving Jesus

Unfortunately, many of us modern day Christians especially us protestants have narrowed this list down to one mental activity - believing that Jesus is the Son of God

I am the way and the truth and the life/No one comes to the Father except through me – Has become the litmus test for us achieving God’s salvation – and has caused great suffering from us to our non-Christian neighbors by us excluding them because we have used these verses to judge who is **“IN”** and who is **“OUT”** – when it comes to that multi roomed house of the Lord

Richard Rohr suggest that the WAY is not about divine sonship but about the way of Jesus which involves dying to the ego, of self, and being reborn to our true self. In other words – give up yourself in order to give it to others in service and love!! From his book Immortal Diamond, pp. 62-65

Marcus Borg – Jesus way is as the mediator of the Sacred – Meeting Jesus Again For the First Time p. 32

The Holy Man or Spirit Person was a type of religious personality that existed cross-culturally, including in Jewish mysticism of Jesus’ time – As a recognized cross-cultural personality type, while challenging the idea that Jesus is the only way to God, it enhances our understanding of

Jesus as a person who not only strongly believed in God, but knew God as an experiential reality in a very intimate way (Borg, 36-38.)

Jesus also models a particular view of truth. Truth is not always about agreeing upon an objective reality. From a philosophical standpoint truth can be subjective

Jesus opponents assert religious truth as according to their understanding of the law and Pharisaic Judaism *****This is big here – Remember suppositions also here – This community was just kicked out of Synagogue

Jesus truth is based upon the primacy of relationships as well as the human divine relationship

The disciples are challenged to live as the truth the way and life are reality in relationships with each other and God

Ministry Story – Gregg Knepp discusses in his book through the story of his adopted two children of color the statement by Jesus in this text (14:18) that I will not leave you orphaned. This is a very real possibility for many children in the world and in our systems of foster care etc. and their identity as orphans.

For Personal Growth

In the previous chapter Jesus sets service as the standard by washing feet and giving them a new commandment to love one another as I have loved you– could this be “**the way**” that he is talking about now in this chapter? (14:4 and 14:6)

Jesus reassures the disciples that they know the way to where he is going, because he has modeled for them the way of the Godly life – Therefore Jesus does not leave them without tools and practices of living the God desired life...

THEREFORE

Perhaps the most important distinction that Christians can embrace is the radical difference between *worshipping* Jesus as the way to God and *following* Jesus as the way to God!!!!

Can you imagine what it feels like to be abandoned by someone you love?

What words of instruction and promise does Jesus provide for his disciples?

Do you think it is easier for people to “trust” in times of comfort? Or in times of fear? Why?

What do you think Jesus means when he says, “I am the way, the truth and the life?”

Other Questions and Ponderings

“It is our responsibility to be extremely careful about making negative, decisive, lasting judgments about people’s eternal destinies. As Jesus says, ‘he did not come to judge the world, but to save the world’ (John 12). We can name Jesus, orient our lives around him, and celebrate

him as the way, the truth, and the life, and at the same time respect the vast, expansive, generous mystery that he is” (Rod Bell in Love Wins p. 60)

What is your congregation, denomination or faith tradition’s stance regarding “**the way**” of Jesus as either an inclusive or exclusive claim to the promise of salvation?

Does your congregation encourage or discourage participation in ecumenical activities with other Christian denominations? Inter-Faith activities? Why or why not?

How do you understand “**the way**” of Jesus? How is this understanding reflected in the life of the congregation?

What is the expectation of personal spiritual growth among leaders of the congregation?