

“The way, the truth and the life”

A sermon by the Rev. Frances Savill

Sunday May 10, 2020

John 14:1-14

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.

Believe in God, believe also in me.

In 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?

And if I go and prepare a place for you,

I'll come again and will take you to myself,

so that where I am, there you may be also.

And you know the way to the place where I am going.

Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going.

How can we know the way?”

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me.

If you know me, you will know my Father also.

From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.”

Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time,

and you still do not know me?

Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.

How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?

Do 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.

Believe me that I am in the Father and Father is in me;

but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves.

Very 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.

I will do whatever you ask in my name,

so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.” John 14:1-14

As Jesus was nearing the end of his earthly ministry he was trying to help his disciples hold on to the essentials of his teaching.

Chapter 14 of John's gospel is filled with powerful, last and of greatest importance words of Jesus.

A preacher could spend a year on this chapter of the gospel.
I will try not to do that this morning.

Jesus is heading towards the cross, he is preparing his disciples for his death, and his words to them are:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”

This passage ends with Jesus telling them that is really to their benefit that he is going to the Father, because they will do not only what he has done, but greater things also.

In the middle of the passage he tells them that he is going to prepare a place for them, and that they will be together again.

In these 14 verses Jesus tells them about how to live this life, what to expect in death, what God is like, and how they are to live in the time until he returns for them.

Let's just work through the passage and listen to some of these great words.

Do not let your hearts be troubled.

The context is not a summer's day by the beach, but the night of Jesus' betrayal, just before he is arrested and executed.

Do not let your hearts be troubled.

Believe in God, or trust in God, believe/trust also in me.

God has a plan, and the darkness of this present time is not going to undo the plans of God. God has our days, our times, this world in his hands, and we do not need to be afraid.

In my Father's house are many dwelling places,

if it were not so would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

We don't have all the details about heaven, but we know that we will be with our Lord. More than that we know that he will come for us and take us home to a place that is prepared for us.

In death we let go of the one we love – but the assurance is that Jesus takes that one by the hand and takes him/her home where everything is ready.

This place that is being prepared is a big place, a spacious dwelling, it is Jesus' Father's house, and he is getting things ready for us to be there with him.

Into this wonderful pastoral moment Jesus continues- ***and you know the way to the place where I am going.***

Well, the disciples were troubled, they did not know where he was going, they didn't know the way, there was nothing certain for them at that moment.

But in fact they did know the way.
They just weren't clear yet, about what they knew.

Jesus is the way, the truth and the life.
The church for many, many years, really since Jesus left this earth, has been focused on getting the Jesus truth right.

We argue about the truth, and the true understanding of the truth.
Denominations splinter over the truth.

But Jesus is more than the truth he is also the way and the life.
We cannot live the Jesus truth without living the Jesus way.

Living the truth of the gospel is about how we do what we do.

How we do what we do matters.
Even when you are right about something, even if you have the Jesus truth and know what we should do about our building, or our theology, or our Sunday School, our services, or whatever the subject, how you do it, the means we use is just as important.

We will not arrive at the Jesus truth apart from the Jesus way.
We are all anxious to have the Jesus' life, the life abundant that Jesus promised.
That life is experienced when the Jesus truth is wedded to the Jesus way.

Our lives are to be conformed to the life of Christ.
So our question not just WWJD: *What Would Jesus Do*, but also specifically How does Jesus do it?

Jesus said; "No one comes to the Father except through me."
This is not negotiable.
The Jesus way, not our way, not the way of the world, not any way that gets the job done, is the only way.

Last week I said Christianity is primarily a personal relationship with Jesus. It isn't just right knowledge or wisdom, or even following a set of rules. If it were those things then you could get there any way. But when you understand that Christianity is first of all a relationship, then you understand Jesus saying he is the Way. He is our access to the Trinity.

Jesus said that since the disciples had seen him they had seen the Father.

Philip said;

“Show us the Father, then we will be satisfied.”

We all have this desire to know God.

But the truth that Jesus reminds us of is that in seeing him, in seeing Jesus, we see God.

We see the human face of God, and see what we need to know and understand about God.

There is no other back side to God, other nature, different from Jesus.

Undoubtedly there is much more to God than we will know even through all eternity, yet what is essential in the nature of God, we see in Jesus.

What we do not know about God is not different from the person and work of Jesus.

The Father is in Jesus and he is in the Father, and there is an essential sameness to them that we can trust.

This section closes with a promise.

Jesus promises that it is really a benefit to the disciples and to all disciples of Jesus who have come after them, that Jesus return to his Father, for we will carry on Jesus work.

We will do what Jesus did, if we dwell in him as he dwelt in the Father, and the Father dwelt in him.

As we continue in Jesus' way and truth we will continue the work of the Kingdom.

So do not let your hearts be troubled.

Dwell in Jesus and allow him to dwell in you in your day to day doings.

Learn his ways, and his truth, and know that he will accomplish his plan for our lives, for our church, for our world.

We can trust him daily until all is ready and he takes us home to his Father's house, where we will be with him for eternity.

Thanks be to God.