

# JESUS IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

## JOHN 14:1-14

Good morning everyone! And we are back to winter! Oh the joy of Ohio weather! I hope you are doing well!

Several years ago, in the early nineties, when our children were still small, and before GPS, we went to visit my brother in-law, who at that time lived in Silver Springs, MD. It was already late in the night. Somehow I took the wrong exit and ended up in the outskirts of DC. I don't know where we ended up even to this day.

After wondering from street to street and seeing that we were not going anywhere, we stopped at a house that had the windows and doors open. I walked towards the doors and knocked. The door was opened and sitting in the sofa where some young people. They were students and in my broken english I asked for help.

They asked where I was going and one of the them said, "I will get in my car, you follow me, I will take you to the highway and point out which exit to get to enter the highway, and then follow the map", So, we did, and soon we where back on the highway and on our way to my brother in-law's house. Luckily, this time, I didn't get lost again and arrived, safely at his house.

Sometimes, we just need the direction that will take us to the place we want to go.

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Sometimes though, we need other type of direction. Perhaps we are dealing with a difficult person, or having to make a decision and we are not sure which decision to make. Whatever decision we make, will take us to either the place we want to be, or we end up in the wrong place or situation.

This sermon is titled “Jesus is the way, the truth and the life” and it is based on John 14:1-14. I know, it is not a very creative sermon title. But I hope that as we talk about this, the Holy Spirit would edify us and give us something new. Something that will edify and build us up in the Lord.

But before we continue, let us pray,

*Lord, here we are again. We have gathered together this time in your name. We pray that you will take this time and use it to mold us, to edify us in you. Let the Holy Spirit open our minds and hearts that we may receive what you want us to receive. Lord, let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, for you are our Rock and our Redeemer. This we pray in the name of Jesus! Amen.*

Last Sunday’s sermon was about how Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Lazarus had been sick and died. His sister sent a message to Jesus saying, the one whom you love is sick. Jesus came on the fourth day

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after his funeral. When Jesus came, he went to the tomb and raised Lazarus from the dead. He gave him a new life.

Paul, writing to the Ephesians says, “

*“You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—”*

*(Eph 2:1–5 NRSV)*

So, now, just like Lazarus, the daughter of Jairus and the son of the widow of Nain were given a new physical life, life that was still slave to death, God, in Jesus has given us a new life.

“When we were dead through our trespasses, [God]made us alive together with Christ. And I say Halleluya! Amen!

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Jesus had been announcing his death to his disciples and the disciples seem a little anxious and troubled. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me”

Do not let your hearts be troubled is also a word for us. The world is in trouble. Yes the world is in trouble and sometimes we feel that the world is a threat to us believers and followers of Jesus. What is troubling us today? The pandemic has changed the way we function in the world. Life has changed for all of us. Almost a million people have died from the Coronavirus just here in the States and over six million worldwide. Many churches have not been able to worship together for all this time. We were not expecting this radical change. Thanks to God, we will try to meet again in person on Palm Sunday. I look forward to this day. Still things have changed so much. The Russian war on Ukraine, that threatens global peace and stability. All these things may be troubling us.

For the disciples, it was the realization that Jesus, in a very short time, was not going to be with them any longer. At least not in the in the same way he had been with them. We have the advantage of knowing how the story ends today, but the disciples did not have the

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ending. In fact, some of them did not even believe that Jesus was going rise from the dead. They didn't understand how and why a Messiah had to die. So, they are troubled. And Jesus knows that they are troubled.

So, Jesus tells them all they need to know:

*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 will 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.*

*(Jn 14:1-4 NRSV)*

Jesus has been teaching them about his death, but he also wanted them to know that death, for Jesus, will not be **final**. He will defeat death. Death will not have power over him. God will lift Jesus out of the grave. But they need to know what will be next. Jesus is teaching them about hope and that their desire and aspiration to live with him for ever will become a reality. Jesus has not been just saying these things. If he wasn't going to "prepare" a place Jesus would have told them so.

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The greek word for the english word “place” is “monei” and in the abstract, means “to stay, to dwell”. In the concrete means “lodging, dwelling-place, room”. Some translations, such the KJV translate it “mansion”. From there we have some popular songs and hymns that use the word “mansion” instead of “to stay, to dwell”, This translation is unfortunate because it can lead our minds to focus on material possession instead of focusing on the relational aspect of this teaching. “I go to prepare a place for you” where the english word “you” means you in plural, “you all” or all of you.

Jesus said to his disciples that if he was going to prepare a place for them, he will come again and take “you all” to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. This has not only a eschatological meaning, but also a hope for the present. Whenever we see people “preparing” a place to live, we think construction. Well, to build a place for a multitude takes several months, some times years. So, we may tempted to think that Jesus is still working hard in heaven building a mansion for each individual christian or families. But the work that Jesus did was completed in his death and resurrection. Because of his work, we have access to this dwelling place that he has prepared for us.

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Thomas, thinking of a physical address, asked Jesus, “Lord, we do not know where you are going, how can we know the way”. He was thinking, we need the address so that we can get there. And Jesus response has resonated for centuries,

*“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”*

*(Jn 14:6–7 NRSV)*

So, we don't need a GPS to find the dwelling place of God. Jesus said, “I am the way”. God revealed himself to us in Jesus and now, Jesus is THE way to the Father. If we know Jesus, we know God. In knowing Jesus we abide in his dwelling place with him. Jesus has declared, with those words, that when we know him, we know and have seen God. And of course, this applies to us. The gospel of John was written many years after Jesus' finished his work on the cross and was raised from the dead and went back to his father. And he is telling us now, if you know me, you know and have seen God.

Let's remember John's purpose of writing this gospel,

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*“But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name”*

*(Jn 20:31 NRSV)*

The signs written in the gospel of John and all its implications were written that we may believe and by believing, we may have life in his name.

Jesus is the way to the Father. Jesus is the way to knowing the Father. We can't know God, if we do not know Jesus.

But knowing Jesus doesn't simply mean an intellectual assent to his teachings. It means to live what he teaches us. It means to “walk” the way of Jesus.

We read in 1 John 2:3-6:

*Now by this we may be sure that we know him, if we obey his commandments. Whoever says, “I have come to know him,” but does not obey his commandments, is a liar, and in such a person the truth does not exist; but whoever obeys his word, truly in this person the love of God has reached perfection. By this we may be sure that we are in him: whoever says, “I abide in him,” ought to walk just as he walked.*

*(1 Jn 2:3–6 NRSV)*

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The love, grace and mercy of God is a free gift that we can never earn. In Christ, God reaches out to us and reveals himself to us. So in Christ, we may know him. And we are so grateful to the Lord for his free gift in Christ. In walking in him, by walking as he walked, that is practicing his teaching we come to know and understand God.

Staying in obedience is one of the foundational factors or elements that keep us in Christ. And we have the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scriptures that illuminate our daily walk and keep us in the way, the way of Jesus.

Even though this passage has end of times significance, Jesus tells Thomas, “From now on you do know him and have seen him”. The disciples can know now that in Jesus they have access to the dwelling places of God. That is, in Jesus they can know God and have communion with him.

There is an aspect of “**now**” for us in this passage. We can dwell in communion with God in Jesus. Phillip said to Jesus,

“Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied”. This is a tough question, it feels almost like a “gotcha” question to me. Jesus answers to Phillip,

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*Have I been with you all this time and you still don't 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 work.*

*(Jn 14:9–10 NRSV)*

Jesus invites his disciples to see the work that he has done. It is probably too hard for the disciples to grasp what Jesus is saying to them, but Jesus tells them, if you don't believe me, look at the works that I have done. The writers of the gospels wrote the things that Jesus did. We have his story, from birth to death and resurrection. Look at his life, meditate in his life, imitate his life and we will see the glory of God. We will see who God is.

Not only that, but he tells his disciples that they will do greater things. They would experience greater things. I think it is **in doing**, and in **in the living out** the gospel, that we come to recognize the truth in Jesus. Jesus is the truth. But we can not experience the truth unless we walk in it in obedience, Again, it is not a matter of an intellectual assent to his teaching, but a practical obedience of his words and commandments.

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All of us learn in different ways. I learned easier by seeing others do what I need to learn. Once I watch others do, then I learn even faster by trying to do what I just learned. And of course, I need to have a greater understanding of where my works fits in the greater scheme of things. Jesus teaches with his words and with his actions, so all can learn from him.

I love this quote from Peter Wilcox in his book “Living the dream: Joseph for today. A dramatic exposition of Genesis 37-50”

“Holiness comes less through dramatic experiences of God’s Spirit, than through the faithful endurance of trials. We grow in likeness to God just by pressing on, day after day, in the ordinary and unglamorous demands of life, in obedience and love.<sup>1</sup>”

Jesus tells that his disciples will do greater things. Jesus was not going to be with them any longer, at least not physically, but he was going to be with them always. In communion with them and all in communion with the Father.

The disciples were left to live out the gospel and to take it to the rest of the world. Which they did. They did not let the flame go out, but kindled it and kept it

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<sup>1</sup> Pete Wilcox, [\*Living the Dream: Joseph for Today: A Dramatic Exposition of Genesis 37–50\*](#) (Milton Keynes, UK; Colorado Springs, CO; Secunderabad, AP: Paternoster, 2007), 130.

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shining because God in Jesus was with them. Starting with the Apostles in the beginning to today, many men and women have done great and enduring things for the Kingdom of God.

Our salvation is by grace. It is free gift of God to us. We can be sure of that.

Paul writing to the church in Ephesus says,

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life*

*(Eph 2:8–10 NRSV)*

Our works will take us no where. There are many people who do good deeds in the world, yet they do not know God in Christ. They reject God, they reject Jesus. If we want to know God and have a relationship with him, we will know him through Jesus. He is the truth that takes us to the Father. And it is in him that we have found a new life. Yes, a new life in Christ.

And there is plenty of room for all who would like to walk in the ways of Jesus. It would be nice, it would

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be so amazing if the entire world embraced Jesus and through him, the world would know God.

Let us pray for this. Jesus tells his disciples in verse 14:14,

*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.*

(Jn 14:13–14 NRSV)

Everything in context, right? In verse 14, Jesus tells his disciples that if they ask in his name for anything, he will do it and God will be glorified. We must keep in mind this whole passage and what follows in order to correctly understand the “anything” Jesus will do it.

Jesus can do anything, but what is he talking about here? In answer to their prayers, they will be able to understand where Jesus is going to and why, they will understand the meaning of the dwelling places and how, in answer to their prayers, they will do greater things for the Kingdom of God. Great things that bring glory, not to the disciple, but to God in his Son.

May our prayers be like that! Let us pray for greater things that God will do in us and through us that will bring great honor and glory to his name.

Amen!