



CHRIST
CHURCH

JOHN 13:36-14:14

³⁶ Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward.”

³⁷ Peter said to him, “Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” ³⁸ Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.

^{14:1} “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going.” ⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

⁸ Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” ⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ 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 authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

¹² “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.

¹³ Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

DAY 1

JOHN 14:1-7

¹“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.
²In my Father’s house are many rooms. 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, that where I am you may be also. ⁴And you know the way to 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 had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

This week we are looking at Jesus’s iconic statement in John 14:6 (along with its context): “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” Today the focus is on the way that Jesus is “the Way.” As we come to the overall text, the stress in Jesus’s response to Thomas’s question clearly falls on Jesus being the Way. Thomas asked, “how can we know the way?” Jesus replies, “I am the Way.”

From OT to NT the concept of “a way” holds rich meaning. Psalm 1 famously lays out two ways of living, “the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish” (cf. Ps. 1:6). Jesus says in Matthew 7, “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few” (vv. 13,14). Early Christians were called the Way (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22). So what are we to gain from reflecting on the emphasis that Jesus lays in declaring himself as the Way?

Eugene Peterson has a prolonged reflection on Jesus as the Way in his book *The Jesus Way*. He says “Jesus as the way is the most frequently evaded metaphor among Christians with whom I’ve worked for 50 years as a North American pastor.” While Peterson is citing his experience, which may or may not be commensurate with ours, it is interesting to reflect on why he might say that. In our text Jesus also says he is “the truth” and “the life.” Is there a sense in which we want to skip that he is the Way in order to get to Jesus as Truth? As Life? Peterson puts it plainly and ordinarily, “The way of Jesus is the way that we practice and come to understand the truth of Jesus, living Jesus in our homes and workplaces, with our friends and family.” To use another famous Peterson saying, the Way of Jesus is a “long obedience in the same direction.” The way of Jesus is to follow him: to walk as he walked, to love as he loved, to laugh as he laughed, weep as he wept, to live as he lived.

But the good news of Jesus as the Way is that he is not simply a model for us to follow as we walk our own path, but he is actually the road itself, laid out through the broken terrain of this world that will carry us home. Jesus didn't simply say "be like me and you will know eternal life." Rather, Jesus said, "First, I will become like you to create a way through the desolation and death that clutter the landscape. I will ask you to follow me, and it will not always be easy, but I will lay down my life to become the road on which you can travel."

As you go into this week will you appreciate the picture that Jesus gives us of a two way street? Jesus is the way to the Father because Jesus was the way from the Father. Will you slow down this week and appreciate the path that Jesus has you on, even though it is surely marked with difficulties, because you know that path is Jesus himself given for you?

PRAYER

Jesus thank you that you are the Way. Thank you that you became like us and laid down your life in order that we may have a path to the Father. Help us to walk that path this week with our eyes open, seeing you in our homes and our workplaces, in the faces of our friends, families and all that we come into contact with. Thank you for loving us. It is in your Name that we pray. Amen.

DAY 2

JOHN 14:1a

“Let not your hearts be troubled.

Who has been left behind by their parents at church? From time to time, it does happen. When there are a handful of kids to gather up and the quietest child is assumed to be in the car it is possible to miss the full count amid all the hustle and bustle. But if you've ever been that one child you may remember the sudden surprise and horror at the realization that your family has left without you. Your family didn't plan on it, they just got distracted or thought you were going home with someone else after church. But eventually everyone realizes what has happened and hopefully the situation is set straight before too much anguish sets in.

The disciples had recently learned that their beloved teacher was going to depart from them soon. And yet they couldn't seem to understand where Jesus was going off to. The Jews expected a savior who would remain and endure in his role as the Messiah. Jesus had told them that the Son of Man must be lifted up from the earth, meaning that he must die in his work. How confusing it must have been for the disciples who had traveled and learned from Jesus for the past few years to hear that.

The disciples were becoming understandably troubled at Jesus's departure. Naturally, they wanted to follow Jesus in the way in which he was headed since that is what they had been called to do. The disciples were under the impression that Christ was leaving them behind, alone. And they could not understand where it was that he was going.

Yet Christ was not leaving the disciples behind, alone. Jesus was leading the way to prepare a place for them in the new creation. Christ reconciles us and brings us to righteous standing in front of God. And as he departs he sends the disciples, and the church, with a mission. Christ leaves and gives us the Holy Spirit to strengthen us on the way. Finally, Christ did not depart, never to return. Eventually a child's parents will notice that someone isn't in the car and will return to the momentarily forgotten child. Christ will return again, he never has forgotten us, to judge and to usher in the new heavens and the new earth.

In these things we have comfort. Christ has not abandoned us, but will return. In the meantime the Holy Spirit lives in us and strengthens us to endure and to witness for God's kingdom.

PRAYER

God we thank you for sending your Son to redeem us from sin. Lord, thank you for the once-for-all sacrifice to reconcile us to God. Holy Spirit, thank you for the strength to go on living for God and sharing the good news of his kingdom, even when we feel alone or abandoned. As we go about our day, help us to remember that we are not alone but are members of one body and our Savior Jesus Christ is our head who leads the way. Amen

DAY 3

JOHN 14:1b

Believe in God; believe also in me.

When Jesus says, “believe in God; believe also in me” he makes a multi-layered radical statement. It’s like a succotash cake, a green layer with nuanced flavor notes, on top of a pink layer with its own unique flavor profile, on top of a yellow layer with yet another tasty layer. Each one of those layers would make their own delicious cake, yet when served together, each bite is full of moist, flavorful yumminess that is difficult to explain. We take the saying, “I believe in Jesus” a bit similarly. Layers of meaning abound in this simple statement.

- On the surface, what does it mean to “believe in Jesus?” Consider writing down a statement of belief regarding Jesus and your faith in Him.
- Pray, like the man in Mark 9:24, “Lord I do believe, but help my unbelief.” What areas of unbelief have been exposed recently?

At the core of belief in Jesus is that we trust in who he says he is. Jesus is saying to this Jewish audience, “You need to trust in me exactly as you have trusted in YHWH.” He will go on to say that he is the way, the truth and the life, not YHWH. That was a profound statement for these Jews, who were YHWH followers, and so were their parents, and grandparents, and their grandparents, and so on all the way back to the Patriarchs. Why does he make this important, albeit complicated, comparison of Jesus and YHWH? Why couldn’t he just say, believe in me? In a way Jesus is saying, remember how faithful YHWH was? Remember how he never broke his covenant with you? Remember how he fulfilled what he promised to do? Remember when he forgave you for your iniquity and sins, and especially for all the times you didn’t follow him? Remember how he was faithful to you in your unbelief? Jesus is calling all those who would follow him to rest in the faithfulness of God. It’s God who has proven to be faithful far more than humanity. It’s God who has returned to the marriage covenant with his people, and provided everything for them. God is faithful, and we must hold to that faithfulness.

PRAYER

Father in heaven, we acknowledge how faithful you are. What a joy to us that you have been so true to your word and being. When we acknowledge our belief in you, we acknowledge that you will be faithful to us, time and time again. Faithful despite our unbelief. Faithful regardless of our actions. Faithful amidst our wrong doings and errors. Faithful, because that is your very nature. Thank you for sending your Son, to show your faithfulness to all things through him. We pray this today in his glorious name. Amen.

DAY 4

JOHN 14:2-3

² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

Final words are carefully chosen. What will Jesus say in these last conversations with his beloved disciples? They now believe that he is the promised Messiah, but still do not understand what that means. When Jesus told them that he would be with them only a little longer, and that they would not be able to come with him, Peter asked where he was going and why they couldn't come. Thomas wondered how they were supposed to know the way when they had no idea where he was going. And after hearing Jesus speak about his Father for three years, Philip said all he really wanted was to be shown the Father. Their minds were confused; their hearts were troubled. They had not understood Jesus said those things after telling them it was now time for him to be glorified, and time for them to show the world who he is:

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: 'just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'" (John 13:34,35)

They were thinking about destinations and directions; Jesus was speaking about a love relationship. He spoke as a bridegroom to his bride.

In Jewish culture, a bride was chosen and purchased by the groom's father. After terms were negotiated with the bride's father, she was known in her village as one who had been bought with a price; she belonged to a new family. When this arrangement was established, the groom returned home with his father, having promised his betrothed that he would come back for her after he had prepared a place for them. Usually that meant adding a house/rooms to the family complex where they would share life together. Because the bride did not know exactly when her groom would return, she kept busy preparing her wedding garments and learning homemaking skills, always alert for the sound of the shofar announcing the return of her bridegroom. At that time, the friend of the bridegroom would bring her to meet him, and they would return to his father's house to pledge their vows to one another. Following that ceremony, a larger group of friends would join in an extended, joyful celebration, a wedding feast.

Jesus, our Bridegroom, declared his intentions when he offered the cup in the upper room during their Passover celebration, calling it a new covenant. He demonstrated the depths of his love when he washed their feet. Now he tells them how he longs for them to be with him in his Father's house. He is a promise keeper, reassuring them he would never say he was preparing a place if he didn't intend to do it. Jesus is a lover and a promise keeper; his last words were a proposal.

Jesus came to earth for his bride, the church. He paid the price when he purchased us with his own blood. He offers us his name and everything he possesses, and asks us to be preparing and watching for his return. He promised to prepare a place for us to be with him in his Father's house. He invited us to celebrate with him in a lavish wedding feast...Jesus, our Bridegroom. Just imagine what it will be to live with him together in our Father's house forever!

Have you heard his invitation?

How are you preparing for his return?

Are you watching every day?

"Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." Rev.19:9

PRAYER

*My Jesus I love thee, I know thou art mine;
For thee all the follies of sin I resign.
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art thou;
If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, 'this now.
Amen*

DAY 5

JOHN 14:7

If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

We were created so that the Father could dwell with his people, but because of our sin and rebellion God needed to provide a solution so that we could be reconciled to him. The Old Testament is filled with images and people which point towards that solution but never truly provide a real reconciliation. What they point towards is our redemption through Jesus. Why should we have confidence that Jesus is the way towards that reconciliation? We have confidence because Jesus is the second person of the Triune God, and therefore, Jesus’ knowledge, nature, and sending are unique to those Old Testament figures that came before him.

First, John opens his gospel account by seeing Jesus with the Father in the beginning before the creation.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. John 1:1, 2

Jesus and the Father have been united as persons of the Trinity together with the Holy Spirit for all time and beyond all time. They know each other in a more intimate way than we can understand.

Second, it isn’t merely that they know each other, but Jesus is the perfect representation of the Father, as the Book of Hebrews reveals to us:

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. Hebrews 1:3

Jesus is the visible reality of God’s glory. The Old Testament manifestations of God, or theophanies, are usually attributed to the second person of the Trinity, and it is the incarnation of the Son in human flesh that is the final manifestation. In Jesus is the embodiment not merely of the Father’s glory but of His character and nature. The character of the Father is on display in the work of the Son.

Third, the Father and Son are united in their mission. We see the Father has sent the Son to complete the work of salvation.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. John 3:17

The Son willingly suffers and gives his life to fulfill that work. It is the character of that work that testifies to Jesus being sent by the Father.

But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me. John 5:36

The work of Jesus is not in conflict with the Father's intentions to redeem his people. Therefore we should have confidence that Jesus is the way because he has known the Father since the beginning, shares the same nature as the Father, and his works and mission are a testimony of the Father's character.

PRAYER

Dear Father, thank you for sending your Son to provide us with a way towards salvation. Help us to reflect the love that you share with us through your Son. Let our works be a testimony to the mission that you have called us to participate in.

