

John 14:1-14
May 3, 2026, Easter 5

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¹ "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 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.

These are some of the final words

Jesus speaks to his disciples before he's arrested.

They're still lingering at the table
of the last supper.

His followers are about to experience
their worst fears,

the suffering and death of their
beloved friend and teacher.

This next part of his journey,

Jesus has to walk alone.

And that will leave the disciples,
not only traumatized and terrified,
but floundering.

Don't let your hearts be troubled, he says.

Trust God. Trust me.

*In my Father's family there are
many places of belonging —
places for all of you.*

In the face of his own suffering and death,

Jesus tells his beloved friends not to despair,
to trust in him.

He knows what he's doing.

He's going to God,
 and he's preparing the way so that
 where he is in the family of God
 is where the disciples will be.

Jesus is comforting his friends,
 letting them know that
 they won't be without him,
 and he won't be without them —
 even though he has to go away.

I think some of the most comforting
 and consoling words of scripture are these,
***"I will come again
 and will take you to myself."***

This is a promise for all of us,
 even for clueless disciples
 who still don't know what he's talking about
 and still ask for concrete evidence.

Philip speaks what's on all our minds,
*"We want more.
 Show us God, and we'll be convinced!"*

Jesus responds with love,
*"Oh Philip.
 Really?
 Have you still not realized
 that to see me is to see God?"*

The oneness of the relationship
 between Jesus and God
 is *that* intimate —
 that *inseparable*.

How do you give evidence of relationship
 except to show up and offer yourself?

Which is what God has done in Jesus,
 and it's what God continues to do
 in the Holy Spirit
 (we'll hear more about that
 next Sunday).

God has shown up and offered God's own self in Jesus.
 God has been working in Jesus'
 words and actions all this time.

Jesus embodies God's work in the world.
 But his days "in the flesh" are limited in time
 and in geography.
 Limited to a small number of people.

The work of the Spirit through the church, though,
 will be global and ongoing,
 not bound by geography
 or time
 or population.
 In this way, the work of God through the church
 is even greater than
 the works of Jesus.

You and I are evidence of this great work.
 We're a long way, in time and place,
 from 1st century Palestine
 where the church began
 with the first Christians —
 people like our guest this morning,
 Kholoud and Mara,
 they're from Shepherd's Field
 just outside Bethlehem —
 the Holy Land.
 And this past week, our Bishop hosted a convocation
 with a speaker from Lutheran World Federation
 who talked to us about
 stories of hope around the world
 in churches he most recently visited
 in Brazil, Hungary, Malasia,
 ...and Washington DC.

Jesus says, "I am the way,"
 in response to the disciples' troubled hearts.
 "Way," in this context,
 is the revelatory life of Jesus,
 the embodiment of God in the world,
 for the sake of the *world*.
 And this revelatory life of Jesus
 resides now
 in the church around the world
 and in us.

Too often this text, especially Jesus' statement,
 "no one comes to the Father except through me,"
 has been interpreted as
 exclusive access to salvation —
 an exclusive invitation to

God's mansion in heaven.
 Like it's available only to Christians —
 and in some cases
 available only to Christians
 with certain creeds or dogmas.
 We shouldn't be surprised,
 because the church has been teaching
 exclusive guard-rails for generations.

But nothing could be farther
 from what Jesus is doing here!
 It's not all about us Christians!
 And it's not about some heavenly existence
 beyond this life and
 beyond this world.
 It's all for the sake of *this* world.
 For the sake of *this* life.

Jesus's words of consolation
 are a promise a relationship
 of intimacy and power,
"I will take you to myself.
Because of me
everyone has access to God,
even you clueless disciples,
trembling in fear
and floundering about what to do
and how get there.
And the work God does through you
will be greater than anything
I've done among you."

How often do we,
 disciples of the 21st century,
 tremble in fear and flounder
 about what to do?
 We fear for the life and future
 of our local church.
 We flounder about how to continue
 the mission of Christ outside our walls.
 Let's remember the context
 of Jesus' words of consolation, though.

Jesus speaks of a relationship that is
 steadfast and eternal —
 with the one who

initiates and sustains
all life.

God works through Jesus' words and actions.

Jesus operates only in the name of God,
going about the work of God.

Our call is to go about the work of Jesus,
operating in Jesus' name.

All within an intimate relationship
that is steadfast and eternal
with the initiator and sustainer of all life.

And we are invited to ask,

In the name of Jesus,
in the reality of his work,
and from **his** perspective
(not from our own will or church ego)
for anything.
Anything.

Don't let your hearts be troubled, he says.

Trust God. Trust me.

*In my Father's family there are
many places of belonging —
places for all of you —
for everyone.*