

John 14:1-12 Sermon for Easter 5, May 10, 2020; St. Paul's, Green Garden, MI

¹“Do not let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to be with me, so that you may also be where I am. ⁴ You know where I am going, and you know the way.” ⁵“Lord, we don’t know where you are going,” Thomas replied, “so 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 know me, you would also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” ⁸“Lord,” said Philip, “show us the Father, and that is enough for us.” ⁹“Have I been with you so long,” Jesus answered, “and you still do not know me, Philip? The one who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I am telling you I am not speaking on my own, but the Father who remains in me is doing his works. ¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me. Or else believe because of the works themselves. ¹² “Amen, Amen, I tell you: The one who believes in me will do the works that I am doing. And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.

Text: John 14:1-12

Theme: “There is only One Way”

In the name of Jesus our risen Savior, Dear fellow redeemed,

Supposedly, there was a saying in the ancient world, “All roads lead to Rome.” It was probably intended to glorify the Roman empire and how it sprawled all over the known world. In addition it probably emphasized the vast system of roads the Romans built. They could travel to virtually any part of the empire over pavement they had built themselves. Even today, we like options for travel don’t we?

We may find it inconvenient when a road or street is closed for repair or rebuilding, but we usually have a way to get around the street that is out of commission. We have to make a detour which is really only a minor inconvenience because we have so many other choices for travel to our destination whether it is in town or on the highway. We always want to take the way we have

Page 2

chosen because we think it is best. But often there are many roads to get us to our destination. But that is not true of the destination of heaven.

People THINK there are many roads to heaven. Even some so called Christian religions say that you don't really need to be a Christian to get to heaven. Many people mistakenly believe we all worship the same God, simply in different forms. But the word of God today punches holes in that kind of thinking. Jesus' message is truly one of a kind. His message tells us who we are—sinners who deserve God's damnation; but he also tells us that God in his mercy gives us HIS Son. That Son, Jesus Christ tells us he is the WAY, the TRUTH and the LIFE. No one comes to the Father except through Jesus—not through deeds, not by gifts of our own choosing, not with actions that WE THINK will please God—no we come to God through Jesus alone. To those who believe there are many paths to heaven, Jesus says, “Don't try it. You will fail. I alone am the way to the heaven that you seek. Trust my righteousness, my holiness, my death and my resurrection. I AM the one and only hope you have to reach heaven.”

And without the proper instruction we believers, too, come up short in understanding the one way to heaven. Even Jesus' disciples who had been with him such a long time did not fully grasp how important it was to KNOW and BELIEVE that Jesus is the only way to the Father.

I. Sinful man wants to see a blaze of glory—Show us the Father and that will be enough for us.

A. Mount Sinai—the glory cloud, fiery mountain, Sapphire throne.

1. But what do those images tell us? In them we see God's power, his majesty.
2. Do we see his mercy in them? At mount Sinai we see the condemnation of the Law. And it is formidable; it terrifies us. And it should.

B. But yet, who of us, in our sinful nature hasn't just once wished that Jesus would come down from the cross and show his mighty power to those who mocked and jeered. Who of us hasn't wished just once that Jesus would put those mockers in their place so that they would fall on their faces in abject terror? Haven't you heard those readings on Good Friday and said to yourself, He should have come down from the cross and put those foolish hypocrites in their places.

- C. If Jesus had come down from the cross, would he not have done it in judgment? Wouldn't he have been giving up on the human race and saying that he was not willing to give up his life for us? But if Jesus did that against those who sinned openly against him, would he not also have to do that to us?
1. So like the disciples our sinful nature does not want the cross. We do not want to see Jesus suffering.
 2. We don't want the ridicule. We want a Savior
 3. We often want to bypass the son of God in order to enter heaven.

Application: So what happens to our faith when we DON'T see God's blazing glory in everyday life? What happens to us when life is anything but glorious as a child of God in a sinful world? Don't you want to see God come down and wipe out the corona virus with one sweep of his arm and bring things back to normal?

But when the troubles come to us, then may we show the world that a child of God gives himself over to the will of his Father. No, your faith and my faith is not rewarded with a life free of trouble. Your faith and my faith is not rewarded with bliss in this sinful world. In fact, it may be that God allows us to suffer more so we continually remember how much we need the life saving death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Transition: We should understand that God's kingdom on earth is not one of glory. It was not one of glory when Jesus came, he did not promise an earthly life of glory and his 33 years on earth did not end in glory. They ended in death and departure because...

II. The Savior's kingdom involves death and departure

- A. So often like Thomas we give in to fear and misunderstanding of God's kingdom. He did not understand that the Savior's kingdom involves death and departure. We often believe that as God's children our suffering in life should be less than others. But so often our trials and difficulties are greater than others.
- B. Paul said to the Ephesian elders, "**We must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God.**"

- C. We see Jesus depart to heaven and we wonder where he is in all of the confusion of life. But he is with us in his word. It is his Word we cling to; the word that tells us he loves us. The word that tells us how he wants us to live, loving one another as he told his disciples on Maundy Thursday evening.

- D. We cling to his promises, “I am with you always, to the end of the world.”

Application: And we, too, when we see all the hatred, all the destruction, the vengeance that people want to take out on one another, we may be tempted to ask, “What does it all mean? Is this what the world is supposed to be? And what about my life? What does it mean if I am just going to die anyway? But you see, it is not about MY LIFE nearly as much as it is about how many lives I can touch with the love of Jesus. It might be my actions or your words of love that make someone more curious about why you or I can still make sense of life in this insane world, in the strange times we live in. And then we can tell people, talk to people, show people that even though Jesus seems to have withdrawn from the world, his promises assure me that not only is he with ME in this world right now, but I have his word to strengthen me, I have his promise that he is preparing a place for me; I have his assurance that I will be with him for eternity in a real heaven because of his finished work of redemption on the cross.

Transition: And it all happens in a way that just blows the mind of people who have never heard it before. God did not send his son in power and glory. No, ... the Father shows us...

III. The Father shows us the Way through the humility of his Son

- A. Jesus showed the love of the Father in humility as he set aside his majesty to be human and gave up his life for us.

- B. In his humility he obeyed his Father’s command. The Father did his saving work through his Son.
 - 1. In Jesus we have the **way** to the Father—trusting in his full payment for our sins
 - 2. In Jesus we have the **truth** from the Father—his unfathomable grace for us. Without Jesus there is NO WAY to the Father. But in Jesus God provides the ONLY way to the Father

3. By Jesus and his power we have **life** that the Father alone gives through faith in Jesus.
- C. Jesus lived humility, Jesus showed how humble he was in all that he did, even in the way he spoke to his enemies. But when he died, when he allowed himself to be taken and crucified, though he had the power to defeat every enemy, by giving himself up to his enemies he won our salvation by giving up his perfect life.
- D. His life was so perfect, so God-pleasing, such a perfect payment for our sins that the Father reunited his body and soul to show us, Jesus IS the one way to the heaven that God promises us.

Application: No matter how hard we try we will never match the humility, the selfless service of the Son of God for us. The only thing we can do is dedicate our lives to keep sharing this ONE WAY to the Father, this one way to eternal life because no message, no wealth, no joy this world can bring will ever equal the joy and riches and satisfaction of living with our God for eternity. There is no greater message we can share with our family, with neighbors and friends. You have a treasure beyond even our ability to comprehend. It is so valuable because there is no confusion about HOW to get to heaven. There is only one way.

Conclusion: Sometimes people picture their lives as a roundabout. They think you can go whatever direction you want and you will end up in heaven, so they think it doesn't really matter. You know we have several roundabouts in Marquette and highway engineers seem to be adding more all the time. And you know when you come to one, you need to know which direction to go. You need to know where your destination is. So if that is true in our everyday lives, why should we think that no matter which direction we take we will end up in heaven? You see, Jesus takes all the confusion out of life. There is only one way. Jesus tells us, he is the way the truth and the life.

Do you want to see the Lamb at the center of the throne? Do you want to see the rainbow circled throne? Do you want to see the thousands upon thousands of angels that do God's bidding? Do you want to see all these things without the fear of receiving God's eternal anger, but receive them instead in happiness and assurance of God's love for you? Then stay with Jesus. Live in him NOW so that you may live WITH him forever. Amen.