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May 21, 2017

***Show Me the Way***  
***John 14:1-14***

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.

**2** 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?

**3** 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.

**4** And you know the way to the place 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 know me, you will know 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 we will be satisfied."

**9** Jesus 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"?

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

**12** 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.

**13** I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

**14** If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

When Jesus speaks these words to his disciples, their hearts ***are troubled***.

They are ***afraid***.

They have just had a last meal with Jesus, and he has told them that he will die, and he will leave them.

Can you imagine?

They have no idea what it all means.

All they know is that life as they know it, is going to ***change***.

Completely.

Do you know that feeling---when your life suddenly changes?

When your heart is troubled by all the change?

***Maybe Your life*** is changing right now.

Completely.

Some are graduating, and facing a whole new world.

**Others** are facing a diagnosis, or a job loss,

a season of caregiving,

rocky roads in a relationship, or the family,

maybe hard times at work.

Some have lost loved ones, and the change is devastating.

That is exactly when Jesus shares these **words** of **comfort** for us—

When life is changing.

*Do not let your hearts be troubled.*

*Believe in God, believe also in me.*

These are some verses that I **memorized** many years ago,

And I find myself repeating them when times are tough, and my heart is troubled!

But I also love the second phrase—believe in God, believe also in me.

I wonder, when was the last time you asked yourself, **what do I believe?**

About God? About Jesus?

Especially if you are starting a **new journey** in life—

**what do you believe?**

It's important to know **what** we believe---

But isn't it more important to know **in whom** we believe?

Jesus' words are not just about a decision of the **mind**.

They are about our **hearts**.

When Jesus says believe in me,

What if he's saying, have a **relationship** with me?

All throughout the gospel of John,

Jesus uses **metaphors** to describe a **relationship** with God,

a closeness to our Savior.

He talks about **abiding** in him like a vine and branches, in John 15,

about **sheep** knowing their shepherd's voice in John 10.

So when Jesus says believe in me,

what if he means be close, have a close **relationship** with me?

Wouldn't that something that can bring us real **comfort**

When our hearts are troubled?

Several years ago we had a VBS called Fiesta!  
And all that week we talked about two questions:

***Who is Jesus?***

And ***what does Jesus do*** in my life? Questions the disciples may have had that last night.

What if these are still ***key questions*** for every Christian?  
Especially when our hearts are troubled, or our lives are about to change?

***Who is Jesus?***

***And what does Jesus do in my life?***

John 14 offers ***good answers*** to those questions.  
If we ***believe*** in Him.  
If we have a ***relationship*** with him.

But ***believing is easier said than done, right?***

In the middle of the night when you can't sleep because tears are flowing,  
or your mind is racing,  
believing is easier said than done, isn't it?

I was pouring my own heart out to God recently, while journaling.  
And I ***remembered*** these words from John 14.  
It didn't stop the pain, but I remembered these words,  
and I remembered that ***I do believe***.  
I have a relationship with Jesus.  
I know He is always with me, right beside me.

Wanna know a ***little trick*** that I've used for years?  
In seminary, we would look at different Bible verses,  
and whenever it said Israel or referred to God's people,  
we would put in our ***own names***.  
Now talk about making the Bible relevant.  
Just try it sometime.  
It works with just about any verse or story.

For ***John 10*** you would insert your own name,  
*I am the good shepherd, I know Patti, and Patti knows me.*  
For ***John 14*** you would say, *Do not let your heart be troubled, Bill. Believe in God,*  
*believe also in me.*

For ***Isaiah 43*** you would say, *But now thus says the Lord, who created you, Ed, Do not*  
*fear, Ed, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name, Ed, you are mine.*

What if this is something that can bring you ***comfort***?

Now, back to those important questions,

***Who is Jesus, and what does he do in my life?***

According to John 14,

Jesus is the one who ***prepares*** a place for where we are going.

*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? And when I prepare a place for you, I will come and take you to myself.*

When you hear that, don't you think of ***heaven***?

Many of us have heard these words at a funeral, because they are so appropriate and comforting.

I believe these are ***words of comfort*** at the time of death, because we believe that God prepares for us an incredible heavenly home beyond anything we can imagine.

Jesus has gone before us to prepare a place for us in heaven.

We can find ***comfort*** knowing that our loved ones are in a special place, and we will be reunited with them one day!

But, what if these words are also about ***right now***, here on earth?

What if Jesus prepares a place for us, here on earth—on the next leg of our life's journey?

What if He goes ahead, like the good shepherd, to ***show us where*** we are going?

When we think about ***rooms*** being prepared for us

What if that also applies to here and now?

*If I go and prepare a place for you, then I will come and take you to myself.*

I firmly believe there is ***nowhere we will go*** that Jesus has not already been, no suffering or trial that he has not experienced.

He goes ahead, to prepare a place for us...each step of the way.

Hebrews 12 says *let us run the race..., looking to Jesus the pioneer of our faith!*

But it can be ***hard to believe*** that Jesus knows the way—and is showing it to us!

The disciple Thomas had the obvious question for Jesus, the question we all ask at one time or another:

*Lord, we do not know where you are going, how can we know the way?*

And then we hear Jesus' amazing answer:

***I am the way, the truth, and the life.***

We've got to stop there for a minute, because

These are sometimes ***misused*** words from the Gospel of John.

***I am the way, the truth, and the life.***

These words have been used to **exclude** anyone who does not believe just as we do in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

They have been used to say we Christians **know the way** (or even that our particular brand of Christianity) is the **only way**.

But what if Jesus is saying something deeper than that?

We **do believe** that Jesus is the way, truth and life, but we don't claim to know who is in and who's out...we leave that to God.

The Greek word **hodos, or way**, means road, or path, It also means a way of thinking, feeling, deciding.

Jesus calls **himself** the way! not a list of dos and don'ts....

Isn't that calling us to a **relationship** with him?

Because **He IS the road, the path** to truth and life?

What if, we are called to follow Jesus, and let him **guide our way---of thinking, feeling, and deciding?**

This is easier said than done.

But what if we took that famous phrase seriously: **WWJD?**

What would Jesus do? What is the Jesus-way? His path?

And wouldn't it be life changing if we allowed Him to **show us the way?**

How many times have you ever said, **there's no way... no way.... how can I find a way?**

I've been there---**thinking, there's no way.**

And that's when I have to stop and remind myself, that my **relationship** with Jesus—IS the **way**.

Are you at a place, thinking there's no way?

What if you stopped, and thought about

The **One who is there with you, to show you the way?**

It makes a big difference to think about **Jesus right beside you**, Especially when you feel like there is no way.

I was reading a sermon this week called

**What to do when you don't know what to do!**

And the Pastor Jared Alcantara, suggested we do three really important things in situations like that:

We **Ask, Listen, and Trust.**

<http://www.preachingtoday.com/sermons/outlines/2017/may/what-to-do-when-you-dont-know-what-to-do>.

First, we *Ask for help*.

We call out to God—sometimes desperately pleading and asking.  
All throughout the Bible people call out to God for help,  
the Psalms are full of these petitions!  
God wants us to *Ask*!

Next we *Listen* to God.

This is *more than just hearing*.

This is *paying attention* to what God is really saying to you.

Have you ever read something all the way through  
and been unable to tell anyone what you just read?  
Sometimes we even do that with the Bible, don't we?  
We read it, we hear it, but do we really *listen* to it?  
Do we *pay attention* to what we are reading, to what we are hearing,  
and do we plan to do something with it?

In the Bible *listening is connected with obeying*.

*Listen and obey*.

There's even a word about this in Hebrew: *Shema*.

It means listen, but it also is a call to obey what you hear.

The Shema is a famous phrase from Deuteronomy 6 that God's people were required to recite about loving God with all your heart, soul, and strength.

Finally, when you don't know what to do, *Trust*.

*Trust God*.

But this is *challenging*, isn't it?

It's easier to trust in God's goodness when things are going *well*,  
and we can see the blessings, the answers to our prayers.

But what about when the *bottom falls out* of our lives?

Do we trust God *then*?

Do we turn to God then?

If you're like me, it's tempting to try and *just handle it yourself*.

I can do it, I can get through this.

Just grin and bear it.

Or, it's also easy to *turn to other people*—we pick up the phone, or get online and reach out to others for help.

But Jesus is actually the one *closest* to us, and the one who can *really help*,  
so why not *turn to Him first*?

One day someone asked *Mother Teresa* why the untouchables, the poorest of the poor, are so drawn to Jesus.

She said, ‘*When Jesus is all you’ve got, you discover that Jesus is all you need*’.  
 I love that.  
 When life is tough, what if we reminded ourselves of this truth?

*Jesus is all we need.*  
*Jesus is the Way.*

Jesus also says in John 14, that he is *the Truth*.  
 The *story of Jesus* is the most amazing truth that any of us could ever know---  
 His life, death, and resurrection  
 That is the most important truth we could ever know!  
 So, Jesus is literally the *most important person*  
 we could ever have a relationship with—don’t you think?

Doesn’t having a relationship with Jesus bring us to an *understanding of life*,  
 that we cannot find anywhere,  
 or with anyone else?

Jesus called himself the *aletheia* in Greek--which means *reality*.  
 I love that.  
 When we start wondering what is real, what is right and wrong,  
 whether everything is just relative, Jesus says *I am the truth*.  
 A relationship with Jesus IS reality—it’s what we really can believe in!

This is *different* than saying we have a list of all that is right and wrong,  
 or a *blueprint for truth*...  
 I think it’s something so much greater!

We have a *person* who is our truth, a *relationship* that guides our path.  
 This is what separates us from other faiths, or just living in the world—  
 It’s this relationship that grounds us in reality.  
 If we don’t know anyone else but Jesus, we can go anywhere.  
 If we remember this truth above and beyond anything else,  
 we will live now, and forever, with God.

So how do we *nurture this important relationship with Jesus*?

Well, it’s kind of like *working at a relationship* with a friend or loved one.  
 We *spend time* with Jesus.  
 We look for Jesus—in the verse of our *Bibles*, putting ourselves right there in it.  
 We look for Jesus---in our time of *worship*, listening for what He has to say.  
 We look for Jesus---in our *prayers*, waiting for Him to answer.  
 And We look for Jesus---in our *fellowship* with other believers.

Jesus also called himself *The Life*.

And in John 10 last week, he said that he came to bring us *Abundant life*.

I think that sometimes we know this in our heads, but not our hearts.

Have you ever thought about the *kind of life you have* because of your relationship with Jesus? And what would your life be like *without* him?

I can *hardly even imagine* that at this this point in my life.

He is, as the song says, *my all in all*.

I am able to get up in the morning and keep on going, because I know Jesus.

I *trust* Him. I *believe* in Him.

I *believe that His words are true*, and his *way of life is the way* I want to live.

You know, when people are baptized here, or they join the church, there is only *one requirement*: belief in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

But first, we ask that people *turn away from sin, and toward life with Jesus*.

Theologian N.T. Wright talks about this *avoiding sin* and *embracing life with Jesus*. He says we should think of a very scary animal--- a snake, or a large spider. If you came around a corner and found yourself facing it, wouldn't you want to run away? Well, as a Christian, that's how we should feel about a life of sin.

Then think how you'd feel if you saw the person you loved best in the entire world, who you hadn't seen for years, walking down the street. What would you do? You would chase after them!

That's how we should behave when we think of Jesus and the new life that he is offering us!

Adapted from N.T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: The Pastoral Epistles* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), page 76

I believe *Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life*---not just in general.

But for me. For you.

For all of us.

Remember those two questions....

*Who is Jesus?*

*And What does he do in our lives?*

Well, I think there is really only *one answer*:

And today it is our *Good News of the Gospel*

Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Amen.