

*Jesus answered... "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.*

*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 if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.*

*And you know the way to the place where I am going."*

*Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"*

*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

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

**John 14:1-7**

### **I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life**

Properties Chair, Carl Mende

Our Call to Worship and Scripture Lesson this morning are a continuation of the Upper Room Discourse where Jesus is giving His disciples His final instructions before He goes to the cross. Judas Iscariot has left the room and has gone to betray Jesus. So Jesus says to them, "*Little children, yet a little while I am with you.*" and then He proceeds to tell the disciples that He is leaving them and that they cannot come with Him. We need to remember that this group of men has been by Jesus' side for His entire public ministry. They have followed Him from town to town. They have watched Him heal the sick and battle with the religious leaders. But now He says to them, "*Where I am going you cannot come.*"

We can only imagine the impact this must have had on the disciples. After all they had been through, leaving their lives and jobs behind to follow Jesus. It wouldn't surprise me if some of them felt like they were being abandoned, that they were thinking in their hearts, "What do you mean you are leaving?" So we see Peter ask Jesus, "*Lord, where are you going?*" to which Jesus answers, "*Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward.*"

It's interesting to note that in saying, "*...you will follow afterward*" that we see a couple of things. First, that Peter's question implied that he wanted to go with Jesus and second, I believe that Jesus was foretelling the fact that Peter would also one day face martyrdom and lay down his life for the gospel. Peter on some level must have sensed the seriousness of what Jesus was saying and says to Jesus, "*Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.*"

Jesus knew Peter better than he knew himself. He knew that Peter had a habit of speaking with his heart, before thinking with his head. So Jesus responds to Peter, "*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.*" For the second time, we can only imagine the shock and silence in the room at this point. Jesus has just told them that not only was He leaving, but now He also tells Peter, in front of all of the other disciples, that Peter will deny Him not just once but three times.

Jesus knew how much what He had said had unsettled His disciples and continuing into Chapter 14, He addresses all of the disciples and says, "*Let not your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.*" Jesus was telling the disciples to trust in God and to trust in Him just as they trusted in God. They could rely on what He was about to tell them as coming from God and that it was a promise that doing so would bring comfort and peace to a troubled heart. Jesus continues saying, "*In my Father's house are many rooms.*" The first thing we should notice is that it is God's house. Leon Morris says that the phrase "*my Father's house*" clearly is referring to heaven, but what did Jesus mean by "*many rooms*"?

The commentaries that I read put forth a number of different ideas and explanations as to what this phrase meant. William Barclay in his commentary summarized the three major ideas as follows: First, the first century Jews believed that there are different grades of blessedness which would be given to people based on their goodness on earth. Each person would be rewarded with a "*room*" based on what their life had merited. Second, that Heaven is not a static place, but that the word translated "*rooms*" means "*stages on the way*" and that even in heaven there will be progress and development and that we will "*pass through*" different "*stages*" of glory.

Now the third idea is the one that is the simplest and the one that made the most sense to me and it is this: The Greek word translated "*rooms*" has a sense of "*a place of abode*" or "*a dwelling place*" that is permanent. So we could read this verse as "*In my Father's house are many dwelling places.*" So what we see is that there are "*many dwelling places*", not just a few. Heaven is not going to run out of space. No one is going to be turned away because heaven is full. The phrase simply means that there is room in heaven for everyone who comes to Christ, there is room for all of the redeemed in heaven.

Jesus goes on to say, "*... if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.*" In other words, there is no doubt, we can rejoice in the fact that heaven is as big as it needs to be. However, not only is it big enough, but Jesus is going to heaven to prepare a place for you and for me. Jesus then says, "*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.*" Jesus wasn't just going away, He was also promising that He will return, that He will come back and when He does He will gather those that are His and we will dwell with Him.

Jesus then tells them that they “*know the way*” to where He is going. But as we have seen so often, they don’t quite get it and Thomas asks, “*Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?*” to which Jesus responds to Thomas and all of the disciples saying, “*I am the way, and the truth, and the life.*” Notice that Jesus did not say that He would show them the way, but rather that Jesus was “*the way*”. He is “*the way*,” it is by His sacrifice on the cross that He has redeemed us.

The way to God’s house is through Jesus. Jesus is also “*the truth*”. So what we realize is that no human has ever fully embodied the truth that they have taught except Jesus. Only Jesus could say “*I am the truth*”. Lastly, Jesus said, “*I am the life.*” Remember what Jesus said in Chapter 11 just before He raised Lazarus from the dead. He said, “*... I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live ...*” In other words, if we want eternal life with the Father, it is through Jesus and His sacrifice.

Finally Jesus sums it all up by saying, “*No one comes to the Father except through me.*” He alone is the way to God. Jesus is claiming that His work on the cross will be sufficient for all sinners. He is the way, the truth and the life, He is the only way of reaching the Father. Matthew Henry says that this expression also implies that Jesus is the beginning and the end of salvation.

In Acts chapter 4, Peter and John are arrested and questioned by the religious leaders because they were “*teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.*” Peter responds to them by saying in Verses 11 and 12, “*This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*”

The question for us, is, do we believe this? This world wants to tell us that there are many ways to heaven, that there are many ways to “Paradise”. Jesus is telling us that there is only one way and that is through Him. He alone can show us what God is like, He alone can lead us into God’s presence and He alone can take us to the dwelling place that He has prepared for us in His Father’s house.