

## How Can We Know The Way?

January 23, 2022

John 14:1-14 (ESV)

*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.*

Did you know that 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the U.S adult population cited the use of technology as a significant source of stress in their life? According to the American Psychological Association, the constant need for checking emails, texts and social media accounted for the majority of this stress through use of technology. One of the troubling things for me personally in this digital world is the rise and spread of false teaching. It's unbelievable how much bad teaching is out there and how much it has replaced the local church. Some for the right reasons I suppose given the last two years. Zoom fatigue is a real thing. And that is not what church or Bible study is. Is it a tool yes but it is not a replacement for what God intended for fellowship.

A New York Times columnist writes this about the digital age we are living in right now.

*"For a long time, all of this lifestyle automation seemed harmless. But eventually, I began feeling that surrendering my daily decisions to machines wasn't making me happier or more productive. Instead, it was turning me into a different person—a shallower one, with more fixed routines and patterns of thought, and an almost robotic predictability in my daily life."*

The troubles that we face today are not what our ancestors faced. While some of the stresses we face because of technology are new, there are troubles that manifest because of sin they have not changed. The world we live in still in the business deceiving each other, hating each other today and betraying each other. I don't think we seen more online hate, more divisiveness, more depravity in the digital world in recent years than 25 years ago.

And it seems more and more people are only learning by what is seen and heard on social media. Only to end up in disappointment, pain and stress. Is there a way out? How do we know the way to lasting peace and comfort in this troubled world? Paul writes to the Corinthians in his second letter saying, *"God is a God of all comfort"*. And many people are asking today, how do we know the way to a place of rest, to a place of comfort for the soul. And Thomas, the disciples of Jesus asked this question to Jesus, "How can we know the way to God?".

Today, we arrive at yet another beautiful portion of Scripture. There are so many things to cover here. But in the time we have Lord willing I will cover only verse 1 through 7.

We are in this discipleship series called *'Preparing for the Cross'* learning from Jesus' time with his disciples.

To give some context to our passage, The disciples of Jesus were troubled by what was happening at the last supper. Judas was a deceiver. He deceived his fellow team members by giving an impression he cared for the poor. He was a greedy man who stole from the money bag. And finally Judas betrayed Jesus. The Lord Jesus was troubled and grieved. Jesus was hurt and wounded in his spirit. So this "hour" as Jesus calls it must have been very stressful to him. Judas's betrayal, Peter's impending denial, knowing that his disciples would leave him and Jesus knowing that he would have to travel this road to the cross alone was excruciating and painful. In every way Jesus was human as you and I. So, imagine the

emotions he must have been going through. And yet Jesus does not give into any kind of self-pity.

Someone said, self-pity is one Satan's favorite weapons. What do you do when you feel you are overwhelmed with thoughts of doubt, discouragement, fear, anxiety, loss, grief or the sense that "no one cares for me" and so on?

Jesus shows *extraordinary emotional leadership*. *How does Jesus respond when he goes through these heightened emotions?* Two ways we see Jesus responding.

1. First, acknowledges his grief. And yet during his grief, Jesus entrusts himself to His Father. He gave glory to God even when it was really hard. In John 8:27, Jesus said these words, <sup>27</sup> *"Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. <sup>28</sup> Father, glorify your name."* You see, Jesus did not deny the fact that he was troubled. He was surely troubled. He acknowledged that he was stressed. Yet, he trusted in his Father. In John 8:29, Jesus says something really worth pausing and noting *"And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him."* The innocent Son of God who did no wrong to anyone and yet was betrayed and abandoned entrusted himself to his Father.
2. The second way Jesus shows emotional leadership is not only entrusting himself to God but modeling and teaching how his disciples ought to respond when they are troubled as well. The turn of events at the last supper were obviously quite stressful to the disciples - Jesus telling them he would soon leave them, one of his own leaving the table to betray him. However, you see Jesus, even though he was troubled, he moves to comfort his disciples. *The wounded Christ becomes the nurse*. And what does Jesus say to his disciples? Verse 1 of this passage *'Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in Me'*. Dear child of God, is your heart troubled or wounded or hurt on weighed down by the cares of this life? Here is the answer. Believe in God. Believe in Jesus. Believe everything that Jesus has said about character, about His being, about His saving power about His steadfast love his faithfulness. Whoever believes in Him will never be ashamed. The Lord knows how to rescue the godly out of every trial. *"Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good"* 1 Peter 4:19.

The word "entrust" is an interesting word. It's the same word Jesus used when he was hanging on the cross when he said to his Father "into your hands I commend my spirit". It means committing, laying it down.

The Psalmist in Psalm 42 prayed this when he was in a state of unrest in his soul. *"Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God"*. Psalm 42:11

And after comforting them, Jesus gives his disciples a wonderful promise. A promise so marvelous and so great that the greatest treasures of this world cannot rival. Look at verses 2 and 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. 4 And you know the way to where I am going."*

Now, in some translations, the words "mansions" is used for rooms. A literal translation is "dwelling places". What Jesus is saying is that there is room or accomodation for them in heaven. Not one room but many rooms. Not just for them for all who are disciples of Jesus Christ. That includes you and I. Jesus in his prayer to the Father said *"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word"*.

We see two wonderful promises:

1. One: Jesus is preparing a place for you.
  - a. This sounds too good to be true. Who in this world has ever made such an offer? None. These disciples were regular everyday folks. Some were fishermen, some were zealots, tax collectors. They were sinners. Jesus takes such people, washes them and promises them a place in heaven. The best life is yet to come. The best life is not in this life or this world. My small mind fails to understand why some prosperity

Gospel preachers say and write things like “you can have it all right here right now” when Jesus himself said, “In this world we will have many trials or tribulations”. There is no denying that we all go through hardship. However, Jesus gives peace and comfort even when we experience those trials. I remember the most intimate times of experiencing God’s comfort is when we were going through the trials of life. Sometimes not knowing what is next for you can be tough, whether it’s a job situation or a health situation or a family situation or a parenting situation or a conflict situation or whatever life is throwing at you *entrust* that situation to God. There are people who say this or that should never happen in my life. Well, if it’s a sin situation, surely the consequences can be hard to stomach but we are not in heaven yet. And that place Jesus is preparing is a wonderful place for those who belong to him. In Revelation 21, we see the picture of the new heavens and the new earth. “*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.*”<sup>2</sup> *And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*”<sup>3</sup> *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.”*<sup>4</sup> *He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”*

## 2. Second promise: Jesus himself will come and take you to God.

- a. Again, this is far beyond anyone can promise in this world. Look at verse 3 “*I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also*” Is this real? Wow! There is so much Jesus says here we can easily miss. Jesus is saying “farewell” to his disciples. And evidently they are upset because they struggle to know where exactly Jesus is going. But to hear this that he is going to prepare a place for them and that he will come back to get them. Who would not want that? In verse 3, Jesus says, “*where I am you may be also*”. We know from the Gospels that Jesus rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God. Dear friends, do you believe that Jesus is preparing a place for you and is coming to take you home? And if Jesus preparing a place for you, how prepared are you? Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:9 “*no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him.*” Hebrews 9:28 tells us that Jesus “*will appear a second time not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him*”. Those who don’t deal with their sin now will only have judgment waiting the second time.

So Jesus tells his disciples he is preparing a place for them and by extension for you. Jesus will come back for his people and in verse 4, Jesus indicates to them what he has been saying to all along. What does Jesus say?

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

The word “know” is also translated “see” or “perceive”. Jesus is saying “you see the way”.

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

I believe this is the central and most pressing question of our day. People want answers. How can we know? How can we see? What is the right way? We need proof. We need evidence of death beyond life. We need data to prove beyond a shadow of doubt to know God exists. And if God exists what is the way to God?

And the answer that Jesus gives is not what people would expect. The people in Jesus’ day asked for signs and miracles. There were people who came to Jesus and asked him, “<sup>30</sup> So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you?” John 6:30

Jesus already knows the hearts of these people. They had already closed their hearts to him as the Messiah. They were only there for spectacular and sensational. Jesus also said that an evil generation looks for a sign but sign will be given except the sign of Jonah: his death and resurrection. Matthew 16:3

And Thomas was no different than the skeptics of this world today.

What does Jesus say? Look at verses 6 through 7.

*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."*

Jesus does not leave any for doubt, ambiguity or uncertainty with Jesus here.

Notice the first thing Jesus says in response.

I am. Jesus is. The second thing you see is the definite article "the". And the third thing you see is the word "way".

Jesus is saying He is the singular exclusive and unique way to God.

In John 10:9 we saw Jesus say "*I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture*".

William Still served as a pastor in Aberdeen, Scotland for 50 years. He wrote that "*Jesus is much more concerned about where we are going than about how far on we have got*". There are so many religions of this world that propose something like this: Follow this four-fold path. Do this ritual of penance. Take a dip in this particular river. Or Jesus is just another way to God. Every religion or philosophy in this world have their own way of defining their way to God. However, Jesus has not given the liberty to anyone to redefine his words.

*Jesus is also the Truth.* Notice again the definite article "the". Meaning Jesus is also The Exclusive Truth. Deceptiveness, inaccuracy, falseness or lying is not a category for Jesus. So when Jesus said "believe me", every word that he spoke is to be believed as truth. Jesus himself said "you will know the truth and truth will set you free". You want to live in freedom. Believe Jesus. Know Jesus. Trust Jesus. You will never ever go wrong by trusting in Jesus. The bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp, was a disciple of John the author of the Gospel of John. At the age of 86, he was brought before the Roman authorities and was ordered to denounce Christ or die. To that Polycarp said "86 years I have served Jesus Christ and he never failed me".

*Jesus is also the Life.* Jesus is the Author of the stuff that makes the smallest subatomic particle in the universe. In him was Life.

One obvious question one might have is: could there be other ways to God?

Jesus answers that question as well. *No one comes to the Father except through me.* Jesus said something very similar when he was talking to the religious leaders of his days. "*No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me*". Jesus drew you to himself with cords of love.

Verse 7 *If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.*"

Jesus ends his response to Thomas by telling him. Thomas, if you have known me, you know God. If you trust him and believe me it is equal to seeing God. Believing is seeing.

What a privilege for Thomas! And what a privilege for you and I.

I want to close with another conversation that Thomas has with Jesus. Jesus appears to his disciples after he rises from the dead. Thomas isn't there with them. And Thomas tells his fellow disciples unless he sees proof. So Jesus appears to him in person and tells him "*Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*" John 20:28.

Have you entrusted yourself wholly and completely to Jesus - the Way, the Truth and the Life?

----- Discipleship Questions-----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: **How Can We Know The Way?** John 14:1-7

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. Read verse 1 – What was Jesus' remedy to the troubled hearts of his disciples? How did Jesus respond when he himself was troubled? Go around and share. John 8: 29, 12:27-28, Luke 23:46

HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.

2. In what ways are you likely to respond when you experience a heightened sense of emotions? Ex: Uncertainty, doubt, loss, grief, discouragement, disappointment, fear etc. Do you believe in experiencing the comfort of God, in his presence and in his promises (verse 3 and 4)? 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
3. What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

4. For personal reflection: What are some ways you would like to grow in trusting God more when troubles hit home? Psalm 37:5, 42:5, 142:1-4