

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God<sup>[a]</sup>; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup>My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup>And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. <sup>4</sup>You know the way to the place where I am going.”

<sup>5</sup>Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

<sup>6</sup>Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup>If you really know me, you will know<sup>[b]</sup> my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

<sup>8</sup>Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

<sup>9</sup>Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? <sup>10</sup>Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. <sup>11</sup>Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. (John 14:1-11)

### **Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled**

I like driving. Being able to get behind the wheel of a vehicle and cruise down the road is something I just enjoy doing. Sometimes all I need to know is that we will get there at some point. I’m also a distracted driver; there’s just so much to see. I don’t mind taking the road less traveled to add a little spice to life with tourist traps that easily sucker me in. I know this can cause some trouble for those who travel with me, especially when they want to get somewhere as soon as possible ready for the trip to be over just as we are leaving city limits. Some, when they travel, need to know all the details—when are we stopping to eat, how often are we going to stop, how much further. And still there are plenty who would prefer not to travel at all. One is not better than the other; at the same time, each can be frustrating for the next. I’m sure personality traits, biology, and how you were raised all play into this in some way. The thing is, you notice these things in more than traveling from one place to the next. You see this as we travel through what we call life.

Along their travels Jesus’ disciples have reached a critical point on the road. They are in the Upper Room with Jesus celebrating the Passover Feast. Rumors that the chief priests and elders have plans to kill their dear friend and teacher, Jesus, very well may have reached their ears. But instead of hiding out somewhere else, Jesus charges right into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. So here they are in the Upper Room and Jesus has just told them that he will be with them only a little longer. Jesus has

spoken of betrayal from one of these close friends—who was it? Who would it be? Surely not I, Lord? They didn't know! He's told Peter he would deny knowing Jesus three times. Betrayal, denial, leaving, death—we aren't surprised that the disciples are shaken, confused, agitated, and troubled. But when Jesus shares with them the comforting promise, Thomas responds: **“Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”** You haven't given us enough details, Jesus! And the details you've given are not what we want to know!

Perhaps you can see yourself in Thomas. We know that our traveling in this world will eventually end. Everyone wants to know, am I on the right way? Plenty will insist this is my life and I will live it according to my truth—what I think or feel is best—and so I will do it my way. But it's bound to happen where your way will run against her way that she thinks is best causing agitation, frustration, and trouble. We hope we are on the right way and try to justify the way we do things, the decisions we make. But then you have to live with the decisions that you made. There's more suffering and struggling not just for you but those you love. There's still a lot of future that you don't have answers to—so how can you be sure? You hear that this Jesus is the most important, but then there are all the other responsibilities, all the other demands, you are busy with so much else—do you really have time for this? Perhaps, you find yourself thinking: does it have to be *this* way? Maybe as long as you go to some church, maybe you have some devotion and say some prayers, that should be good enough. Maybe you can choose what you want to hear and follow what you want. But that's a very dangerous way because you will inevitably ignore the parts that show you how you are living and acting are not right. You'll ignore those words that reveal a heart that does not have its priorities right and your deep need to be saved. And that will lead you away from the one who says He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Or perhaps you see yourself more with Philip. Philip seems to be good with Jesus' answer. He knew where he was going. What he needed was something more, **“Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”**

We know where we are going. You probably learned it at an early age. But, Lord, show us a little easier life, and that will be enough. Lord, show us a little more financial security, stability, and sustainability, and that will be enough. Lord, show my life dreams to become reality—the job, family, place, experiences—and that will be enough. Lord, show her to listen to me or put him into my life, and that will be enough. Lord, fix this person so they are better, and that will be enough. Lord, show this relationship and problems fixed, and that will be enough. Lord, just do this and that will be enough.

Do you see the issue? It's almost like we look past Jesus. Yeah, you promise all of this stuff Jesus, but what we really need is something else. We think that if he does that, then, then we will be satisfied. Then, we will be able to do as he calls us to do. Then, we will have made it. But when those things don't happen, our hearts are so troubled. Does God love me? Did I make him mad and that's why he's not doing it? Do I need to do something more to make up for that wrong? Haven't I worked enough, tried enough, promised enough, suffered enough? When Jesus becomes just something you learned and some knowledge you have and not who you trust and receive, he stops being enough. And if he isn't enough, we look for it somewhere else and wherever we think we find it, that most certainly will not be enough.

Jesus says to you, **“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me...I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”** As long as you are on, in, with the Way you are safe. He will take you where you need to be and where he wants you to be. The Good News of Jesus is the most inclusive teaching. God wants all to be saved. This is not reserved for only a few; this is good news for every nation, tribe, culture, and group.

At the same, it is the most exclusive because there is only one name under heaven by which we are saved. **No one can come to the Father except through me**, Jesus explicitly says. The way to not be troubled, the way to peace and hope, to be saved, the way to the place Jesus has prepared for you, the way to Father isn't coming from anywhere else. When you are on the Way, Jesus, everything else falls into place where it needs to be. It cannot come from your good works and promise to do better; those are still stained with sin. The way cannot be by you choosing what you want to hear and ignoring those things you don't like that he has to say—it leads you away from him. The way to the Father is through Jesus and Jesus alone. And he is the one who chose you and put on the Way. By the waters of Baptism, he placed you on the way and he keeps you there taking you back to the Word and His Sacraments. You don't have to go searching for the Way. He's right there—in the Word and Sacraments—where he promises to always be.

It has to be this way. The truth is that your sins separated you from God and kept you from the way. But it wasn't just the things you failed to do or have done, it's what we are by nature—hostile, bitter enemies of God who do not want him or what he says. The truth is the shame of your sin clung to you and the stench of death hung over you because death is the result of sin. But the one who was rejected has become the cornerstone; all who trust in him will never be put to shame. You can't; he was already shamed for you as he hangs naked, bleeding, dying, for you. You can't be put to shame; he's washed you with his blood so sin's

guilt and shame has been taken away. This truth is the greatest scandal and terrible offense that a dying God saves, that I cannot do anything to save myself, that even the smallest fraction of percent dependent on me means I would lose it all, that He is the only way for me or anyone to be saved. But it's the truth. You didn't come to this on your own; even the faith the believes and holds to these promises is a gift from God. And it's this truth that sets you free. Freedom from sin so it does not control you—your debt is paid in God's blood. Freedom me from Satan's grasp that tries so desperately to drag me to hell—his head is crushed and power destroyed. This truth frees me from constantly trying to be right with God and doing the right thing because the truth is, in Jesus, I am right with God.

Therefore, it also frees from the fear of death and the terror of the grave because Jesus is the Life! All those who believe in him shall not perish. The end of your book is already written. That Jesus who lived and died for you rose again to erase any doubt in your mind that this is true. And that same Jesus has returned to the Father and has a place waiting for you, especially you. After all, he did all this so that you would be him and live with him. It's not enough to bring to this place. No, he is coming back to take you to be with him.

But we don't have to wait until he returns or he calls us to him to start enjoying some of the benefits. We aren't wandering aimlessly in this life. Even when we suffer and struggle, we haven't been forgotten. With Jesus we are on the Way so we know that whatever we face, he is working to bring us to him. The Life gives us life to enjoy today; he gives us all we need for body and life and then sets us free with the truth that whatever we do as his people we do for him, especially the little ones. The end of the book is already written. So, we can stop wasting our life trying to keep God happy. In Jesus you already are. We can stop wasting our life worrying. We can stop wasting our life trying to impress other people. Instead, he who is the life has given us this life to enjoy, to serve neighbor with the full confidence that, you know what, it's going to be okay. Your end is already written; let me spoil it for you. Your name is in the Book of Life. You have a place with your name on it waiting for you. Jesus is ready for that trumpet blast to take you to be with him. And until then he rules and reigns over all things especially for your good. So do not let your heart be troubled. Believe in God. Believe Jesus. He is the way, the truth, the life. Amen.