

JESUS THE WAY

John 14:1-14

Key Verse: 14:6

“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”

In chapter 14 Jesus continues to talk with his disciples in the upper room just before his betrayal. Jesus prepares them for life after his departure. Jesus gives them precious promises. Jesus gives them clear direction. Jesus tells them how to display the glory of God through their lives and ministries. May Jesus’ words speak to our hearts today.

First, trust in God and his word of promise (1-3).

Look at verse 1. “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.” Jesus knew the disciples’ hearts. Their hearts were troubled. Until now, they had followed Jesus with simple faith, leaving behind their families and careers, and overcoming their “mommy boy” tendencies. They had persevered through hardship and training. They could overcome everything by looking at Jesus. Jesus was never defeated. Jesus always had hope and vision. Jesus always knew what to do. Jesus had loved each of them like a mother. As long as they were with Jesus, they were sure that everything would turn out for the best and they would be happy and fruitful. But Jesus had just told them, “My children, I will be with you only a little longer...Where I am going, you cannot come” (13:33). Jesus had clearly said that he was leaving them. This time, they could not come with him. The disciples felt that they were losing everything. We can understand. When we separate from someone we loved and depended on, there is anxiety and a feeling of loss. Dr. Harvey Siy’s family is preparing to go to Omaha, Nebraska at the end of this month. Dr. Siy has become a professor shepherd. It is God’s answer to prayer. However, for his wife Susanna, it is not easy. She and Jenny Cook have been sisters in Christ who lived together for fifteen years. At the thought of separation, tears well up in their eyes.

Anxiety is a common problem for all people. Whenever a soldier leaves the USA to go to Iraq, many loved ones are troubled in their hearts. Those who graduate from universities are happy for a few days. But when they begin to think seriously about their futures they can become anxious about their career or marriage. Many are anxious over the increase of immorality and violent crime. People try to overcome anxiety by piling up money in the bank, accumulating political favors from others, or increasing the number of security forces. But in the end, these things do not alleviate anxiety. How did Jesus help his disciples?

Look at verse 1 again. “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.” Jesus tells us how to overcome any kind of anxiety. It is by trusting in God. God is the Almighty Creator. God is the Sovereign Ruler whose purpose is always good. God is love, and he expresses his love to his people without fail. In God there is no reason for anxiety. Anxiety comes when we forget about God. If our hearts are anxious, let’s repent. 1 Peter 5:7 says, “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”

It is marvelous that God invites us to trust in him. But Jesus did not stop by saying, “Trust in God.” Jesus gave specific promises to his disciples. Look at verse 2. “In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.” Jesus meant that he was going to heaven, or the kingdom of God. But Jesus referred to it as “My Father’s house.” Jesus’ expression, “My Father’s house,” gives us a feeling of warmth and security. Jesus did not talk about heaven as if it were a theological concept. Jesus talked about it in very personal terms as a place of love, joy and peace—a place of great happiness—that he called “My Father’s house.” In doing so, Jesus expresses his own hope and longing to go to his Father’s house. It was just moments before his betrayal. Nevertheless, Jesus had a vivid image in mind of his Father’s house in all its beauty and brilliance. Jesus wanted his disciples to have the same hope and faith. While struggling in this world, we can find real comfort when we remember our Father’s house. Jesus wants us to believe this promise and experience the love and security of our Father’s house in our hearts.

Jesus says that there are many rooms in the Father’s house. The King James Version uses the word “mansions,” “In my Father’s house are many mansions....” Mansions are not just ordinary houses; they are large and stately. Very important and wealthy persons live in mansions. Jesus was going to prepare mansions for his disciples. When we remember how much Jesus loves his disciples, we can realize how mindful he is in making a mansion for each one. These are not Communist style apartment buildings, but custom-built mansions. For the last two years we have been building a new Bible house at UIC. We have spent much time planning its construction and use. We want everything

to be beautiful and useful for student evangelism. If this is true of us, how much more is Jesus mindful in preparing our heavenly home. Jesus is making the best custom-built mansion for each of us where we can live with him forever. This is his promise.

In verse 2 Jesus says, "...if it were not so, I would have told you." Jesus tells us the truth. Jesus does not make false promises. We need this assurance in a world of false promises. Last week the U.S. State Department released a report on human trafficking worldwide. It claims that about 800,000 persons per year are transported across international borders as virtual slaves. In most cases, these people were led astray by false promises of success and riches. Secular humanism is a false promise. Easygoing hedonism is a false promise. Jesus never makes false promises. Jesus tells the truth. Jesus' promise is trustworthy.

Look at verse 3. "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." Jesus promises to come back and take his disciples to be with him. This refers first of all to his Second Coming in power and glory. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 says, "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever." It will be a glorious moment when Jesus returns for his church. And this could happen at any time. In addition, Jesus returns for his people one by one as they go to paradise. St. Stephen, at the moment of his martyrdom, saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God (Ac 7). Jesus came back to get him and take him to paradise.

Jesus has promised us a mansion in his Father's house. Jesus has promised to come back and take us with him to his Father's house. There, we will be with Jesus forever. When we believe these promises, we can be free from anxiety. We can freely serve Jesus, sacrificing our time and resources joyfully. Let's accept Jesus' promises in our hearts.

Second, Jesus is the way and the truth and the life (4-6).

Jesus said in verse 4, "You know the way to the place where I am going." The disciples knew that Jesus was telling them the truth. Jesus wanted them to accept his words by faith; then they could gain greater spiritual understanding. But Thomas said, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Thomas did not understand what Jesus was talking about. He was not yet a spiritual man. He probably wanted Jesus to give him an address and a road map. Instead, Jesus gave him one of the most important Bible verses. Look at verse 6. "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

In the first place, Jesus is the way to the Father and to the Father's house. Why is it so? It is because Jesus is the only one who has come from God. Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:13, "No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man." When Jesus speaks of the Father's house he is speaking of what he has seen and experienced. All others who claim knowledge of heaven are speculators. Jesus is the only one who has been there. More than that, Jesus came down from heaven to bridge the gap between God and man. No one could climb up to God by human effort. But Jesus came down from heaven to earth to open the way to God. John 1:14 says, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." Praise Jesus who humbled himself to come to us!

Jesus is the way to God because he alone solved our sin problem. In the Old Testament system, the holy God lived among his people in the Most Holy Place in the temple. There was a heavy curtain separating God's dwelling from the rest of the temple. Only the high priest could go in there once a year, offering an animal sacrifice for his own sins and the sins of the people. This was a temporary system that did not really solve man's sin problem. However, when Jesus died on the cross, shedding his blood, he made an offering acceptable to God. Hebrews 10:19-22a says, "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body...let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith...." Jesus is the way to God.

Jesus is the way to God because he rose from the dead. Jesus said in John 11:25-26: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." Before Jesus' resurrection, men lived in the shadow of death. But Jesus broke the power of death through his resurrection. Now nothing can separate us from the love of God. Death is the moment of entering our Father's

house. Jesus is the way to eternal life in God. Many people feel that they have no way. So they say very often, “No way.” But we have a way. Jesus is the way.

In the second place, Jesus is the truth. What is truth? That was Pilate’s question (Jn 18:38). Many people think of truth as a set of principles or rules. Some think the truth is scientific fact. But the Bible says that the truth is a person; Jesus is the truth. Why is Jesus the truth? It is because Jesus tells us that we came from God, that our lives have absolute meaning in God, and that we are going back to God.

In the third place, Jesus is the life. It is because Jesus has life in himself. John 1:4 says, “In him was life, and that life was the light of men.” Jesus promised in John 5:24, “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.” Life is the most precious thing for anyone. Jesus gives life because Jesus is the life.

Jesus is “the” way and “the” truth and “the” life. Jesus is the only way to God. Jesus said, “No one comes to the Father except through me.” We live in a time of religious pluralism and cultural relativism. The social consensus is to accept all beliefs as equally valid. One so-called theology professor said that it doesn’t matter what the contents of belief are, only that it is practiced sincerely. According to him even devil worship is commendable if it is done sincerely. In this atmosphere many young people have begun to say, “It’s all good.” But Jesus said that no one comes to the Father except through him. We must stand clearly on this truth and help people come to Jesus, the way.

Third, do even greater things than these (7-14).

Jesus said in verse 7, “If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” In spite of his disciples’ unspiritual minds, Jesus asserted that they were now those who knew God and had seen God in Jesus. Jesus’ words of hope and faith were nothing but grace to his disciples. It was time for them to say, “Amen.” But Philip spoke up, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” It seems that Philip did not hear what Jesus had just said. Worse still, it seems that Philip did not understand the main point of Jesus’ teaching in the whole of John’s gospel. It is that Jesus is God. Perhaps Philip wanted some kind of supernatural experience in order to believe. How did Jesus answer?

Jesus rebukes Philip for his spiritual blindness. Jesus had revealed God plainly to his disciples. Look at verses 10b,11. “The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and that the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.” Although Jesus had clearly revealed God, the disciples needed to make a decision of faith. They needed to accept Jesus as God by faith. Usually, Jesus did not encourage faith based on miracles. Jesus wants his disciples to believe his word. But Jesus felt it was so urgent to plant faith in his disciples that he even appealed to believe his miracles. To Jesus, for his disciples to have faith in him was everything.

Look at verse 12. “I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.” Jesus went to the Father through his death and resurrection and ascension. Jesus sits at the right hand of God and grants the Holy Spirit to his people. Through the gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus changes his disciples and enables them to do greater things than Jesus. Jesus does not want us to be mediocre. Jesus wants us to do great work of God by faith.

Jesus further explained how to do great work of God. Look at verses 13-14. “And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.” Jesus urges us to pray. When we pray Jesus does great things through us. Jesus uses our prayers to accomplish his will and to bring glory to God. This is not vague and general. Jesus wants us to pray specifically so that we may see the answer to prayer. Jesus wants us to know he is working through our prayer. When Mother Barry assumed directorship of UBF in 2002, she prayed until she found the direction to send 100,000 missionaries to 233 nations by the year 2041. Especially she prayed for the evangelism of Muslim countries, North Korea and China. Since then we have seen God answer in many ways. The work of God in Muslim countries has been growing. This summer there will be a UBF Bible Conference in the Middle East. It will be held in Arabic and all missionaries pray to bring Muslim sheep. In Kazakhstan UBF and Indonesia UBF, many Muslims have come to know Jesus. Recently, a UBF missionary went to Turkey. In China, God is using permanent and short term UBF missionaries. God allowed us to send prayer journey teams to North Korea and even hold a prayer meeting in front of Kim Il Sung University. These

things seemed impossible just a few years ago. But when God's servant led us in prayer and we asked in Jesus' name, the work of world mission has prospered. Jesus wants us to do great things in his name through prayer.

Let's remember that Jesus is the way to God. When we have no way, Jesus is the way. In Jesus we can come to God, enjoy the life of God and do great things for God.