

Seventh Sunday of Easter
May 17, 2015
John 14:4-6

In Christ Jesus, our only **WAY** from this veil of tears to the glorious joy of heaven above, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Ever been on the wrong road? With GPS nowadays it is not as easy to get lost, but it still happens. We think we are going the right way and suddenly we find out we are going the wrong way. I remember one of my sons coming home from ILC to Saginaw. It was one of the first times he drove this route himself. He was going around Lansing. It was somewhat confusing for the hwy went around the west side of the city and then headed north-west to Grand Rapids but also east toward Flint. The numbers were Hwy 96 and Hwy 69. Well my son missed the 69 and took the 96. We got a call and he said, "Dad, I think I'm lost. The sign says Grand Rapids ahead." He found out he was going west, instead of east.

Ever been near the Chicago Loop? As you approach you see a maze of roads going in every direction. In some places roads are banked 3-4 levels high. No doubt from the air it looks like mass confusion as cars are going in every direction, but when you are on the right highway, the right road, the one that takes you where you want to go, it is not so confusing. If you keep your eyes on the right road, follow its curves and turns, its dips and rises, its signs and directions getting to the right destination is not as hard as one imagined.

Well this morning our Savior Jesus declares to all who are looking for the WAY:

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

What is the Way, and to what place does the Way lead us?

Those two questions were the same ones that Thomas and the disciples wondered about. Jesus, on the same night in which He was betrayed, after having instituted His Supper, spent some time comforting, strengthening, instructing and preparing His disciples. In the first 3 verses of chapter 14 Jesus says: **"LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED; YOU BELIEVE IN GOD, BELIEVE ALSO IN ME. IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE ARE MANY MANSIONS; IF IT WERE NOT SO, I WOULD HAVE TOLD YOU. I GO TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU. AND IF I GO AND PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU, I WILL COME AGAIN AND RECEIVE YOU TO MYSELF; THAT WHERE I AM, THERE YOU MAY BE ALSO."**

Then Jesus spoke the words of the first verse of our sermon text, verse 4: **"AND WHERE I GO YOU KNOW, AND THE WAY YOU KNOW."**

One would think that after more than 3 years of following Jesus, listening to His Words day in and day out, His disciples would have understood what Jesus was speaking about. But they didn't! They thought Jesus was talking about a place on this earth, and a real physical road, or way to get to that place.

But Jesus is not talking about some mansion with many rooms somewhere in Jerusalem or Capernaum. He is not talking about taking a real road or highway to get to this place. He is speaking of heaven, the home of His heavenly Father, a home with more than enough room for all people.

Unfortunately the disciples in their spiritual blindness were still looking for a physical kingdom; an earthly kingdom and an earthly king who would rule over Israel and the other nations of this world. But Jesus is not that kind of king. His **"KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD!"**

Since Jesus is speaking of a spiritual place, He also is speaking of a spiritual way to get to this place. What does that mean? It means that we must reject any physical, man-made way of getting to this non-physical place. Human ways like—doing good works, obedience to the Commandments, saying our prayers, going to church, giving of offerings, being really nice, sharing and giving, sacrificing oneself for others. All of these human ways can only fall short and end up going nowhere but to the dead end of hell and damnation.

To get from this life to the next life is simply impossible for us human beings to do by ourselves. It is like coming to the shoreline of the ocean and needing to get to the shoreline on the other side of the ocean. We cannot fly over it, we cannot swim across it, and we cannot walk through it. All of our human ways would only end up in drowning and disaster. But we can make the leap from life to life—only through Jesus.

There is the story of the little boy who jumped into the car with his dad to go to baseball practice. His dad drove to the practice field and the boy looked out and said, "But Dad, today practice is at the field where we play our games." The father said, "Why didn't you tell me we were going the wrong way?" The boy said, "Well, I didn't know this was the wrong way."

That is how it is when you are a child. When you're little, Mom and Dad are the way. You just go where they go and you're there. You trust that they will get you where you need to go. Like my son. I drove him and his siblings most of those years when they were in high school.

That is how it is with Jesus. We trust that He will be the Way that takes us to heaven. Without Jesus we would be hopelessly lost and wandering in futility.

We as believers need to be reminded of this so that we don't start to believe that we are saved by a religious system—hearing God's Word, belonging to a Christian congregation, saying our prayers. We are saved by a person—the God-Man. So the question is not: "Is my name on the membership role of a Christian congregation?" It is not: "Do I have a certificate that shows I have been confirmed in a Christian Church?" It is not, "Have I made sure I have given enough money to Church so God will be happy with me?"

It is rather, "Do I believe that Jesus lived and died for me? Do I have my name written in the book of life because I believe that Jesus shed His blood to cleanse me or all of my sins? Have I been led to repent of my sins and to trust that Jesus is the only One who has defeated Satan and conquered death for me and that He alone gives me eternal life? Do I believe that Jesus will take me from this life into eternal life when I die?"

Even as the children of Israel had only one way, one pathway to escape the advancing Egyptian army at the Red Sea—and that was through the open path of the Red Sea, opened by God; so also we have only way to heaven to escape the advancing army of Satan, his evil angels and this sinful world—and that is through Jesus who has taken away our sins and parted death for us.

The last line of our text today would be torn out of most Bibles by the politically correct of our day. **NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH ME.** Jesus is saying "the way of the Buddhists is wrong. The way of the Mohammedans is wrong. The way of the Jews is wrong. The way of the Hindu's is wrong. In fact the way of every other religion that teaches some other way to the Father are all wrong. The only way is through Me."

The Father sent the Son to take our place and to earn salvation for us. He did this by His perfect life of obedient love and His perfect sacrifice as full payment for all of our sins. The Son accomplished what the Father sent Him to do and the Father then raised Him from the dead to assure us that He accepted His Son's sacrifice for us. Therefore there is no other way to the Father but through Jesus.

But we would not know of this way without the Truth. Jesus is the **TRUTH**. Jesus is the Word and in John 17:17 He said, **"SANCTIFY THEM BY YOUR TRUTH. YOUR WORD IS TRUTH."** In our first Scripture reading this morning from Hebrews we learned that the Son went to the Most Holy Place to sacrifice and shed His blood for us before God. That is **TRUTH**. Jesus said **"FOR THE SON OF MAN HAS COME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST."** That is **TRUTH**. Paul wrote, **THIS IS A FAITHFUL SAYING AND WORTHY OF ALL ACCEPTANCE, THAT CHRIST JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD TO SAVE SINNERS.** That is **TRUTH**. John writes, **BUT IF ANYBODY DOES SIN, WE HAVE ONE WHO SPEAKS TO THE FATHER IN OUR DEFENSE-- JESUS CHRIST, THE RIGHTEOUS ONE.** That is **TRUTH**. Again Paul wrote, **FOR GOD DID NOT APPOINT US TO WRATH, BUT TO OBTAIN SALVATION THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO DIED FOR US.** That is **TRUTH**.

This **TRUTH** not only creates faith in our hearts, leads our eyes to see the only **WAY** to life, but also leads us to walk in that Way and strengthens and sustains our faith. This **TRUTH** leads us to simply cling to Jesus and the Cross; to look upon Jesus as our only Substitute, our only Savior. We do not come to the Father by being like Jesus; we come to the Father by and through Jesus—by trusting in Him, relying upon His life, His death and His resurrection. It is through Jesus alone that we can come to the Father.

For Jesus is also the **LIFE**. Because Jesus is the **LIFE**, death could not hold Him. He conquered death and rose from the dead to live forevermore. He has earned life for us and given it to us through His Word of Truth. As He said in John 3:14-17 **"AND AS MOSES LIFTED UP THE SERPENT IN THE WILDERNESS, EVEN SO MUST THE SON OF MAN BE LIFTED UP,**

THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE. FOR GOD DID NOT SEND HIS SON INTO THE WORLD TO CONDEMN THE WORLD, BUT THAT THE WORLD THROUGH HIM MIGHT BE SAVED."

Jesus is the **WAY** to everlasting life; He is the **TRUTH** that leads us in that **WAY**; and He is the **LIFE** that leads us through death into the eternal mansions above.

If there is another way to pass from death to life; to escape from sin and damnation to righteousness and salvation; to be relieved of everlasting misery and distress and enjoy eternal bliss and happiness—then Christ means nothing to us. Then we might as well cast Him aside and disregard all that He has done—His life of perfection; His suffering and death upon the cross and His resurrection back to life.

But He who is the **TRUTH** tells us He is the only **WAY**! What a contrast to the popular teaching that says all religions lead to God and to eternal life, they just follow different paths. Jesus teaches us there are no other paths, there is no other way. The Way to heaven is exclusive. It excludes every other way. But it also is inclusive; it includes everyone; for Jesus died for all people.

May these words be impressed upon our hearts so that our walk through this life be hand in hand with Jesus Christ who is our **WAY**, who leads us by His **TRUTH**, and who has earned for us **LIFE**. Amen.