

## Hope in Him! Knowing and Remembering the Way

John 14:1-6,

Easter Sunday I, April 12, 2015

Sermon Text, John 14:1-6 (KJV):

*“Let not your heart be troubled: ye 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 unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”*

Beloved of the Lord.....Life at times is very busy, indeed too busy. Sometimes it is packed full of activities and work, and there are many duties we must fulfill in the offices God has given us. There is never enough time in the day for a mother to get *all* her work done. Fathers struggle also, and it is hard to find time to spend with the children. We all have chores and duties and things we simply must do and cannot leave undone. Out of necessity we also have to put things on the back burner, though we don't want to. Besides this we begin to feel sorry for ourselves. Where is “my time” and “Why don't I get any time for myself”. Inwardly we complain while outwardly we struggle. We forget that the time God grants us in life, is a time of grace, not a time of merit. In like manner we can all confess we do waste a lot of time which could be better spent in service to our neighbor.

In any case when life gets real busy, the sad truth is we put God on the back burner too. We forget about God or He does not come into our mind much at all during the day. We might pray before we eat, but so often this is vain repetition and then we forget about Him again. But what is worse, we fail to make time for Him, the reading studying and meditating upon His Word. We don't set time aside to be in communion with God, praying to God, or simply thinking about what He desires we do in life, as opposed to what we are actually doing. When we forget God in this manner, there are consequences, namely life gets even harder. We are easily discouraged and depressed. We become like the disciples who met behind closed doors out of fear of the Jews.

First Corinthians 15 sums all this up quite well saying, *“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.”* Ours is not a vain hope where we cross our fingers and hope for the best, but ours is a certain hope of life everlasting in heaven, knowing Jesus has indeed risen from the dead! If we don't remember this, if we forget about God, if we put Christ to the side of our thoughts and allow the world to distract us with all its business, we will indeed be in distress. Therefore let us put the brakes on our busy life, and stop and ponder the path of Jesus, the path of the cross. It was a path of suffering but not without purpose. It was a path, a way for us that gained for us victory over sin and death, and even the gain of life everlasting. Therefore when you find that once again you are too busy with life and all its works and chores, calm down and sit down, and be that Mary who took the time to sit down and listen to Christ, and do not be a Martha. Take time to read, mark, and inwardly digest His Word. Remember your first love Who said, *“Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid”*. *“In my Father's house are many mansions”* and *“If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”*

I. How Christ is the Way. As we most often do, let us get the context of our text and background. John 14 takes place sometime that Thursday night in which Jesus was betrayed. Jesus spoke these words either in the upper room where Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, or they were spoken on the way to Gethsemane. Knowing all things Jesus is giving His disciples strength for what lay before them, hence *“Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me.”* Because Christians have the witness of the Holy Ghost within, we have the power, His power, to calm down our troubled hearts which are filled with worries, fears, and anxiety. We are not always successful of course, nor can we always calm down, but by prayer He can help us. His help comes when we remember His Word and promises. When we thus find ourselves worrying about something, or our minds are obsessed with a certain subject so it seems we can hardly expel our fears, *Hope in Him! Knowing His way!....for Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”*

Also do not overlook how Jesus said *“Ye believe in God, believe also in Me.”* Our faith is not just that there is some Almighty God above us who might help at any time if He feels like it, but Jesus said *“believe ALSO in Me”*, namely remember for Jesus’ sake God will graciously receive you and hear your prayers in a gracious way. Continue to repent of your sins and examine yourself, but never believe God has cast you away because of what you are suffering. Jesus is not going to cast you away, or destroy you, for look and see Him there upon the cross suffering all things for you. And look again and see Him rising in triumph from the dead. And look again and see Him ascending up high into heaven until a cloud blocks Him from sight. Even now in heaven Jesus rules over all this earth, though His ways are higher than our own, and His thoughts also. *“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”* Jer. 29:11,12 (KJV)

In our lesson Jesus now says, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”* This means Jesus is the only way for sinners to reach heaven, and without Jesus no sinner will reach heaven. Jesus alone hung upon the cross in our stead and place, a Substitute for every single sinner in the world, all people. The gates to our Fatherland are open through Christ but if we try to justify ourselves by our works they will be closed again because our deeds are evil. How depressing it is to consider how all the Muslims will be damned (except they repent) because they didn’t believe in the sacrifice of Jesus for their sins. Likewise the same is true of all Jews and Jehovah’s Witnesses who still today claim to believe in the Father, yet they deny the Son who said *“No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.”* Indeed any sinner who tries to get to heaven without Jesus will be bankrupt and destitute on the Last Day. All the good works they did during their lifetime will be nothing more than a pile of excrement on Judgment Day. The works of men are nothing more than a stench before God, in comparison to the sweet-smelling sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Lord. Pity the Jews who try to please their God by not eating bacon. Pity the Muslim who bows down toward Mecca, or the Catholic who bows to Mary and not Christ. And pity yourself if you trust in your works. So the Lord says in Isaiah chapter one, *“Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.”* The one and only sacrifice which God the Father accepts, is the blood sacrifice of God the Son. Faith alone in Jesus is necessary for salvation, for *“Every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, will have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

II. How Christ is the Truth. But Jesus is not only the Way, but also the Truth, for He said *“I am the truth”* and Jesus prayed *“Thy Word is truth”*. What does this mean? It means Jesus is the Gospel Truth which justifies us, and nothing else. By His work on the cross, His intercession and mediation for all sinners, by His sacrifice God declares the verdict, namely through Jesus God declares the whole world righteous and forgiven. That truth alone creates and gives faith to lost sinners, and saves us from death, hell, and Satan, lifting us up to heaven.

But Christ is also the Truth, in the sense that His True Word alone is the sole authority in our life whereby we are to be led. God’s Word is the fount and source of all wisdom, thus let us not listen to the many counselors of this world who can lead us astray. Hymn #355 says, *“Thou art the Truth; Thy Word alone, True wisdom can impart; Thou only canst inform the mind and purify the heart.”* This is why Christians should read their Bibles daily, not without thought or mindless reading, but that kind of reading that searches the Scriptures as the Bereans. Quoting now Acts 17:11 note the high praise the Holy Spirit gives the Christians of Berea in comparison to the Christians of Thessalonica. It is written of the Bereans, *“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”* They didn’t blindly follow the Apostle Paul, but they heard him preach and then they double checked their Bibles to see if he was faithful to God’s Word. In like manner none of you are to blindly follow me, your pastor, or any other pastor in life, but you yourself must search the Scriptures to see whether these things are so. So it is written of God’s Word in Psalm 119, *“How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”*

III. How Christ is the Life. On that note let it also be said the busy life of a Christian is often difficult, simply because we are not searching the Scriptures and finding Christ. Don’t let your life be so busy that this world and the devil distract your eyes away from the pages of God’s Word. You bring your sorrows upon yourself if you allow that.

Should God come first or second in your busy life? Yet if you faithfully set aside time each day to hear Jesus speak through the Word, and if you call upon Him in the day of trouble, rest assured you will find in Him and His Word an overflowing fountain of life and strength, health and true salvation for your soul! Hence Jesus said *"I am the way, the truth, and the LIFE"* .....let us remember and rejoice in that LIFE of Christ, both spiritual and everlasting life. Again Hymn #355 says, "Thou art the Life; the rending tomb, Proclaims Thy conquering arm; And those who put their trust in Thee, Nor death nor hell shall harm." Looking at that tomb, you can see your own life from the dead in the power of His resurrection. By way of the cross and His dead and buried body, so your sins are dead and buried too, erased from the sight of God by holy and cleansing blood. If you believe and trust in Jesus and not your works, you need not fear damnation for you can expect ONLY SALVATION FOR JESUS' SAKE, for *"He is risen! as He said!"* Your faith then is also a type of resurrection. It too is a part of the Life Christ has given you, because the Spirit Himself has quickened you. So it is written *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."*

Finally beloved, understand the life everlasting Jesus has promised you, for *"In my Father's house are many mansions"* and *"I go to prepare a place for you."* This means your place in heaven was gained for you, prepared for you, by Jesus who then ascended the cross to pay for your sins. Heaven is not still under construction, as if carpenters are still there building, for all things were created in six days. Rather your place in heaven was prepared 2000 years ago "not with gold or silver" .....but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Therefore what Jesus promised will indeed come true. *"I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."* *"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."* Amen.

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