



Easter 5 – Mother’s Day

May 14, 2017 - 10:15 a.m.

Rev. Todd Goldschmidt, Pastor

Theme: JESUS IS THE ONE AND ONLY WAY TO THE FATHER!

Sermon Text: John 14:1-14 (NIV)

14 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ² 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? 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. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going.”

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

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

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

⁹ 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’? ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ 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. ¹² Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

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Moms dare to care. And daring to care can be a heart-breaking venture. Moms who dare to care risk the chance that their children won't respond to their concern the way they hope and pray. They gamble on the possibility that their loving care will go far enough, last long enough and be strong enough to ensure that their children feel valued for who they are, not for what they can or cannot do. Caring moms want their children to know they can turn to them for encouragement and support no matter what challenges or difficulties they face—whether their children are 5, 15 or 50! But *Christian* moms who care have an even greater concern. They work tirelessly and pray fervently that their little ones will learn that Jesus loved them enough to die for them to take their sins away and that rose again so they can live forever with Him in the rooms of His Father's house that He's preparing for them. Above all, they want their children to know and believe the truth that

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When our boys were little, Suze and I would read Bible stories to them and pray, “**Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep**” at night before they drifted off into slumber-land. It was always such a peaceful process, as I recall. But then my memory isn't what it used to be. One of the most challenging issues that many parents face is what's known as “separation anxiety.” Well Jesus' disciples suffered from the same malady. He'd given them a heads up several times that He was heading back home to heaven once His work on earth was finished. Once He'd accomplished all that He'd set out to do—once His saving mission was complete—He'd return to the right-hand the Father. He'd leave the state of humiliation in the rear-view mirror that He entered into at His conception by the Holy Spirit in the womb of His mother, Mary, and re-enter the state of exaltation that He'd enjoyed from eternity.

So, in preparation for that momentous event, Jesus dared to care. He dared to care enough to comfort His disciples, who were distraught at the thought of His departure. He said to them, “**Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. 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? 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. You know the way to the place where I am going.**” We find these words of Jesus to be some of the most comforting in Scripture. But put yourself in the disciples' sandals. They had an entirely different perspective. This was real-time for them, not 2 millennia later like it is for us. They were struggling to grasp what their day-to-day reality would be like once Jesus was no longer physically present to guide and direct them with His words of wisdom and to serve as the consummate example of grace under pressure and God's love in action.

Like a Christian mom who repeats sage advice to her kids for what seems like the umpteenth-million time, this wasn't the first time Jesus tried to prepare His disciples for that moment. But they weren't really listening to His caring words. All they really cared about was how His departure would negatively impact them. His words, in other words, went in one ear and out the other. The Twelve had lost sight of Jesus's person and purpose. He'd

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told them point blank: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

He also added the wonderful truth that “on the third day He will rise again” (Luke 18:33)! Yet even the good news of His resurrection fell on their deaf ears much like a mother’s words of wisdom often seem to. So isn’t it a pleasant surprise when you overhear your child intone, albeit perhaps a bit too piously, “My Mommy says,” to a playmate?

What Jesus told His disciples is incredibly comforting—especially in the face of death. Death is the starkest reminder of the effects of the fall into sin. Adam and Eve wanted to do things their way, not God’s way. And that self-centered attitude is at the heart and core of every sin you or I commit as well. Sin is selfishness, pure and simple. When we choose to sin, we’re really telling God, “I’ve got this one, God. I know better than You what’s in my best interests.” We seek to satisfy our carnal desires and run pell-mell after transitory things that are destined for destruction instead of seeking God’s “kingdom and his righteousness” first and trusting that when we do, “all” the “things” we need for our body and life “will be given to [us] as well.” (Matt. 6:33). That’s what Jesus vows will happen for us *if* our priorities line up with His. And Jesus *always* delivers on His promises—***always!***

“You believe in God; believe also in [Jesus].” Take Him at His Word, for His “word is truth” (John 17:17). He speaks the truth when He tells us that He’s gone “to prepare a place for us” in His “Father’s house.” So we can also trust that He “will come back and take [us] to be with [Him]” so “that [we] also may be where [He] is” in heaven! We “know the way to the place where” Jesus went thanks to Thomas. “Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way? Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.’” Jesus is “*the way, the truth and the life!*” “No one comes to the Father except through” Him!

This is a scandalous claim of Jesus. No one would’ve complained if He’d simply taught about God or been upset if He’d just presented His take on the Scriptures. But He went much further. He presented Himself. He didn’t just propose a way to God. He proposed Himself as the unique entrance into knowing who God is. That’s the scandal of the gospel, and it got Jesus crucified. It’s also a huge stumbling block to unbelievers. The exclusiveness of Jesus’ claims is good evangelistic material and a necessary part of any gospel presentation, but it contradicts the spirit of our age. People want an adviser, not a Lord to whom the owe allegiance. They want a mentor, not a Master. The prevailing mood of our culture is to accept some of the truth of Jesus without accepting His unique claims of divinity. People appreciate Jesus the philosopher but avoid Jesus the King of all creation at all costs. It’s simply too demanding to follow one Lord to the exclusion of all others.

Does this mind-set creep into our thinking too? Most of us know, theologically, to reject such a compromising view of Jesus. But in practice, how many lords do we really have? Most of us could likely identify rivals to Jesus to whom we sometimes bow. A career path? A political perspective? A relationship? A lifestyle? A philosophy that is, at least in part,

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contrary to God's will as He lays it out in His Word? We daily consume information from a variety of sources, many of which tell us another way, another truth, another life. We try to ignore them, but at times we accommodate them or even incorporate them into our lifestyle. In reality there's really only one revelation: Jesus Himself. His claim is exclusive. Yet we hesitate to narrow ourselves to Him alone. He insists on it. He alone is "the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through" Him!

Jesus told His disciples, "Do not let your hearts be troubled." Realize that Jesus is preparing them for the most catastrophic experience they'll ever face—His execution. Their Messiah, their Liberator, their political Savior is about to die a shameful death. Their hopes for revolution against Rome will be sealed in a guarded tomb. They'll suffer despair and disillusionment. Their world will be rocked. We don't despair when we read of Jesus' preparations for His death. Our hearts aren't troubled, because we know the Resurrection power of the gospel. No, our hearts are troubled by other things. We see what's going on in the world and wonder if the end is near. We hear of wars and rumors of wars. Falling towers and biological pathogens panic us. We note that the site of the Crucifixion is once again the most contested plot of land on the planet. And we worry. A lot.

Jesus says, "Don't." Even if all hell breaks loose around us, we have a place of supreme safety amid those turbulent waters where Jesus dwells with us even now. The world can't touch the one who rests in Jesus' care, however brutal it becomes. It may threaten all that's corruptible—our possessions and bodies, but it can never harm our souls. Worry occurs when we overvalue something that's transitory. Yes possessions, opportunities, health, relationships and jobs are important for our daily life. But they're not essential to our life in Christ. When we overvalue them, they turn into idols. And we overestimate our role in preserving them. When they're threatened, we are too. Our hearts are troubled. But if we fix our hearts exclusively on Jesus, our hearts find rest in Him. Our Refuge, Shield and Provider tells us not to worry. He can be trusted. The Rock of Ages doesn't move!

Jesus vows, "Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it." So we ask, in Jesus' name, "Help me, Lord, to put my hope and trust in You alone." And we sing the song we likely learned first on our mother's lap: "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to Him belong. We are weak, but He is strong. Yes, Jesus loves me!" Jesus Is the One and Only Way to the Father! Amen.

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