

Jesus Said, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life"

Have you ever walked in half way through a conversation and you kind of get the idea of what's going on but you're also kind of confused?

That's pretty much what we're doing here with our reading this morning. We're starting at John 14:1 but that's mid way through a conversation between Jesus and his disciples that begins back in chapter 13. So what I'd like to do is to actually rewind a little bit and take a look at what happens during the first part of the conversation.

You Will Disown Me

In verse 31 of chapter 13 Judas has left the building, we've discovered that he is going to betray Jesus and he's gone off into the night. It's just Jesus and the other eleven sat having a chat and Jesus tells them some news - "I will be with you only a little longer"(v.33) and "where I am going you cannot come." (v.33) He also gives them a new commandment "As I have loved you so you must love one another". (v.34) To which Peter, well he basically ignores the commandment and then refuses to accept that he can't come wherever it is that Jesus is going. Despite the fact that Jesus tells him he can follow later Peter still asks why he can't come with him now and says "I will lay down my life for you." (v.37) which sounds quite noble on the surface, except that he's saying it to argue against what Jesus has commanded him and seems even less noble when Jesus replies "Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the cock crows, you will disown me three times!" (v.38)

Why have we gone back to look at these verses? Because I think to really understand the

significance of what Jesus has to say in chapter 14, we need to first understand who he is saying it to. He's saying it to the eleven disciples yes, but they are very representative of humans as a whole and during this conversation we very much see the humanity of Peter, as one who is of this world. And by that I mean that he is clearly broken, he is clearly sinful – and he is clearly just like us all. He is unable to go to that place where Jesus is going – which is to be with the Father. It's a place he wants to go, he says he's willing to die to get there but ultimately his sinfulness means that he can't, when things get tough he says “Jesus? Nope never heard of the guy.” - he disowns him. We're no different, we want that great prize at the end, we want paradise – we'll often say we're willing to do whatever it takes to get there suddenly – lust. We think we're going in the right direction and suddenly – pride. We're going God's way and then suddenly – the ways of the world over God and we're going the in the wrong direction. Every single one of us is like this, it's the broken condition of humanity. And the consequence of this is heart breaking and I can't stress enough the seriousness of this, because the consequence is that instead of ending up where we're supposed to be, where God wants us, which is with him – we end up with the alternative, and that is death. The way of the world is death and it's because of the sin of mankind.

It's important that we recognise that this is our starting point because what Jesus says next completely changes everything.

Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled

He begins - "Do not let your hearts be troubled." (v.1) At this point you're all thinking- Matt, how can we not feel troubled, you've just completely depressed us – you've told us we're all sinful and we're all going to die? Well, yeah, OK I did do that but listen to this – Jesus says "You believe in God, believe also in me." (v.1) You believe in God right? Most people do, whether or not it's the heavenly Father, most people put something in that God spot. It might be "The Universe", it might be "Fate", it might be the England football team. Well, if you believe in God, believe in Jesus! This is what he's done for you - "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 may be where I am." (v.3)

Do you hear what Jesus is saying here? There is no shortage of space in paradise. There is enough room for everyone to come home to the Father! There's enough room for you, and you, and you, and me – enough room for all of us, and everyone else. And Jesus has made this possible. He knows we can't get there on our own, he knows we'll go the wrong way so he's made it possible, he's coming to take us there. I feel like I say these four words ever time I preach, but it's because it's true – THIS IS GOOD NEWS. This human condition is NOT the only option but there is an alternative and Jesus has made it possible.

I am the Way and the Truth and the Life

At this point Thomas chimes in in verse 5- "Lord, we don't know where you are going? How can we know the way?" I don't know if he left to go to the toilet and just came back or if he just wasn't paying attention because I'm sure Jesus just said "I'm going to come back and take you there" but anyway, it seems to work in our favour that Thomas asked the question because Jesus answers like this – "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (v.6)

Thank you Thomas for asking that question because in the two short sentences of Jesus' answer – he shows us a complete reversal of the ways of the world, they are words sum up what Jesus did for us in his death and resurrection and completely liberate us from death sentence that we are living under.

What's so incredible about Jesus' answer?

The world says "make your own way" - it's full of people stumbling around trying to make something of themselves, trying to achieve, feeling lost with no hope of achieving the one thing that matters, unity with God. It's full of people like Peter saying I can do it and then heading the wrong way.

But Jesus says "I am the way" – he doesn't stumble around of the darkness, instead he entered into the darkness of death and broke through the other side bringing us home to the Father. Giving us a real hope that one day we CAN be with him.

The world says "choose your own truth and let others choose theirs". The world says it's OK to lie if it gets you the result you want. It's full of confused people who don't know what truth is anymore.

But Jesus says "I am...the truth". He is the truth of the Father, in him we know God, we know where we belong. So we don't need to be confused, we don't need to lie because he we can trust in him.

The world says "It's your life, do what you want with it" and so since the very beginning, since Adam and Eve, people have been doing what they want with it but look at the consequence, all around us everything is dying.

But Jesus says "I am...the life." He has defeated death, in fact he has reversed the way of the world and gone from death into life and even better he has said, I'll take you with me. Into a real abundant life – a life that doesn't end when we die but really begins.

No One Comes to the Father Except Through Me

And then Jesus says "No one comes to the Father except through me."

In some ways it sounds restrictive -You can do this my way or not at all, but as we've discussed, without the "except through me" all there is is "No one comes to the Father."

We made it restrictive -we walked our own way, followed the lie of sin and headed toward death instead of life. But Jesus finds us in this mess and offers us truth instead of lies, life instead of death, and he offers to bring us home to the Father.

Jesus is the ONLY way to the Father and this is completely liberating. We did have a death sentence but now we have a promise of abundant life in him. We now have someone reaching out a hand to us saying "Come with me if you want to live." We now have a real hope and a real future.

I'll just finish by saying this.

I've had conversations with people from outside the Church who have said to me, it's nice that you have a faith but it's not for me – they see going to church as being like going to the gym or think following Jesus is the same as following a football team. But the fact that Jesus is the Way and the Truth and the Life means that being a Christian, isn't just a hobby, it isn't a nice way to spend a Sunday morning or a distraction from reality. When we say yes to Jesus we are saying yes to life! When we choose Jesus over the world we have a real hope, a glorious hope, we have a future and a reason to be joyful! And so if we really do what Jesus commanded, which is to love one another – I think the most loving thing we can do is to let them know let them know how they can also have this life, this

hope, this joy. To tell them that Jesus THE way and THE truth and THE life and that no one comes to the Father except through him.