

Acts 7:55-60
Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16
1 Peter 2:2-10
John 14:1-14

Sermon May 7th, 2023

Jesus Is the Way, the Truth, and the Life!

In our gospel, the disciples are anxious from hearing about Jesus' impending death (**Image One**: someone feeling anxious). They don't want to have to say goodbye to their teacher, mentor, friend. They feel insecure about the possibility of carrying on Jesus' ministry in their community without Jesus being physically present with them. "How many times did you tell us Jesus: "oh you of little faith?"" They feel confused over the thought that Jesus the Messiah is actually going to die. "If you are the Messiah Jesus, why are you going to die at the hands of the very people you have been sent to liberate us from?" As Jesus' foretelling of his impending death really starts to sink in, the disciples are struggling to be hopeful about their future, as well as, about the future of Jesus' movement.

Likewise, when we face suffering, we too feel anxious, insecure, confused (**Image One**). We too struggle to be hopeful about our future. For example, when we grieve the death of a loved one. We feel anxious about what life will be like without them. We feel insecure about our ability and/or capacity to keep going. To keep living life with energy and purpose. We feel confused about why they are no longer with us in body. We struggle to be hopeful about a future without them.

Or, when we suffer from a chronic physical or mental illness/condition. We feel anxious about how people will treat us (**Image One**). We feel insecure about being able to function well in our homes, and in our community. We feel confused about why God doesn't heal us already. We struggle to be hopeful in God's promise that one day we will experience God's healing and redemption from our suffering.

Or, when we are ignored, rejected, by someone or a group of people. We feel anxious about the possibility of being hurt again and again (**Image One**). We feel insecure about making new relationships. We feel confused at why people are treating us this way. We struggle to be hopeful that someday the community will accept us. Someday we will meet someone who will love us for who we are.

Or, when we experience a job loss or major increase in rent or mortgage or insurance. We feel anxious about our financial wellbeing (**Image One**). We feel insecure about finding a new job, or finding the money to account for the increase. We feel confused at why our boss would let us go, or why the owner of the house would do this to us? We struggle to be hopeful in God's promise that God will provide for our wellbeing.

Like the disciples, when we suffer, we too feel anxious, insecure, confused, hopeless (**Image One**).

Well, in our gospel, Jesus can see and hear the worry that the disciples are feeling. In response, Jesus says, “do not let your hearts be troubled.” Jesus acknowledges their anxiety. Jesus is listening and in tune with what they are feeling.

Likewise, Jesus can see and hear the anxieties we feel. In response, Jesus says to us, “do not let your hearts be troubled.” Jesus acknowledges our anxiety. Jesus is listening and in tune with what we are feeling (**Image Two**: someone feeling at peace).

Jesus goes on to tell the disciples, and us, that they/we are valued. That they/we are welcome into God’s kingdom, with all our anxiety, insecurity, confusion, hopelessness. That Jesus is going to prepare a place for them/for us.

Jesus goes on to tell the disciples, and us, that Jesus’ death is not the end of our story. Our loved one’s death is not the end of our story. Our chronic pain or illness is not the end of our story. Our ignored, rejected, broken heart is not the end of our story. Our financial struggles are not the end of our story (**Image Two**).

Jesus then tells his disciples, and us, that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Jesus is everything to his disciples, to us. And Jesus invites them/us to keep believing. To keep following the way of Jesus. To keep trusting in Jesus. To keep seeing that with Jesus comes new life. Even after Jesus faces death on a cross. Even as we bear our own crosses.

Jesus has spent the last three years training his disciples to say and do what Jesus has been saying and doing. And even though Jesus is about to face death on the cross, the disciples will carry with them into the future these memories, these teachings. Jesus will continue to live in and through the disciples even after his death, resurrection, and ascension (**Image Two**).

Likewise, through hearing what Jesus says and does in the scriptures, in the proclamation of Word and Sacrament, we too carry with us Jesus’ teachings, as well as, everything he did to reflect God’s grace, hospitality, healing, and redemption in our world. Jesus continues to live in and through us even after his death, resurrection, and ascension (**Image Two**). Like, our loved ones who continue to live in and through us, after they die.

Jesus goes on to tell his disciples, and us that he believes in us so profoundly, that he says we will be able to do greater things than he. That we will be able to keep going. To keep living life with energy and purpose. That we will find ways to function. That we will make new relationships. That we will find a new job or money to account for the inflationary pressures. That we will be able to change the world in wonderful and

exciting ways. Jesus believes in us, and encourages and us to do the same (**Image Two**).

And so, in our gospel, we see that Jesus meets us where we are. Jesus hears our anxious voices, our insecure pleas, our confused thoughts, our hopeless laments. Jesus sees that we are suffering.

And leaves us with words of peace and promise. Calming our anxieties (**Image Two**). Building us up when we feel insecure. Helping us try to make sense of what happened. Giving us hope in God's future promises.

Let us pray, gracious God, when we face suffering in our lives, help us see where you are present. When we feel anxious give us peace. When we feel insecure, build us up. When we feel confused, help us see. When we feel hopeless, open our hearts to trust in your promise. In Jesus name we pray, **Amen**.

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