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***Show Me the Way***  
***John 14:1-12***

*"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.*

*2 In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?*

*3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.*

*4 And you know the way to the place where I am going."*

*5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"*

*6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

*7 If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."*

*8 Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied."*

*9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father'?"*

*10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works.*

*11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves.*

*12 Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.*

When Jesus speaks these words to his disciples, their hearts ***are troubled***.

And they are ***afraid***.

They have just had a last meal with Jesus, and he has told them that he will die, and leave them.

Can you imagine?

They have no idea what it really means.

All they know is that life is going to ***change***. Completely.

When have you felt like your life is changing?

And your heart is troubled?  
*Maybe it's* changing right now.

Some are graduating, and facing a whole new world.  
*Others* are facing a diagnosis, or a job change,  
 Or a season of caregiving.  
 Other are facing changes in relationships,  
 Or the loss of loved ones.

That is exactly when we need these words of Jesus--  
*Do not let your hearts be troubled.*  
*Believe in God, believe also in me.*

After memorizing these verses many years ago,  
 I find myself repeating them when times are tough, and my heart is troubled!  
 They are words of comfort, and belief.  
 It's important to know *what* we believe---  
 and *in whom* we believe. *Believe in God, believe also in me.*

Jesus' words are about a *relationship* with Him--  
 All throughout the gospel of John,  
 Jesus uses *metaphors* to describe that *relationship*.  
 He talks about *abiding* in him like a vine and branches, in John 15,  
 about *sheep* following their shepherd's voice in John 10.

So when Jesus says believe in me,  
 Have a close *relationship* with me!  
 Now think about that— isn't that a word of *comfort for us*,  
 When our hearts are troubled?

But let's back up.  
 If we want to rely on Jesus for comfort, we have to know:  
*Who is Jesus?*  
 And *what does Jesus do* in our lives?

John 14 offers some *good answers* to those questions.  
 If we *believe* in Jesus.

But *believing is easier said than done, isn't it?*  
 In the middle of the night when you can't sleep because tears are flowing,

or your mind is racing,  
believing is not always easy, is it?

I was pouring my heart out to God recently, while journaling.  
And I **remembered** these words from John 14.  
It didn't stop the pain, but I remembered the words,  
and how ***I do believe***.  
I have a relationship with Jesus.  
I know He is always right beside me.

Wanna know a ***little trick*** that I've used for years?  
I learned it in seminary.  
Whenever the Bible says the people 'Israel' or 'God's people',  
We would change that to ***personal names***.

For **John 10** you could say,  
*I am the good shepherd, I know Patti, and Patti knows me.*  
For **John 14** you might say, *Do not let your heart be troubled, Bill. Believe in God,  
believe also in me.*

In **Isaiah 43** you would say, *Do not fear, Ed, for I have redeemed you.  
I have called you by name, Ed, you are mine.*

What if reading the Bible this way can bring us ***comfort***?  
I believe it really can.

Now, if we go back to John 14,  
We hear that Jesus ***prepares*** a place for us....  
*In my father's house are many rooms, if it were not so, would I have told you that I  
go to prepare a place for you? And when I prepare a place for you, I will come and  
take you to myself.*

What do you think of when you hear that?  
Many of us have heard these words at a funeral,  
because they are so appropriate and comforting at the time of death.  
They are a promises about our heavenly home.  
And the ***comfort*** of knowing that our loved ones are in a special place,  
and we will be reunited with them one day!

But, what if these words are also about ***right now***, here on earth?

What if Jesus prepares a place for us, today, as well?  
 What if He goes ahead, like the good shepherd,  
 to *show us where* we are going?  
 What if everywhere we go, Jesus has already been there,  
 To prepare each step of our journey?

That's not always easy to believe during the tough times though, is it?

Thomas asked Jesus,  
 the question we all ask at one time or another:  
*Lord, we do not know where you are going, how can we know the way?*  
 And then we hear Jesus give an amazing answer:  
***I AM the way, the truth, and the life.***

Now before we dive in that, we should stop for a minute and understand that  
 These are often *misused* words from the Bible.  
***I am the way, the truth, and the life.***

These words have been used to *exclude* anyone who does not believe  
 Exactly like we do, in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.  
 They have been used to say Christians *know the way* (or that our particular brand  
 of Christianity) is the *only way*.  
 But what if Jesus is saying something deeper than that?

We ***DO believe*** that Jesus is the way, truth and life,  
 but we don't claim to know who is in and who's out...  
 we leave all of that up to God.

The Greek word *hodos, or way*, means road, or path,  
 It also means the way of thinking, feeling, and deciding.

So when Jesus calls *himself* the way—it's NOT a list of dos and don'ts....  
 It's a *relationship* with Him—  
 It's letting Jesus *guide our way---of thinking, feeling, and deciding!*

Remember the famous phrase: ***WWJD?***  
 What would Jesus do?  
 What if we asked ourselves that all the time?  
 What if we allowed Jesus to *show us the way to live?*

But how many times have we ever said to God,  
*there's no way... no way out, no way through this.... how can I ever find a way?*

When have you been there---*thinking, there's no way?*  
That's when we can stop and think,  
our *relationship* with Jesus—IS the *way*.

How often do you imagine *Jesus right beside you?*  
Especially when you feel like there is no way?

In a sermon entitled, *What to do when you don't know what to do!*  
Pastor Jared Alcantara, suggests we do three really important things in situations  
like that:

**We ASK, LISTEN, and TRUST.**

<http://www.preachingtoday.com/sermons/outlines/2017/may>

First, we **ASK for help.**

We call out to God—sometimes desperately pleading,  
Just like many of our ancestors did throughout the Bible!  
God wants us to *Ask!*

Next we **LISTEN** to God.

This is *more than just hearing.*

This is *paying attention* to what God is saying.

Remember last week, using that way of reading the Bible called Lectio Divina?  
Reading it out loud, three times, asking *what are you saying to me God?*

But how many times have you read something  
and you can't remember a single word?  
Sometimes we do that with the Bible, don't we?  
We read it, we hear it, but do we really *listen* to it?  
Do we *pay attention* to what we are hearing,  
and plan to DO something with it?

In the Bible *listening is connected to obeying.*

There's even a word that means both Listen and Obey, in Hebrew: *Shema*.

It means listen, and it means obey what you hear.

The Shema is a famous phrase from Deuteronomy 6 that God's people were  
required to recite daily,

about loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Finally, when you don't know what to do, we **TRUST**.

**Trust God.**

Which is not easy is it?

It might be easy to trust in God when things are going *well*,  
and we can see the blessings, and the answers to our prayers.

But what about when the *bottom falls out* of our lives?

Do we trust God *then*?

If you're like me, it's tempting to just try and *just handle it myself*.

I can do it, I can get through this.

Just grin and bear it.

Or, it's easy to *turn to other people*—we pick up the phone, or get online and look up answers.

But Jesus is actually the one *closest* to us, and the one who can *really help us*,  
so why not *turn to Him first*?

One day someone asked *Mother Teresa* why the Untouchables, the poorest of the poor, were so close to Jesus.

She said, '*When Jesus is all you've got, you discover that Jesus is all you need*'.

What if we reminded ourselves of that truth?

That Jesus is all we need.

That Jesus is the **WAY**.

Jesus also says that he is *the TRUTH*.

The *life of Jesus* is the most amazing story that any of us could ever know!

His life, death, and resurrection,  
is the most important truth in the world!

And having a relationship with Jesus bring us to an *understanding of life*,  
that we cannot find anywhere else, right?

Jesus called himself the TRUTH, the *aletheia* in Greek--which means *reality*.

I love that.

When we start wondering what is real, what is right and wrong,  
whether everything is just relative, Jesus says *I AM the truth*.

A relationship with Jesus IS reality—it's what we can believe in!

This is *different* than saying we have a list of all that is right and wrong,

or a *blueprint for the way to live...*  
It's something so much greater!

We have a **PERSON** who is our truth,  
And a *relationship* that guides our path.

This is what separates Christianity from other faiths, or life in the world—  
It's this relationship that grounds us in reality.  
If we remember *Jesus is the truth* above and beyond anything else,  
That's real life.

But having that kind of relationship with Jesus means  
We need to *spend time* with Jesus.  
We need to look for Him—in our *Bibles*, putting ourselves right there in it.  
We need to look for Him---in our *worship*, listening for what He has to say.  
We need to look for Jesus---in our *prayers*, waiting for Him to answer.  
And we need to look for Jesus---in our *fellowship* with other believers.

Jesus finally called himself *The LIFE*.  
And in John 10 last week, he said that he came to bring us *Abundant life*.  
I think sometimes we know this in our heads, but not our hearts.

Have you ever thought about the *kind of life you have* because of Jesus?  
And what your life would be like *without* him?  
I can *hardly even imagine* that at all.  
He is *life*.  
I am able to get up in the morning and keep on going, because I know Jesus.  
I *trust* Him. I *believe* in Him.  
I *believe that His words are true*, and his *way of life is the way* I want to live.  
I believe in His body, the *body of Christ*, the church.  
I don't even know where I'd be without that.

You know, when people join our church, there is only *one requirement*:  
belief in Jesus as Lord and Savior.  
But first, we ask that people *turn away from sin, and toward life with Jesus*.

Theologian N.T. Wright talks about *avoiding sin* and *embracing life with Jesus*.  
He says we should think of a very scary animal--- a snake, or a spider.  
If you came around a corner and found yourself facing it, wouldn't you want to run  
away? Well, as a Christian, *that's how we should feel about sin*.

Then think how you'd feel if you saw the person you loved most in the entire world, who you hadn't seen for years, walking down the street.

What would you do? Wouldn't you chase after them!

And run to embrace them?

That's how we should ***think of Jesus and the new life that he offers us!***

Adapted from N.T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: The Pastoral Epistles* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), page 76

Friends, I believe ***Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life***---not just in general.

But for me, and you.

For all of us.

That is our ***Good News of the Gospel***

Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

For that gift, all God's people can say together, Amen.