

# FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

## Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church

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### More than Enough

John 14:1-12

*"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. 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." 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 knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." 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'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. 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 miracles themselves. I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He 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 Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.*

Almost every parent is familiar with the bargaining ritual that takes place when a child really wants something from a store and you have told them they can't have it. They will promise you almost anything to get you to agree to buy them that certain toy or piece of candy they feel they just need to have. One plea that a child will sometimes make goes like this: "If you just agree to buy this one thing this one time, I will never ask for anything else from you the rest of my life." It's a silly statement. Every parent can see right through it. It's this kind of "silly" plea, however, that we find in our Gospel reading today.

By the time of our Gospel reading today, the disciples had been with Jesus day in and day out for three years. They ate with him, walked with him, and talked with him. These were the men whom Jesus had spent the most time teaching about his Father's will and his own mission as the world's Messiah. Yet, even after all this time, the disciples didn't seem very confident in their knowledge of God. They were nervous because Jesus had told them that the time for him to leave was very near and they didn't know what they were going to do. Jesus tried to calm them. He told them, *"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. 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."* Jesus wasn't leaving them for good. He was going to prepare a place for them in heaven. And one day, he would come and take each and every one of them to be with him. These words should have provided great comfort. But the disciples were still uneasy.

Not surprisingly, Thomas spoke up. He's the same Thomas who would later doubt the Savior's resurrection until he saw him with his own eyes. Thomas said, *"Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"* Jesus must have been saddened by Thomas' words. Thomas was so concerned that he would not know where to find God, that he looked right past the obvious. He looked right past the Savior, who was standing in front of him. It couldn't be that easy. There had to be something more difficult, some deeper knowledge, some steeper path to get to God. It's as though Thomas thought Jesus had been holding out on them somehow. "Just tell us the way, Jesus!"

And even when Jesus made it so clear for them, saying *"I am the way,"* the disciples were not satisfied. This time Philip spoke up. He wanted something more from Jesus—some added assurance before Jesus left them. And so he said to Jesus, *"Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us."* Of course, the irony of his statement is that Jesus had been showing them the Father all along. They just couldn't see it or accept it. The disciples thought they needed something more. They wanted to make their spiritual life and their path to heaven more complicated than it really was.

Do you ever see the path to God as something difficult and foreboding? “There’s so much stuff in the Bible. How can I begin to know who God really is?” And just when you think you might have grasp on who God is, then something like September 11<sup>th</sup> comes along. Or maybe you lose your job or find out that a friend of yours has cancer. How are you supposed to make sense of that? Suddenly, knowing who God is doesn’t seem very easy any more. You wished you had a close relationship with God, but it just isn’t possible. You say to yourself, “It would be nice to have a faith like those people in church who seem to never waiver and have the right answers to all the difficult questions. But that’s just not going to happen for me. I wouldn’t even know where to start.” And so instead of picking up your Bible and trying to grow in faith, you just leave it on the shelf. And instead of growing closer to God, your faith starts to falter. It’s not that you lack desire to know God better, but you need direction.

This is what Jesus gave to the disciples as they questioned him about the way to God—direction. And the direction pointed right to himself. Jesus said, “You’re looking for the way? Well, *I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me.*” The disciples had the way to the Father—the way to heaven—standing right there with them. If they were so intent on seeing the Father, they needed only to look more closely at Jesus. All they wanted to know about God, they could learn from watching Jesus. As Jesus said, “*Anyone who has seen me, has seen the Father.*” Jesus was more than a good man or a learned teacher, he was and is true God—one with the Father and Holy Spirit. The disciples had proof after proof of Jesus’ divinity. They had seen him turn water into wine, feed the five thousand, and even raise Lazarus from the dead. As they watched these miracles, they were watching the power of God the Father Almighty. What more did they need? Nothing! They had Jesus.

Do you want to know more about God? Do you want a closer relationship with the One who created you? Do you want to have a faith that does not shrink but keeps growing and growing? Then look at Jesus. He is the way, the truth and the life. It is that simple. If you want to know about God’s amazing love, just watch Jesus unselfishly go to the cross for the sins of the world. If you want to know about God’s mercy and forgiveness, watch Jesus work among the outcasts of society, the poor, the weak and the lame. Everything you ever wanted to know about God can be found in Jesus. Sometimes we smile when the children come up front for the children’s message and they answer “Jesus” for every question. But maybe they are really on to something. Who is the one that has given us life even though we deserve death? Jesus. Who is the one that gives us the strength to get up in the morning when we know we have fifty hours of work and eight hours to do it in? Jesus. Who is the one that gives us the power to forgive our spouse for the twentieth time when the nineteenth time was supposed to be the last? Jesus. Jesus. Only Jesus.

It’s so simple. If we want to know the path to deep and meaningful relationship to God, just get to know Jesus better. How do we do that? That’s also not as difficult as we might think. We have a whole book about him—it’s called the Bible. The great thing about the Bible is that Jesus isn’t only found in the four gospels that tell us about his life. He’s on every page. The entire story of the Old Testament is about Jesus—God faithfully preserving his people so that Jesus could come to this earth at just the right time. And those letters in the New Testament written by the apostles? They are also about Jesus—how the forgiveness that Jesus won for us changes how we live every day of our lives. And if you aren’t satisfied with only reading about Jesus, you can come and meet him one on one. In the sacrament of Holy Communion, we have the chance to meet the Savior face to face. How much closer of a relationship with God can you have than that?

And as you get to **know** Jesus better and better, an amazing thing happens. You start to **show** Jesus better and better. Jesus said to his disciples, “*I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He 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 Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.*” Jesus has chosen us to be his instruments to carry his name out into the world. And so we ask Jesus to do great things though us—things such as forgiving a neighbor, sharing the gospel with a friend, or showing mercy on someone in a less fortunate situation than we are. These are things we could not do on our own. But Jesus gives us the power as we come humbly before the Father in prayer. **Amen.**

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