

## How Can We Know the Way? John 14:1-5; 20:24-31

### Introduction

- Avery's Crisis
  - Woke up Tuesday morning, Mom had already left for work
  - Avery began looking for a note from Mom
  - She came to the conclusion that Mom had left without writing her a note
  - Result: Major Breakdown!
    - "How could she?"
    - "That is so unnice?"
  - A few acting classes and she could star in any daytime show!
- Easter Sermon Series: "Jesus Christ: Friend or Foe?"
  - The drama of the Easter story is told to us through letters.
  - As the drama of the cross unfolded, Luke 23:48-49 ESV, "And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things."
  - Through this sermon series, we are looking at the different characters who encountered Jesus to glean some understanding for how they responded to Jesus' crucifixion.
  - The truth is, we don't need acting classes to walk in the shoes of these characters. They resemble parts of our own lives: the friend and the foe!
  - What we need is humility to recognize how we truly do respond to Jesus on an everyday basis, and wisdom to understand the Truth.
  - Humility and Wisdom are what we find in Jesus.
- Character Focus: Thomas
  - One of Jesus' twelve disciples
  - Often referred to as "Doubting Thomas" because he refused to believe that Jesus had resurrected until he could touch Jesus' scars.
  - Yet, when we read the story closely, we find that all the disciples struggled to believe, even though Jesus had foretold how the events would unfold.
  - Today, we have the Gospel letters that tell us the events of the crucifixion and resurrection
    - Our lives are a testimony to our encounter with Jesus
    - We are either Friends or Foes
    - The cross reminds us not only of the grace of God, but also the call that is upon each of our lives to follow Jesus.

### Real Faith is Uncomfortable

- John 14:1-3
  - Trouble
    - Thematic during this discourse

- Began with “Jesus who was troubled in his spirit” (John 13:21, ESV)
      - Betrayal
      - Disciples were uncertain as to who was going to betray Jesus
    - Disciples struggling to gasp why Jesus must leave them
      - Peter’s question to follow Jesus
      - Thomas’ question is similar, as he asks about directions for where Jesus is going.
- Isn’t good to know that Jesus showed emotion?
  - He didn’t walk around like a robot
  - He felt fear among other emotions
  - He had to exercise faith just like we have to in order to overcome our fear
- Believe
  - More than just a recognition, but determines direction
  - Jesus is the direction for believing in God
  - In other words, to believe in God, means to follow the example of Jesus.
  - “Love one another as I have loved you.” John 13:34, ESV
- Believing in God requires something of us
  - Believing in God resulted in a promise
  - However, the part that is often left out is the action part
  - Since I believe in God, it requires of me to...
    - A New Commandment
    - Keep my commandments
    - Walk where I walk
  - Foes believed in God, but were not willing to follow Jesus
  - Friends not only believed in God, but they answered the call
- Assurance
  - Faith can be a scary thing but Jesus offers some assurance
  - Jesus goes before us to prepare the way
  - Fear often keeps us from putting action to our faith
    - Betrayal
    - Denial
    - Internal struggle in our life.
  - Jesus not only goes before us, but comes back to us
    - Jesus restores Peter
    - Holy Spirit
  - Where I am, you may be also
- Rock climbing experience
  - First time in a long time
  - Walls were 30 to 40 feet
  - A rope was all that was holding me
  - Moment when it hit me what I was actually doing
  - Control breathing, trust the rope
  - Then let go and push off

- It was fear but it was adrenaline
- Faith should create “trouble” for our spirit
  - It should challenge us
  - It should call us to action
  - It should move us from where we are to a better place
  - If your faith does not “trouble” you or make you feel uncomfortable, do you have really have faith at all?
- The assurance that we seek comes from knowing that Jesus has gone before us, and returns for us, so that where he is, we may be also.

### A Friend of Jesus Knows the Way

- John 14:4-6
  - Here again, the disciples are challenged as to where Jesus is going
    - Peter wanted to follow Jesus but couldn’t
      - Physically- could not bear the cross, nor go to heaven
      - Spiritually- did not possess the love required in order to sacrifice
    - Thomas- We don’t know where you are going; so how can we know the way?
      - Physically- cross to heaven
      - Spiritually- surrender and sacrifice through faith
  - A Friend of Jesus knows the Way
    - “I’ve been showing you the way the entire time I’ve been with you.”
    - Jesus is, The Way, The Truth, and the Life
    - “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men”
  - Can you relate to these disciples?
    - They get that there is something special about Jesus
    - However they struggle to understand how to go where Jesus goes
    - This is the journey that we must take each day of our lives
  - The Cross is not only our Salvation through believing what Jesus has done for us, but it is also the LIFE that we must pick up in order to follow Jesus.
    - Real Faith should make us uncomfortable, because it challenges us, and moves us from places of comfort to a better place
    - Yet all along the way, Jesus has gone before, and comes back to us to walk through the uncertainty with us so that we can be where he is at.
  - As friends of Jesus we should know the way, because we have observed his example, now we just have to put his example into action.
  - When we put action to our faith, Jesus calls this LIFE
    - I don’t think that God wants us to be miserable all our lives
    - However, I do think that he wants to lead us somewhere that is better than where we are
    - All the disciples had to get to a point, where they quit watching Jesus do everything, and they started to do the ministry through faith
    - It required Jesus leaving to go ahead of them

- If we are going to get to the place that God has for our lives, to really live life to the full- we have to be willing to let go of the comfort of the present to press toward the life that God has for us up ahead.

### There's always something more on the other side of Faith

- **John 20:24-25**
  - Thomas was not with the other disciples when Jesus came the first time
    - Key Verse- **John 20:21**
    - Like a team relay race-passing the baton. Jesus has ran his lap now it's your turn.
    - There's always something more on the other side of faith.
    - The problem is we want to see it before we will believe it.
      - Real faith will make you uncomfortable
      - A real friend of Jesus knows that we have to put action to our faith in order to experience life
  - **John 20:26-27**
    - Jesus walks through locked doors!
    - N.T. Wright, "He (Jesus) comes and goes as though he belongs both in our world and in a different world, one which intersects with ours at various points but doesn't use the same geography."<sup>1</sup>
    - Lots of times we keep walking into locked doors because we haven't put our faith into action by following Jesus.
      - Real faith will make us feel uncomfortable
      - Real friends of Jesus know the way
      - There's always something better on the other side of faith!
        - When we follow Jesus, through faith, he is able to lead us around the obstacles that this world often puts before us.
        - Jesus has gone before, and already opened all the doors.
        - If we follow him by faith, then we can walk through what appears as locked doors to the world, but wide open for those of faith!
  - **John 20:28-29**
    - Thomas' confesses his faith
      - "Believe in God, then believe also in me."
      - Thomas is now willing to follow Jesus where Jesus leads
      - Thomas was able to see something better on the other side of faith.
    - Thomas' response is the whole purpose of John's gospel<sup>2</sup>
      - **John 20:30-31**
      - "By believing you may have life in his name" ESV
      - Being a friend of Jesus is worth it!

<sup>1</sup> N.T Wright, *John For Everyone: Part 2 Chapters 11-21*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004, pg. 153.

<sup>2</sup> *ESV Study Bible*, Wheaton: Crossway, 2008, Kindle Location, 377745.

- At times it is uncomfortable
- BUT, if we put our faith into action then we experience true life!

## Conclusion

- The Foes of Jesus were unable to see beyond the locked doors of this world
  - The Romans
  - Political power slipping away
  - Faith was just not practical
  - A Mighty Warrior King is what we need
    - They were always looking for answers within the realm of what everyone else had
    - OT need a king instead of a prophet
    - Need Egypt instead of Judah
    - Need to worship golden images like everyone else when we don't have Moses
  - We can easily get caught up in that style of life
    - The truth is, that isn't life at all
    - It's life in a box that leads to a dead end- literally!
- A Friend of Jesus
  - Believes without seeing
  - 2 Corinthians 5:6-7 ESV, "So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, and not by sight."
  - 1 Peter 1:8-9 ESV, "Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls."
  - A friend of Jesus knows
    - That real faith will make us uncomfortable at times
    - Real faith requires us to take action
    - Through Faith God is unlocking doors in our lives for something greater than what we can presently see.
- How can we know the way?
  - Probably one the most sought out answers we look for in life.
  - Jesus responds by inviting us to follow him
    - He has already walked the path
    - He desires to walk the path again with you
    - A friend of Jesus believes, a foe of Jesus says, "I'll find my own way."
  - If you want to walk through the locked doors in life, you have to follow Jesus by faith.