

Sunday, 10 May 2020. Easter 5

John 14: 1 -14.

‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life.’

John’s context for these discourses is His effort to reassure and prepare His frightened disciples for His death, and to prepare them for the new life they must live afterwards. Everything is changing. Things are going to be very different, with a difficult road in the meantime, not unlike the situation we are in with the lockdown we’re experiencing. Jesus is saying things they don’t fully understand, but suddenly in the confusion some of His words hit them, ‘You know the way to the place where I am going.’ Thomas breaks in saying we don’t know where you’re going, and don’t understand what you’re saying, so how can we know the way? Panic stations! They don’t understand and they are frightened and confused. They know what He is saying is important, and they need help. So Jesus responds with the words, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life.’

These words have echoed down the ages, and in different places and times, have spoken clearly to us of the meaning of our discipleship; to the disciples, through the trauma of the crucifixion, the joy of the resurrection, and the formation of the early church, to the church in the Roman empire, in medieval Europe, through the reformation, through the Methodist revival, the great missionary movements of Victorian England, in the post Christian era in which we live, today as we search for direction and meaning, as we seek to respond to a needy world of war and violence, poverty and hunger, death and disease. The world has continually changed, but through it all we believe that the good news of the Gospel is relevant and needed. Our call to discipleship continues, we are called to be, to do, to care for this world in which we live. We need to be renewed in the joy of faith, and cry ‘Show us the way.’ Jesus says I am the way, the truth, and the life.

He is truth and life for us. He gives us life in His Risen Presence. He comes with forgiveness, salvation, healing and promise, all based on our seeing Him as truth. His truth is so important, for His truth is the truth within His person, His loving, and doing, and teaching. It is the truth of personality, not ‘isms or statutes, but the truth of God’s love incarnate in Him, the love seen in His sacrifice sealed with the resurrection, the truth in the Good Samaritan, which told a story of love and said ‘Go and do likewise.’ It is relevant in every time and place, simple and profound, not bound by rules or dictats, but determined by the need of another and our response.

And so we follow His Way. It is a path that always beckons us forward, and which we are always travelling. It leads us constantly to new discoveries, and new ways of thinking. We travel it with many, for we are the body of Christ, those who have gone before, those who travel with us, and those who follow on. Sometimes it goes through pleasant paths, with sunshine and warmth and we are filled with joy as we see the light ahead, sometimes we are lost and frightened and we stumble on in the dark, and need the help of others to guide us along, and even sometimes to be carried. Sometimes we leave the path, and cannot find our way back, until others find us and lead us to the path again. Sometimes we think we are there, for we see the hilltop, but when we are at the summit, we see the road goes on to

another light in the distance. We see the Kingdom ahead, we find glimpses of occasionally, but the fullness of it is before us, and we know we are surrounded by a great host of witnesses. So we continue.

So everyday, we are on our way, for we're the travelling , wandering race, we're the People of God.'

Glennys Bamford

Hymn 297

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.

The cross stands empty to the sky.

Let streets and homes with praises ring'

Love drowned in death shall never die.

Christ is alive! No longer bound

To distant years in Palestine,

But saving, healing, here and now,

And touching every place and time.

In every insult, rift and war,

Where colour, scorn or wealth divide,

Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,

And lives, where even hope has died.

Women and men, in age and youth,

Can feel the Spirit, hear the call,

And find the way, the life, the truth,

Revealed in Jesus, freed for all.

Christ is alive and comes to bring
Good news to this and every age,
Till earth and sky and ocean ring
With joy, with justice, love, and praise.

Collect for the day:

Eternal God,
Whose Son Jesus Christ
Is the Way, the truth and the life:
Grant us to walk in his way,
To rejoice in his truth,
And to share his risen life;
Who is alive and reigns with you,
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and forever. **Amen**

A prayer for Christian Aid Week:

When we stand gazing upwards, bring us down to earth:
With the love of a friend
Through the songs of the sorrowing
In the faces of the hungry.
When we look to you for action, demand some work from us.
By your touch of fire
Your glance of reproof
Your fearful longing.
As ruler over all:
Love us into action;
Fire us with your zeal;
Enrich us with your grace
To make us willing subjects of your rule. **Amen**