

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come. – Rev. 1:4

Dear fellow believers,

If you knew you had less than 24 hrs to live, what would you do with that time? Spend time with your family and friends? Pray ... a lot, asking God to have things turn out a different way? Think about yourself? Think about others? Think about what will happen to your family and friends after you are gone? Those are probably all things that we all would do in that situation. But it's probably *not* a situation that would ever *really* come up for most of us, because none of us know when we would die. But that's not the case with Jesus. He knew *how* he was going to die. He knew *who* was going to kill him. He knew *when* he would die. It would be less than 24 hrs from the words he spoke in our gospel. This was on Maundy Thursday, the night before his death on Good Friday. You might wonder, why are we going back to events from that night when we are in the season of Easter now, not Lent. You will see why. For the words that Jesus had that night were not just for when he would die on the cross the next day, but also for when he would ascend back to heaven, 40 days after Easter, which is fast approaching in the church calendar. But in those less than 24 hrs before his death, Jesus would do all of those things I mentioned before and what we have here is Jesus thinking about what would happen to his friends, his apostles, after he was gone. He doesn't want them to be at a loss at what's about to happen. So he has words of comfort for that night and the rest of their nights. He reminds them that he is THE Way to Truth and Life. Listen again to these words of comfort.

I.

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me." (v.1) Do you see what Jesus has *already* anticipated about what's going to happen to his apostles after he ascends back to heaven? They were going to be troubled i.e. confused, at a loss, wondering what's going on, not knowing what to do. He calms them and says, don't worry. "You know what, you believe in God, believe also in me. I and God are one." And here's what Jesus tells them to comfort them. The first of *three* things he will say.

The first comfort is in verse 2, when he says, **"My Father's house has many rooms."** Jesus' Father, God – Jesus is once again showing that connection and closeness he has with God. In his Father's house there are many rooms. If you remember the King James, it translated here "many mansions." Not the best translation. But "rooms" does not quite get the idea either. What Jesus is saying here is that in his Father's house there are many dwelling places, places to live, places to stay in ... basically he wants to comfort the apostles by saying God's house is big, big enough with a lot of living space, a lot of space for a lot of people.

The second comfort is when Jesus said, **"if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?"** (v.2) What that means or looks like, this preparation, we aren't sure. God's house, heaven, is already perfect so what does Jesus need to get ready, right? But this word and the picture it gives us does show just the care and concern Jesus has in making sure everything is just right for his apostles. It's like when we know that we will be having guests coming over and spending the night, we want to make sure that everything is ready, that it's all just right for their arrival. They are guests in our house. The apostles will be guests in the Father's house. So Jesus wants to make sure that things are set and ready for them. But Jesus does not stop there with his comfort.

The third comfort is in verse 3. **"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."** (v.3) If Jesus is going through all of this work to get things just right. If he ascends back to heaven to put the finishing touches on those dwelling places. If he died on the cross to take away the sins of the whole world, so that the apostles would *be able to enter* into this perfect home of his Father's, *of course* he will come back and take them to be with him in his Father's. They have places to live in already set up and as Jesus finishes in verse 4.

"You know the way to the place where I am going." (v.4) The way to heaven. The way to the Father's house. The way to be where Jesus is right now. They know, but they don't *think* they know.

The apostles don't get it and one them, Thomas, asks the obvious question, "**Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?**" (v.5) That leads Jesus to answer with those wonderful words, "**I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**" (v.6) Jesus reminds the apostles that they did already know what he was talking about, because they already knew *him*. They had been with him for 3 years by this time. They had seen him do miracles. They had heard him preach. They had seen him show time and again he is the Son of God, he is the Savior of the world, he is THE Way to his Father's house. Faith in him, that knowing and trusting he is the Savior is how the apostles enter heaven, is how we enter heaven.

II.

In a world like ours, that does not like or think there are absolute anythings, a world where you can't come out and say that you are right and other people are wrong without sounding big-headed or arrogant, what does Jesus say in verse 6? I am THE Way, not just a way, not just one way of many. He is the THE Way. In a world where absolute truth is kind of unheard of, where the idea is that if it is true for you, good, but it might not be true to me. What does Jesus say? I am THE Truth. Only what he says is absolutely true. In a world that is dying all around us. In a world where from the minute we are born, we get one minute closer to our deaths. What does Jesus say? I am THE Life. He is the one who can change all of that. He is the one who can give life that will not end in death, a life that lasts into eternity with him and his Father. Jesus says a lot of things that are not politically correct for our time, but are *actually* correct for all time. That's the thing about facts, the things that Jesus says here. They are true *in and of* themselves. They are true whether people deny them or not. It's like how the sun works. It's like the rain falling down. It's like the clouds in the sky. Whether you say they are there or not, whether you know how they work or not, that does not change the fact that they are there and that they do work.

So it is with Jesus' words here. It doesn't matter whether people think they are true or not, that doesn't change the facts of them. They are true. Jesus is THE Way to Truth and Life. He is the only way to know the absolute truth and to see an eternal life in his Father's house. And that is the comforting thing about these words for the apostles and for *us*.

In a world of change around us. In a world where the weather changes for the good and for worse. In a world where governments rise and fall. In a world where we do not know the future. In a world where we change for the good and for the worse. In a world that makes our hearts troubled day in and day out because of those changes. In a world where we do not see our Lord right here in front us. What do we still have?! These absolute truths, these absolute comforts. The first comfort: There in his Father's are many rooms, many dwelling places, many places to live in. The second comfort: Jesus is preparing a place for *us* in that house. He is getting things just right for *our* arrival. The third comfort: He will return to take us to live there, to be with him. For we know that these words are also for *our* comfort. For we *also* know the way to where Jesus is. For we know Jesus. We trust in Jesus. We believe that Jesus is THE Way to Truth and Life. And nothing will change that. AMEN.

The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. AMEN.

Hymn of the Day: