



Free EvangelicalLutheran
Synod in South Africa

Sermon for Sunday Cantate 2017

Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life!



St. John's Lutheran Parish
Shelly Beach

• The Word of God for this Sermon is written in John 14, 1-14:

- ^{ESV} 33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.'
- 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.
- 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."
- 36 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward."
- 37 Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."
- 38 Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.
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- John 14:1 "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.
- ² 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?
- ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.
- ⁴ And you know the way to 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 had known me, you would have known 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 it is enough for us."
- ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? 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 authority, 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, or else believe on

account of the works themselves.

• ¹² "Truly, truly, I say to you, whœever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.

• ¹³ Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

• ¹⁴ If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

• *Let us pray: Come Holy Spirit, give us ears that can bear the risen Lord so that we receive His good gifts and rise with Him in Spirit now and later in body and see Him with our own eyes in the Resurrection. Amen.*

• **Dear Members of Christ's Body!**

• It is being said that in the so-called post-modern world-view control has become everything people want. We want to control the remote of the TV, of our alarms, of our bank accounts. We want to control and secure the stock-exchange. We want to control the colours of our cars and all details within it. Basically, we want to design our own life, how it should be. We want to design our own homes, and when we move into a rented home, we post-modernists like to make some changes to place our stamp, to let our footprint be seen in the place.

• Now, this is not a problem per Se, as this belongs to the space of freedom God has given us. We may design our own house etc.

• The trouble comes in when this control streak of ours invades or starts to interfere with the work Jesus does for us. What work is Jesus speaking of here? "*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?*"

• Our eternal home will not be our design of our choice! We will have no control over it. Jesus is preparing it for us. When it comes to our eternal Life, we have no control over it!

• Peter is a good example of a so-called post-modern man- you see, maybe post-modernism is not so *modern* after all- he wants to go with Jesus, wherever He goes, although Jesus had told Him, "*where I am going you cannot follow me now*" then the promise "*but you will follow afterward*". Peter, of course, did not take "no" for an answer and questioned the word of His Lord and then made this very modern sounding assertion: "*I will lay down my life for you*". Peter could not accept- at this stage- that Jesus alone is the Way to eternal Life. He thought that he could contribute in the Way to eternal Life, by paying the highest price he could think of, to give his own life for Jesus.

• This is when Jesus had to burst his ego bubble by questioning his boastfulness and confessing that the very opposite would happen: he, the same Peter, would deny his Lord three times!

• Where Jesus was going, no human being could accompany Him, and no human being did accompany Him. He had to go alone and He went alone. The Way to eternal Life goes through the Cross, through the curse of God on the pole. We human beings had no control over this Way. It was never our idea. We would never ever have done it this way. Jesus, and Him crucified, is the Way to eternal Life. Being on the Way of Christ means exactly this: That our desire to control the future of our Life has been crucified and buried in His Death. We deny our Self, we deny our deep and strong desire to need to have that control over our future, even if it is only a small little tiny bit of it. Jesus takes it out of our control completely! You cannot come to the promised land accept through, via, Jesus. He has to take you there!

• Do you see, this is the very opposite of what Peter did before the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. He denied the Word of Jesus and stood behind the power of his Self: I will lay down my life for you. It sounds very pious- isn't laying down ones life for someone else a very noble unselfish deed? Yes it is, but not in this case, because the Way to the Truth belongs only to Jesus. There is no co-operation on our side, not even in the slightest way.

• Jesus died on the Cross for you, on your behalf. He did it completely without your help, completely external of yourself. This is the best news for us who are poor in the Spirit, for us sinners. However, our old Adam feels left out, he fights against this loss of control. The highest thing he wants to do, namely he desires to control the way to the future we had in mind for our selves. Now this is taken away. Therefore we may feel troubled, we may feel uncertain and even lost, because its not in our hands any more.

• This is where Jesus gives us His promise, the solid ground on which we can stand, to which we can cling and hold onto, to rely on, namely: *"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 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?"* Jesus takes care of everything. He prepares a place for us in the Father's living room. Our future is certain. There is no uncertainty. It does not depend on us. He prepares this place for us together with the Father, Himself and the Holy Spirit.

• And, furthermore He promises to come again to take us where He is. And this we should understand physically. On the Last Day He will resurrect us physically and we will go where He is, namely where His Father is.

• Now at this stage Philip asks the next question which might be on our lips, [8] *"Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."* It is the same as saying, Lord, it would really be of great help if we could have a little peek into Heaven and see the Father. That would really convince us and comfort us. Jesus doesn't think so.

• He says to him, [8] *"Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me,*

Philip? Whœever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?'"

• Jesus and His Father are so much united, that if you know Jesus, you know God the Father, whom no-one has ever seen. Jesus is the only begotten Son of the Father. He is of the same nature as God. He is begotten not made, from eternity. Therefore, Jesus does not only speak the truth, but He Himself, in person, is the Truth. And as He is the only begotten Son, He is the only revealed Truth in person. If you believe Him you believe His Father. His works are the works of His Father.

• And that is why He Himself is also Life, just as His Father is Life itself, the Giver of Life.

• In our Baptism we have been born from above, out of God. That is our new Life in Christ is still very much hidden, but we are united with this Life.

• So, we see, the Way to the Truth, to the Father has been accomplished for us by Christ. He prepares our eternal room in the house of God. None of this lies in our control. It happens for us. We receive it like children receive gifts at Christmas. But, we also know who does this. It is our Father in Heaven, who loves His children. He has things much more in control than we are able to control the building of an earthly house.

• And, to cope with the remaining time on earth, Jesus gives us another gift, the gift of prayer. He gave us His name, and we may use His name to ask Him for anything we need in this life and the next and let us not forget, for everything our neighbour needs in this life and in the next.

• As Christians, we are not post-modernists, we should certainly not strive to be such, we are a new creation, a new priesthood of believers, who trust that Jesus literally is our Lord. As long as He is in control of us, our future is 100% certain.

• That is why we vehemently, seriously, deny our old Adam, any control of our future. Because when he grabs at the controls of our life, it immediately becomes uncertain again.

• Therefore, we praise God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and with a joyful heart receive the magnificent gifts He gives to us in His Divine Service. **Amen.**

• *Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. The God of peace be with you all. Amen.*