

I AM THE WAY

John 14:1-14

Key Verse: 14:6

"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

Last Sunday Jesus taught us by saying, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (13:34,35). Through this message we were greatly moved and we all became unusually hilarious, expecting that we will love one another. When parents love one another, their children grow in happiness and security. They grow up as the fruit of love, and they are all happy young men and happy young women. When brothers love one another, they can make friends among brothers; they can be like the Cambridge Seven and revive the spiritual condition of this country. When sisters love one another, they are happy to be friends among sisters and they can grow up to be the mothers of [prayer](#) and mothers of this nation. They will not be disgraceful women, like those who are seeking the fleeting pleasure of sin. We can be influential men and women of God if we love one another. We can show others that we are disciples of Jesus if we love one another. Let's love one another! "Love one another" doesn't necessarily mean to hug one another. It's a matter of heart; it is not a matter of indecent behavior.

In today's passage Jesus teaches his disciples the hope of the kingdom of God in a way they could understand. For example, Jesus didn't say "the kingdom of God," but he said, "God's house." It was a very important message because Jesus' disciples had no idea about God's house; on the contrary, they were full of great expectations and earthly dreams and political ambition. Nevertheless, Jesus teaches them about the absolute necessity of God's house, and about how to be a member of God's house.

First, an [anxiety attack](#) (1a). Look at verse 1. "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me." Here, Jesus knew that all of his disciples' hearts were troubled because they assumed that Jesus was going to go away from them at any moment. We can understand the disciples' troubled hearts. As we know well, they followed Jesus. They could not eat a regular meal, even at the Last Supper. Only the betrayer, Judas Iscariot, took the bread and went out. But the other disciples were so surprised at the betrayal of Judas Iscariot that they could not eat anything. When they followed Jesus, they could not enjoy the joys of human life: the joy of eating regular hot meals, or the joy of regular family gatherings before the TV screen, or the joy of a happy marriage with the great expectation of future success. To the disciples, to have many children and enjoy the happiness of raising them was inconceivable, because Jesus did not give them any prospect of marriage. Still, they followed Jesus.

In Peter's case, he abandoned his fisherman's business and his lovely wife, and possibly, Little Peter, too. James and John were from a well-to-do family with a powerful mother. Andrew was a limitlessly

quiet gentleman, but he seemed to have something in his heart. Philip had already calculated what to expect through Jesus. Thomas had many questions about his great expectations. I don't know what Matthew the tax collector did after [following](#) Jesus. Anyway, they followed Jesus to the end during the time of his messianic ministry. But when they sensed that Jesus was departing to an unknown place, their hearts were troubled. Their dreams were broken. Their dream might have been that Jesus would establish an earthly messianic kingdom and that they would be cabinet members. Their question was who among Peter, James and John would become the Prime Minister. We can understand their broken dreams and great expectations when we read "Great Expectations" written by Charles Dickens. Life in the world is a continuation of maintaining a troubled heart, because the world is similar to the turbulent waves of the sea. No one escapes from anxiety attacks.

Second, my Father's house (1b-4). The secret of having the peace of God and everlasting security is to trust in God and trust also in Jesus. It is because Jesus takes us back to his Father's house. Here Jesus said, "In my Father's house," because the disciples didn't have the concept of the kingdom of God at all; they were stuck in worldly dreams and expectations. Look at verse 2. "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." John's gospel is indeed deep and philosophical. It is obvious that none of the disciples had even a single room with a toilet. So Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many rooms." It attracted the disciples' attention greatly, because they hated to sleep with dozens of disciples in a room while half of them were snoring and half of them were calling, "Mommy! Mommy! I am hungry." Here, "God's house" precisely means the kingdom of God. The words "kingdom of God" may not touch our hearts because we are young, and because of our sinful nature. But the "kingdom of God" is most important in Biblical thought.

When we see the plot of the Bible, there are three distinctive divisions. First is God's creation and establishing paradise for Adam and Eve's marriage. Second is the loss of paradise because of one man Adam's sin (Ro 5:12). Third is the restoration of paradise. Abraham was chosen by God as the ancestor of faith. God promised him to make his name great and give him many children, with whom a nation could be established. Of course, Abraham liked God's promises, especially "your name will be great." But his real joy was that he had the hope of the kingdom of heaven. He longed to enter the kingdom of God. Hebrews 11:10 says, "For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God."

As we know, St. Paul became one of the greatest men in the Christian world. Virtually, the seed that conquered the Roman Empire was planted by him. Conquering the Roman Empire or evangelizing the whole world was his burning vision. But in 2 Corinthians 5:1 he wrote, "Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands." St. Peter was the top disciple and a candidate for Prime Minister of the earthly messianic kingdom they thought Jesus would establish. Later he learned that the kingdom of God is the only everlasting place and our final destination. He said in 1 Peter 1:3,4, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great

mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you." The promise of the kingdom of God is the key point of the gospel. Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection are the process of fulfilling the promise of the glorious kingdom of God. The Bible teaches us repeatedly that we can be good pilgrims on earth when we have a living hope of the kingdom of God. This is the reason Jesus said in Mark 1:15, "The time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come" (Lk 11:2). Therefore, the Lord's prayer, "your kingdom come," must be in our hearts.

Some may think that we can believe in the kingdom of God when we become around 70 years old. That's nonsense. All mankind long for God and his house. For example, when St. Paul visited Athens, it was full of idols. There were even many nameless idols (Ac 17:23). In other words, atheistic nations had the most idols, as well as many myths which explained the secret way to fortune and eternal life. It is irony that the atheistic and humanistic Greeks had the most idols, and yet they were seeking God, not knowing what they were doing. This reminds us of Jesus' prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Lk 23:34a).

When we study Great China, we learn that it was divided into several hundreds of feudal lords' countries, and their incessant wars never ceased. But Confucius wrote a book about the principle of human ethics. The main point of his book was the relationship problem. A subject must be loyal to his king. Children must obey their parents absolutely. Wives must be servants to their husbands. Whether his theory was good or bad, his teaching edified people and finally unified the nation. His top disciple, Mencius, organized his practical teachings into the principles of a moral code, made them a reality, and advanced Chinese culture. Practically, their philosophy was humanism. But in their writings, many ancient scholars and philosophers unwittingly, and contrary to their philosophy, used the word "God" in many ways, such as "the Supreme Lord," "the Lord of creation," and "the Lord of heaven." There is a great paradox. More than 200 times they associated the concept of God, such as "the Heaven of heavens," "the Supreme Emperor," "the Supreme Destiny," "the Heavenly Emperor," "The Great Being."

During the time of persecution of Christians in China, a Confucian scholar and a Catholic Christian had a debate for three days. Mr. Song, known as the best Confucian scholar, finally recognized the Catholic Christian, realizing that in Confucianism there are many names for God; he admired the Catholic Christian's high-levelled scholarship. Why are people sorrowful? Because they do not know where they came from and where they are going back to. If they knew where they came from and where they are going back to, they would all be happy. Even a wretched man knows in his conscience that there is God. Why do so many young people commit suicide and abuse drugs? They also, in a kind of confused way, are seeking God and his sweet home...the kingdom of God.

Look at 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."

Jesus promises that he will come back and take them to God's house so they may be with Jesus. Look at verse 4. "You know the way to the place where I am going." Jesus' disciples looked as if they were spiritually blind. But Jesus knew that they knew God's house in their hearts. We also know Jesus and God's house in our hearts, don't we?

Third, I am the way (5-6). In part three Jesus mainly teaches us the way to the Father. One of his disciples, Thomas, said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" (5) This verse indicates that Thomas would know the way to God's house through Jesus' death and resurrection. But he had no idea about Jesus' trial, suffering, death and resurrection. He did not know that Jesus' death and resurrection is the way to God's house. What Thomas said seems to be a little rebellious, because Jesus had taught so many times about his upcoming crucifixion and resurrection, at every opportunity. But Jesus was very kind to Thomas, a man of doubt. Here we learn that doubt is intentional, and doubt is a disease. We have a choice of believing or doubting. Thomas was a man of doubt.

To this man of doubt Jesus gave one of the most famous Bible verses. Look at verse 6. "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" In reality, "the way" includes the truth and the life. When we study philosophy deeply, we learn that "the way" is the truth and life. So, one of the Chinese philosophers said, "If I know the way in the morning, I am happy to die in the evening." But "the way" has definite and distinctive meaning in the Bible. "The way" is to know the truth: where I came from and where I am going back to. In other words, it is to know the meaning of my existence and what my final destination will be. It is a question everybody is asking, even little children. A six-year old girl asked her daddy, a servant of God, "Where do we go when we die?" Her father was speechless for a few minutes. Then he said, "When we believe in Jesus, we go to the kingdom of God."

Through the study of epistemology and ontology, many great scholars sought to know the way...the prima causa. But they could not find an answer. After 1,700 years of studying ontology and epistemology, scholars became worn out, and, at the same time, technological development discouraged philosophy study and humanity study. Now there is a rumor that a philosophy professor at a large university works as a carpenter during his summer vacation to support his family.

Here, the important point is, no one has ever explained where man came from and where man goes back to. Did you know that? But our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of Almighty God, said in John 3:13, "No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven--the Son of Man." Jesus also said in John 6:38, "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me." Jesus said in John 8:14b, "...for I know where I came from and where I am going." In history, nobody knew where heaven was. Nobody knew who God was. But Jesus says, "I know where I came from and where I am going." So Jesus is the way.

Fourth, I am the truth (6). Why is Jesus the truth? To know the truth is basically the same as to know the way. But the truth explains to us more about the way. Secular philosophers say that truth should be

universal. It should be applicable to the man of ancient times as well as to modern people. Truth should be unchanging. Truth also should have absolute value. Where is such a thing in the world? Things of the world perish, spoil and fade away, as Peter said (1Pe 1:4). There is no truth except our Lord Jesus Christ. Because Jesus is the only truth, Jesus is the truth. Jesus is the truth, because he teaches us the way to be free from all the bondage of sin. John 8:31,32 says, "To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'" As we know well, most people suffer, not because of their uncles or neighbors, but because of their complaints and sins. But Jesus sets us free when we believe in him. Also, Jesus teaches us the way to go to God's house. Jesus is the truth because he taught mankind the word of truth, the way to God's house.

Fifth, I am the life (6-14). As we know well, in the human world everybody thinks that his own life is the most precious. In Jesus' time there was the pool of Bethesda near the temple. There were many sick people. There was a rumor that the one who jumped into the pool first when the water was stirred would be healed of his sickness. It might be a caricature of human struggle. Likewise, there are so many sick people in the world. All of them want to be healed from their sickness; none of them want to die. All of them want to live the longest possible life, and if possible, to live in this world forever. In fact, life is the most precious. This is the reason Jesus said in Mark 8:36,37, "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Let's read verse 6 one more time. "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" Jesus is the life because he is the author of life. John 1:4 says, "In him was life, and that life was the light of men." Again, John 5:24 says, "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." But Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us" (8). Philip was a mathematician. He had seen the crowd of 5,000 people and estimated that eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite (Jn 6:7). He was a brilliant person. So his pride was very strong. His pride was so strong that he could not curb his pride to listen to Jesus' teaching. But Jesus did not rebuke him. Jesus said, "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'?" (9) Actually, Jesus showed his disciples that he is the Son of God through many miraculous signs. Next, he taught that he is the Son of God who came as the Lamb of God through his death on the cross and resurrection.

Jesus thought because Philip was a brilliant person, he could do great things if he believed in God. Jesus quietly encouraged him that he could do greater work than Jesus. Look at verse 12. "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." But Philip could not do anything. He could not even believe in Jesus, because he was only thinking and doing nothing. So Jesus encouraged him to pray. Look at verse 13. "And I will do whatever you

ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father." There are so many brilliant people. There are so many patriots. There are so many idea banks. But they only think and do not pray. Then they cannot do anything. If bright people pray, they can do greater work than Jesus--of course, not in quality but in quantity. Many bright people only calculate and become drug abusers or mental patients. They must repent and learn how to pray and do the great work of God. Therefore, don't be too smart. Let's practice the truth and pray.

May God help us through the Holy Spirit so that we can believe that Jesus is the way and the truth and the life, and that our Lord Jesus Christ has prepared many rooms in God's house for each of us. Without faith in the kingdom of God, we believe nothing. May God help us believe in the kingdom of God. We are like Jesus' disciples because we are attacked by anxiety many times a day when we do not know that Jesus has gone to God's house to prepare many rooms. Through Jesus, may God open our spiritual eyes to see God's beautiful house.