**John 14:1-14 May 10, 2020**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

 Our text for this morning comes from the Gospel of John the 14th chapter here re-reading these words. “Thomas said to him, “Lord we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way? “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” This is our text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
 I am not a master of directions. While I am blessed to live at a time in history that allows for Global Positioning Satellites to direct me and let me know which way I should be going I still struggle to find my way. I have never been the best navigator, and many times, I can remember sitting in my car, or on my bike, staring at a crossroads, wondering which way it is I’m supposed to be going. As bad as I am at directions I was for a short time a pizza delivery man, and for just about every address in the downtown Bay City area, I had to put it in my GPS so I could find the house. Finding your way is difficult, when you’ve moved to a new area. I’m sure you’ve all had a similar experience, whether it was attempting to find a building in a busy town or simply trying to find a new acquaintances house. We’ve all been in a situation where we weren’t exactly sure where to go or how to get there. I can still remember a night when I was returning to Fort Wayne, Indiana from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and I drove 45 minutes in the wrong direction, before I realized I wasn’t going the right way. Once I realized what I had done I immediately turned around, but for those 45 minutes that I was traveling on the wrong path, and going in the complete and total opposite direction, I was calm and collected as if I was just making my way back home. It wasn’t until the truth came out, that I was going the wrong way, that I became confused, and disappointed that I had been on the wrong path. The right path, and the wrong path, can be very similar. And we find ourselves asking, “How can we know the way to go?” Especially these days, when it seems there are numerous plans from numerous people in positions of authority on how best to combat this disease. Some states are opening back up, some states remain in lockdown the rest of the month. What’s the best thing to do? “How can we know the way to go?”

 Thomas, the famous disciple who we know for doubting Christ’s resurrection, appears again before us here in our Gospel lesson from John 14. He asks Jesus how he and the other disciples were to know the way to the place that Jesus was going. In a way he was simply asking for clarification, for Jesus had just told his disciples that they knew the way to get to where He was going to prepare a place for them. Jesus was speaking about the joys that awaited all believers in heaven, and that once He left them, He would come again to bring them to be with Him. Jesus said these things in order to comfort them, for earlier he tells them to not let their hearts be troubled. These words are not just for the disciples, but they are for us as well. Jesus calms us with the truth of His Word, and comforts us with the knowledge that He is preparing a place for us. We, as Brothers and Sisters in Christ, as God’s elect and chosen family, are still waiting for that glorious day when Jesus will return to take us to be with Him. But Thomas did not know the way He should take in order to get to the place that Jesus was going. Thomas was seeking the correct path to salvation in this life.

 What is the path to salvation? It is an easy question, but it has been answered in many different ways. Just last week we saw Jesus Christ revealed as the Good Shepherd, the one who lays down His life out of love for His sheep. In our Gospel lesson from John 10, Jesus was described as the door of the sheep, meaning that only through Christ could a sheep go out to pasture and be fed, and taken care of. Here, Jesus teaches His disciples again saying plainly, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” Jesus has clearly put before the disciples the path to salvation: believe in Jesus Christ and come to Him and you will be saved. Eternal life comes from Christ alone and He is the path to take in order to go to heaven for all eternity.

 Christ is the path. His Word is the guide. So what path are we on? After all, Peter tells us in 1 Peter 2 that “we are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that we may proclaim the excellencies of He who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.” We are called, to be set apart, on the path of salvation. We are not called to simply walk the same line that those who are not God’s own children walk. We are not called to go with the flow of life, and simply give in to every temptation of this sinful world. Paul writes that we should not be conformed to this world, but instead be transformed by the renewal of our minds. We are not to simply conform to the sinful standards of this fallen creation. We are God’s chosen and holy people. That means we are set apart for a holy and righteous purpose.

 And Jesus himself says in the later part of John 14 that “whoever believes in Him will do the works that He does.” Whoever believes in Christ will follow His path of salvation and not give in to the desires of sin. So what path are you on? Are you on the holy and righteous path, as God’s chosen people, set apart by God to do good works in His name? Or are you on a wider path? A path of happiness? A path that calls for you to simply blend into the background in your daily life? A path that leads through many twists and bends and never seems to lead to the Church, or to the study of God’s Word, but instead to your own earthly pleasure? Even today it’s easy to disregard God’s Word, to not load up and listen to a Church Service, to neglect giving to the Church in their time of need, to forget about God entirely, and hibernate from everything, including God’s plan for your life. Two paths sit before all of us, a path that is God’s and a path that is the devil, the world’s, and our own sinful nature’s. Which path do we find ourselves on?

 If we are honest with ourselves, we will come to the realization that we more often than not, are on the wrong path in this life. We are content to live in sin, and do not realize that we are walking down a dark and treacherous road until it is too late. In those moments, when we are comfortable in our sin, and do not think that we are doing anything wrong, The Law, shows us our sin, and reveals to us our imperfections. And in those moments, we are not following the way, and the truth, and the life; Jesus Christ, we are following our own ways, and our own truth, and thinking that we are in complete and total control of our own lives. The path of ourselves, while it may bring happiness for a while in this life, will inevitably be a lonely one. For the flower and the grass fades, and the happiness of this world fades away.

 But we are not alone, even in isolation, even if we may feel the walls closing in after so many weeks of not being able to meet together. Even though we may feel that way at points in our lives. And we do not walk alone but as God’s own children. We walk, guided by God’s true Word, and His glorious light, that called us out of the darkness of sin, and the path of self-glorification and called us instead into his marvelous and holy light. We are called, to be set apart, meaning that we are called to be holy. We are called to walk together as God’s children. And we are called by He who is the way, and the truth, and the life. For the lies of this world try to convince us that there are many paths to salvation, but there are truly only 2 paths in this life. The path of life, and the path of death. The path of life is completely and totally founded on the Word of Jesus Christ, and the revelation of His glory and His work of redemption, where He died on the cross to take away our sins. The path of death is completely and totally founded on a Gospel that is contrary to God’s Word. It is focused on a redemption that comes from our own works, meaning that we create for ourselves an idol of our own worthiness. And that is a path that is not the truth, but a lie. It does not lead to eternal life but instead to never ending death and pain.

 We have been called to walk on the way of salvation, and reflect the light of Jesus Christ. We have been called, and set apart by God, to do good works in order to glorify the work of the Son of God who took away the sins of all mankind. We are not called to live lives of luxury or comfort. We are not called to walk a broad path that leads to our own pleasure. We are called to be set apart and holy, for that’s what God makes us. He makes us Holy through water and the Word. He makes us Holy, through His sacred acts instituted for us for the forgiveness of our sins. His Word teaches us the truth. And that Word brings life. Life that is eternal. Life that is never ending. Life that does not just simply last for a while and then leave us, but a life that is ours whether we remain in this world or not.

 God’s love for us is so great that He is the way between God our heavenly and almighty Father and us His sinful and fallen creation. He has bridged the gap. He is the road to salvation. He is the pure and perfect way between this life and the life to come. And He is the only way. He has gone before us to prepare for us the joy and the glory that waits for us in heaven with him for all eternity. We do not need to fear that we are lost, and confused, or on the wrong path to salvation when we are firmly and completely rooted in God’s Word. Because that Word reveals to us, Christ and the salvation won for us by the Son of God.

 I may have gotten lost a few times in my life when I was driving to a new place. And we too many find ourselves lost in this life. Lost in the pursuit of earthly happiness and lost in our despair when the good times of this life have gone away. Lost in the midst of a pandemic which seems to never end. Lost in loneliness. Lost in sad thoughts of a Mother’s Day spent separated from that special woman in your own life. In those moments we are covered in sin that separates us from God. But we are not alone in this life. We are not abandoned on the wrong road. We are called by God, made Holy through His Word and through the Holy Spirit. And we are forgiven of our sins, and called out of the darkness into His light, and His truth. While this world may seek many different paths to salvation, the truth remains that there is only one way to God the Father and to eternal life, and that is Jesus Christ. He is our way through the darkness. He is the one who has called us to be Holy, and who has equipped us to do good works in His name. And He is our light, and our salvation, that will take us to be with Him for all eternity, with a life that will never end. May God bless all of us as we continue on the path of life, which is Jesus Christ. May God remind us of His truth, which is that life is found in no one else.

Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all human understanding keep our hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.