

### THE WAY, THE TRUTH THE LIFE.

*(John 14:6)*

#### Let Us Pray:

***Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.***

Text: John 14:6

*Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.  
(ESV)*

#### Dear friends in Christ,

Christ is risen! response... He is risen, indeed!

Easter feels like it's a life-time ago, doesn't it? But it's only been five weeks since we celebrated the Resurrection of Jesus! And despite being unable to celebrate this high festival in one place, we rejoiced that by Christ's victory over sin, death, and the devil, we not only have hope for this life but also for eternity.

But high festival or not life goes on, doesn't it?

Now, the Son of God knew it would turn out like this. He knew that following His death the apostles would face many struggles. Jesus also knew that after His ascension they would take the message of the gospel as far west as Rome (Paul/Peter) and, as legend has it, Thomas went as far east as India.

Indeed, Jesus knew that life post-Easter would also go on for us in the 21st century. So besides giving His church the gift of Holy Communion for spiritual support, He teaches us some vital truths:

- Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me
- I am going [to the Father's house] to prepare a place for you...
- I am the way and the truth and the life.

Unlike the world's way of coping with this pandemic – like applauding medical and essential services personnel, and one another – Jesus points us to Himself. You see, as Christ is the cornerstone of the church, the keystone of our salvation, and the source of every mercy and blessing, it means that Jesus alone is our anchor in life.

Stephen – one of 7 men appointed to do charity work in Jerusalem – was ‘a man full of God’s grace and power’ (Acts 6:8ff) who lived victoriously, firmly believing that Jesus was his anchor. And doing ‘great wonders and miraculous signs among the people’ many came to faith. But, as Stephen was stoned to death, he showed grace to those who killed him by praying that they be forgiven.

Yes, my friends, this victorious life was also given to you in Baptism together with the gift of the Holy Spirit. That, like Stephen, when you experience hardship or discrimination you will not ‘let your hearts be troubled, [but] believe in God [and] also believe in me [Jesus]’.

Now, this phrase contains three commands: The first one is negative: ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled’. Put simply, Jesus is saying: stop letting your heart be traumatised by your fears and the troubles of the world. That’s easier said than done! Right? So Jesus tells us how in the other 2 commands: ‘Believe in God; believe also in me’.

My friends, people panic when they find themselves in a situation where they have little or no control. Only a few months ago, when it was decreed that all who tested positive to COVID-19 would be isolated for two weeks, supermarket shelves were emptied in a day. Now, in these situations it’s no use consoling yourself saying: ‘Don’t worry, everything will be fine’. It doesn’t work. You just start worrying even more!

That’s why, in life’s stressful situations, Jesus tells us to ‘believe in God; believe also in me’. He’s telling us not to focus on our troubles but on the One who took our sin and guilt and troubles to the cross, and rose again for our salvation. When Stephen was being stoned he looked not to his executioners but heavenward, to Jesus. Mind you, this didn’t prevent him from being killed. But he died in peace.

So, what’s distressing you right now? Is it underlying health issues and the fear of being infected with COVID-19; or a vulnerable loved-one in aged care? Are you in financial stress because you have lost your job, or is there uncertainty about your career? Are you struggling with temptations or unresolved guilt?

My friends, in times like this it’s easy to focus on your worries and troubles. Instead, Jesus tells you to focus on Him – for He is the way and the truth and the life. Now, you might say – *That’s easier said than done! Jesus didn’t have to put up with the fallout of COVID-19.* Not so. Jesus said this not long before being arrested, flogged and nailed to a cross. So this is not a pep-talk, but salvation in the making.

You see, it's like this: whatever worries us and whatever evil threatens to consume us, it first consumed Jesus. And the empty tomb shows us that whatever consumed Jesus, was itself consumed by Him! It's all been conquered! Thus, as our Saviour, Jesus is truly the way, for His cross is the way of victory for us. He is the truth because His death on the cross reveals that we have a substitute who paid for our sins. And He is the life, for though Jesus died, yet He is risen from the dead and lives to reign for eternity.

So, my friends, Jesus' message to His disciples – including you and me – is this: though you will die 'do not let your hearts be troubled', for you too shall live! You see, your heavenly Father didn't just raise Jesus to life again – He also raised you and me and everyone joined to Christ by grace through faith. Jesus went to His Father's house 'to prepare a place for you' so that you and all the faithful can live with Him forever.

As surely as Jesus has washed you clean and forgiven all your sins, so surely He will raise you from the dead when He returns for you on the Last Day. You have Christ's promise – the word of God, not man. Amen.

**The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.**

Sermon by Pastor Ernie Kiss  
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