

Easter 5 John 14:1-6.

## **Let Not Your Hearts be Troubled**

*Sermon by Rev Maxine Cleghorn*

Today is the fifth Sunday of Easter. The text from John's gospel focuses on comfort and hope. Let me explain that the promise of comfort made by Jesus in the text took place before Jesus' death. It became necessary as a leader or rabbi to give hope to followers in the face of impending departure or death. Jesus had called and created a community of friends (twelve apostles) which represented the new Israel. He knew his death and departure was near, so he comforted His troubled disciples.

Jesus said, "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me." In the New Testament, 'heart' meant more than just feelings. 'Heart' meant knowledge. The Greek word for heart is *Kardia*, from which we get *cardia* or *cardiac*. The people in Jesus' Mediterranean culture, also believed that heart was the "center of rational thought." Against this background, Jesus specifically mentioned the heart when he gave the disciples his words of comfort. In referring to the heart, Jesus was assuring his disciples that their feelings were validated. In actuality, he was letting them know that the knowledge they had of him would get them through difficult times. These are difficult time for some people. For Christians who do not have access to virtual worship it is especially challenging to focus on rituals of worship. What they have to rely on right now is the knowledge about God which comes through experience with Him.

In order to further comfort his disciples, Jesus promised them a home. Jesus had called them from their homes and families. During that time, they embarked on a life without a permanent place to live. They shared in Jesus' ministry and trusted him. Knowing that he was about to leave them, Jesus promised them continuity of life, by promising them a home with His Father. Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many dwelling places." He also said that he would go and prepare a place for them and return to take them to live with him. Many of the deceased who recently succumbed to the COVID-19 disease had no one to claim their bodies. Some of them, (like the homeless on the streets right now), had no place to call a home. Jesus' promise is for them as well. "I go to prepare a place for you."

Some people live life seeking the right formula for happiness; some just sail right along. When Jesus revealed himself as the way, Thomas asked for the formula to find the way to that special place that Jesus said he would go to prepare. Thomas asked, "How can we know the way?" This is reminiscent of the candidates for baptism who asked John the Baptist, "And we, what shall we do?" We recognize that people search for fulfillment and happiness in many ways and the questions may be phrased differently. However, there is one way. Jesus is the Way. In the early church, Christianity used to be referred to by Christians as the Way. Jesus' 'way' is not one paved by human hands or carved out by nature itself. Jesus himself is the true authentic path to eternal life. Therefore, Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to Father except through me."

On listening to Jesus, one of the disciples, Phillip, was not willing to go through the entire journey that constitutes the “way”, so Phillip said, “Show us the Father and that will be enough.” Jesus then testified to the consubstantiability of Father and Son when he said, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father,”

There are many people today who would like a quick fix, a quick solution, a quick transport into their desired destination of self-fulfillment. Jesus encourages them as well, to go the right route. Go through the ‘way’.

What are people mainly requesting nowadays; “Show us the way” or “Show us the Father”? These requests are one and the same. The way to the Father is Jesus. The way to life is Jesus. The way to the truth is Jesus.