

## SERMON TRANSCRIPT

12.28.2025 | The Way, the Truth, and the Life | John 14:1-7 | Dr. Ben Day, Senior Pastor

If you have a Bible this morning, I want you to grab it and go to John chapter 14 with me. We're gonna be in John chapter 14 as we continue in this series, the promised ones, what we've been in for this season of Advent. Mentioned earlier, if you know anything about the traditional liturgical church calendar, the Advent season ends at Christmas. But I've always enjoyed continuing a series that's Advent-focused beyond just Christmas, because I think it helps remind us that our hope is not just in an event or in Christmas day, but is in the fact that we await our Savior who has come and will come again.

I grew up in the church, and I grew up in a church that was very good about bringing the focus to Christmas and what's the reason for the season and Jesus's birth and all those things. But we never really talked about Advent. Wasn't really a word that I heard growing up much. And as I became an adult, I started to understand what Advent meant kind of in the traditional Christian sense, what the season focused on. I really love the dual focus of Advent. That Advent is not only for remembering that Jesus has come, but it's also for anticipating his return.

We've tried to keep that dual focus throughout this whole month, but to be honest, as we've been walking through the promised one, looking at promises from the Old Testament that Jesus has fulfilled, much of our focus has been on the way that Jesus has fulfilled them in his first coming. Each sermon, we've tried to look a little bit at how Jesus will still fulfill these promises in his second coming, but we've largely focused on how Jesus as the promised one has fulfilled the promises of God in his first coming.

And what I always enjoy doing is taking the Sunday after Christmas, the Sunday after Advent has kind of ended to remind us that there are still promises that we await fulfillment of in Jesus's return. Today, I wanna draw our attention forward a little bit more. Instead of just looking back at Jesus's birth and how he fulfilled so many promises in his life, death, and resurrection, I wanna pull us forward to consider the promises that still await us. So we're gonna go to John chapter 14. These are words that Jesus spoke to his disciples on the night that he was betrayed, as he was sitting down to take the Last Supper with him. A night which he was gonna be betrayed, the next day he would be crucified. Jesus spoke a lot of words, and we hear these words of comfort and of promise to his disciples.

Pretty well-known words if you've read the Bible much or if you've heard much of what Jesus has said about being the way, the truth, and the life. We read that here, but we're gonna be in John chapter 14, verses one through seven. Jesus says to his disciples, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house are many rooms. For were not so, would I have not told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 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. And you know the way to where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" And Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my father also. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

Have you ever had an experience that you are waiting for with a lot of anticipation, and then it did not meet those expectations, or maybe it was over a little bit too soon? This can happen a lot of times to kids on Christmas morning. Maybe there was one present that they were really hoping to get, and as all the presents under the tree get open, that present never gets open. They never get the one thing that they were hoping for, and now Christmas morning, which they were, had such great anticipation for, feels like a letdown. Or maybe they get that present. It's there under the tree, but it breaks later on on Christmas day, or it's just not as cool as they had built up in their mind, and all that they had been waiting for, all the anticipation just did not live up to what they actually experienced.

Doesn't just happen to kids on Christmas morning. Could happen to us adults. Have you ever been on a vacation that just didn't meet the expectations that you had put on it? It wasn't as restful, it wasn't as beautiful. The weather didn't turn out as well as you had hoped. Did the job that you had always been working towards always turn out to be what you had hoped it would be? Did some of the things that that job turned out to be not as fulfilling as you once thought they would be when you were working for that promotion? So many times there can be things that we have such great expectations for, and then when we actually experience them, maybe it's a bit of a letdown, or it comes and goes far too soon.

Sometimes I wonder if that's how the disciples felt whenever they had been walking with Jesus for years, and then Jesus would start to talk with them about his death, about how he was gonna leave them. I wonder if that's how they even felt maybe on Friday night or on Saturday after Jesus had died, before he rose from the dead. I mean, think about it, these are men and women who had left everything, left their families, left their jobs, their callings to follow Jesus, and for three years they had been with him day and night. At first probably just thinking he's this rabbi that they could learn from, they could study under, but then as he performs miracles, he speaks of the kingdom, they probably begin to see him as the promised one, the Messiah, the Savior, the King of Israel. But then instead of talking about taking his place as king, he talks about dying, he talks about leaving them.

In fact, did you notice that as he began here in chapter 14, he said, "Let not your hearts be troubled." Why would their hearts be troubled? I mean, here they are with Jesus having the Passover meal with him. What would be causing their hearts to be troubled? Well, we read about it just earlier at the end of chapter 13. If you just back up a few verses into where John was writing right before this, in John chapter 13, verse 33, Jesus says to his disciples, "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You'll seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now also I say to you, where I am going, you cannot come." Jesus says to his disciples, "You are like my children, I care for you so much, but you're only gonna be with me a little while longer." And then even as I told other people, now it's also true for you, I'm going somewhere that you can't come with me. You won't see me anymore.

That would cause their hearts to be troubled. A few verses later, Peter speaks up as he so often does. Verse 36, Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I'm going, you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward." Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." 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." He says, "Not only am I going someplace that you can't follow, but you're not gonna be as faithful as you like to think that you would be. You wouldn't be able to follow me where I am going, you would not be able to stick as close as you would hope that you could. In fact, Peter, tonight you will deny me three times, deny even knowing me, even though you sit in this room having a meal with me." This is why Jesus needs to speak words of comfort to his disciples, because he's about to depart from them. All that they had been hoping for, all that they had been dreaming that he would be, seems to be kind of crashing down as Jesus talks about his death, as he talks about leaving them behind and they can't come with them. And so he says in verse one, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me."

Can I ask you this morning, is your heart troubled? Is there something in this Christmas season that maybe causes your heart to be troubled? Is there something that happened over the course of 2025 that causes your heart to be troubled? What's weighing on your heart this morning? What's making you anxious? Jesus says the answer to our hearts not being troubled is to believe in God and to believe in him. In order to strengthen his disciples belief in him, in order to comfort them and encourage them in their faith, even while he's going away, he gives them these promises of what he's doing, where he's going, of what it means for them. And I want these promises to comfort you this morning. I want these promises to be a word of comfort for when Christmas doesn't turn out the way that you had hoped it would. Hope these words of promise will be a comfort to you when life doesn't turn out the way you expected it to. Hope these promises of Jesus will be a comfort to you when you can't see where God is working and you wonder what he's up to.

Would you hold on to these words from Jesus? That he is the promised one who has come and has fulfilled all these promises spoken of the Messiah and the Savior in the Old Testament, but yet there is still something that we hold on to, a hope that we still have for the future, a hope that we have in the present.

I want to draw these promises from Jesus just in three parts. You'll see them in your bulletin if you like to follow along, but I just want us to consider the words of Jesus and allow them to comfort our souls, that our hearts would not be troubled. The first part of the way Jesus comforts us with these promises is that he promises a place prepared for us with God. Jesus speaking to his disciples, and I think through them to us as his followers, seeks to comfort us, to give us peace in the midst of difficult times by promising a place prepared for us with God. So Jesus has been telling his disciples, I'm going somewhere and you can't come with me. You're not gonna see me anymore, I'll be somewhere else. And so then he takes the time to tell them a little bit about where he is going and why he's leaving them behind. He says in verse two, "In my father's house are many rooms. "If it were not so, I would have told you, "what I have not told you, "that I go to

prepare a place for you." In other words, what Jesus is saying is, where I'm going is to the father's house. I'm going there to prepare a place for you. And I need you to know that at the father's house, there are many rooms. Now it's clear when Jesus is talking about returning to the heavenly father, he is talking about going back to heaven. He's talking about being at the dwelling place of God, and he is saying that there are many dwelling places there with God.

This can be translated different ways. Some older translations at times will not talk about rooms, but will talk about mansions. Sometimes you talk to Christians and you'll hear them say that they know they've got a mansion for them waiting in glory. The translation here seems to indicate maybe it's more, not just each of us having our own individual mansions, but rather there's one really large place that God dwells. And within that place, there seems to be a number of rooms dedicated to each one for us to be able to have a space to dwell with God. No matter what it's a mansion, what it's a room in his house, the idea here is that Jesus, the son, is going back to the father, to his dwelling place, and he says there are many rooms there. There's a lot of space there.

I don't know if you're around Christianity in the 90s, but there was this song called Big House. My son Levi and I have some interesting bedtime routines. I'll have to tell you more about some of those later. But one of the ones that was a staple for us for a while every night was to sing Big House. And in the song Big House, it's talking about the father's house, and it says that there are lots and lots of rooms. Jesus is saying that, he says, "I'm going to my father's dwelling place, and I need you to know that I'm preparing it, and there's plenty of room there." If you've ever wondered if there is space for you in heaven, the answer is yes. If you've ever wondered if there is a place for you in God's dwelling place, the answer is yes.

Jesus is saying, "Here at the father's house, there are many, many rooms, many dwelling places, for you to come and to be with me and the father forever." He says, "I'm going there so that I could prepare the place for you." Now, when you think about going to heaven, Jesus going to heaven, going to the father's house, you gotta have to wonder, well, what kind of preparation is needed? Like, are we talking about a full remodel where Jesus is knocking out walls, rearranging stuff? Are we just talking about a paint job? Is this just buying some new furniture? What kind of preparation is needed for the father's house, for there to be a place for you and I?

Well, the idea is not that Jesus has to prepare the father's house, that's been perfect before the world began. What he's saying is, he has to prepare a place for you. What Jesus is talking about here is his upcoming death and resurrection. How when Jesus dies for our sins and then raises from the dead, what he is doing is he is preparing a place for you and I to be with him at the father's house forever. See, it's not so much that the house needs preparation, it's that you and I need preparation. We need to be cleansed from our sin and we need to be clothed in the righteousness of Jesus for us to be able to dwell with God forever. Jesus says, "What I'm about to do this evening, tomorrow, Sunday when I rise from the dead, this is all preparing a place for you.

This morning as you come to the table, as you eat the bread, as you drink the cup, remember that Jesus' sacrifice prepared a place for you. There's a lot of room at the father's house, there's a lot of space, Jesus has prepared a place. Have you accepted your invitation to come and dwell at the father's house? Have you trusted in what Jesus has done in his sacrifice that you might be able to dwell with God forever?" This is what Jesus is promising us, that he is going off to prepare a place for us that we will get to be with God forever and that actually leads to the second promise that I wanna draw out here. Jesus is saying, "They're gonna go away, you're not gonna see me, but what I'm actually promising you is that God's presence will always be with you." Here's the second promise, God's presence is always with us.

How does Jesus comfort us as his followers? The promises that he's going to prepare a place for us to make a way for us to be with God forever and therefore he is promising that we will be with God forever, that God's presence is always with us. You think about that's the invitation, when Jesus says, "I'm going to make a space for you at my father's house." He's saying, "I'm going to make sure that you will get to be with God forever." When you think about going to the father's house, think about going to be with God, sometimes we can picture it as if we're going off to like a far away land. We live in this crowded city, doesn't feel like there's enough space for all of us sometimes. Sometimes we could think maybe like the father's house is like out in the countryside where there's a lot of land, there's really big houses and there's room for all of us.

But better than thinking of the father's house as being in like some far away land, it's probably better to think of the father's house as home. That we were created to be with God, that being with God is like being at home. You ever notice that being home is one of those great themes of Christmas? Making it home for Christmas is one of those things that show up in all the Christmas movies? I don't know if you are as cool as our family is, but on Christmas day, we watched a very Jonas Christmas. It's a new Christmas movie about the Jonas Brothers. The whole premise is, are they going to make it home for Christmas, right? And the idea is one that's been shared in so many Christmas movies, is about giving home for Christmas. And why is that a common theme? Why around the holidays do we think about and talk about and have movies about making it home?

Because I think all of us feel that as fun as it is to go on a vacation, to travel somewhere new and exotic, as fun as it is to get to experience something different. When it comes to the holidays, when it comes to a special event, we really just want to be in a place where we're loved. We want to be in a place where we feel like we belong. That's home. We long to be in a place that feels like home, especially around this time of year. What the Bible says is that actually that's what Christmas is all about. That's the work that God is doing, that God came in Jesus to bring us home. That when we get to dwell with God forever in his house, we are getting to be at home forever.

See, in our sin, so often we go looking for home. We go looking for love and belonging in so many different places in this world. And what so often we find is that all those places we look for don't actually end up feeling like home. And everywhere we turn in this world, there will be this kind of longing that's not quite met. It's actually a picture that you were made for home that is not in this world. Here's the way that C.S. Lewis put it. He said, "If I find in myself desires, which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world. You were made to be at home with God." You think about where we started this whole series in Genesis one and two and three, that we were made to be in communion with God and we lost that in our sin. Jesus has promised that he is preparing a place for us with the Father in his house. He is saying, "I am going to bring you home." That is his promise is that he is going to come to the disciples, he's gonna return to them, and he is going to bring them home so that they would be with him forever. That's what he says in verse three. He says, "And if I'm going to prepare this place for you, I will come again and I will take you to myself that where I am, you may be also."

Do you hear this language of Jesus's presence with his disciples? He says, "I desire to be with you, to dwell with you." This is the message of Christmas, that God so desired to be with us that Jesus came down from heaven, took on flesh and dwelt among us that we might be with God. Isn't it always so meaningful when family or friends travel to come and see you? Isn't there something special about people spending their money on airplane tickets, spending their vacation days, spending their time, their effort, all that it takes to travel just to be with you? It can make you feel so loved, so desired. The Bible says that the God of the universe has an even greater desire for you, that he came down from heaven to be with you so that you might be with him. And Jesus says, "I've not only come once, but I am coming again, and I will bring you home so that where I am, you may be also."

There's this promise that we get to have God's presence in Jesus as he returns and brings us home, but this is not just a promise that we await in the future. You know, they think about being with God at home forever, we think about Jesus returning one day. Sometimes we can think that these are just promises that we just wait for the future. But the reality is we already experience this promise of God being present with us always. As Jesus is talking to his disciples, and he's telling them he's about to leave them, just a few verses later, he explains that they're actually not going to be alone. He actually tells them, "I'm not gonna leave you as orphans." This is what he says in verses 16 and 17 of this chapter. He says, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another helper to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you."

God says that, Jesus says that when he leaves, he's gonna send the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit will not just be Emmanuel, God with us, he will be indwelling God in us. In fact, just later in chapter 16, as Jesus continues to speak to his disciples, he says, "It's actually better that I go back to heaven. I know you won't see me, I know it might trouble your heart, but it's actually better that I'm not here, because then the Holy Spirit will come, and he will dwell in you. And God's presence will always be with you." God's presence is just as much in his people this morning as it was here on Christmas Eve, or last Sunday. God's presence is in you on Christmas day, and it is today and tomorrow. In the Spirit,

God's presence is in you, both in your times of rejoicing and in your times of grief. In the Holy Spirit, God's presence is in you when you're on the mountaintop and when you feel like you're in the valley of shadow of death. Reality is, the promise is, God's presence is always with you. Spirit is in you if you're a believer of Jesus. Jesus has come and he is coming again for you, and you will get to be in the Father's house forever.

Do you notice that the whole triune God, all three persons of our Trinity God is involved in that process? Father, Son, and Spirit, all at work in the work of redemption, all dwelling with God's people forever. This is the promise that God will be with us, that we have his presence always. So Jesus is preparing a place for us. We currently experience God's presence, but then the question is, well, how do I know that I always have God's presence? How do I know I'm actually going to make it home? And this is the last promise that I wanna draw out for you this morning from this passage. And that is Jesus offers us a comfort by promising that his person reconciles us to God. Jesus promises us, he comforts us by promising that he himself, his person, reconciles us to God.

You know, what I'm describing here about making it to heaven, making it home, it's not something that's really just unique to Christianity. I mean, the idea of being in a place like heaven is very similar to lots of different belief systems, lots of different religions. You might call it nirvana, you might call it paradise, might call it enlightenment, you might call it different things, but almost every belief system, every religion has some idea that there's something beyond just this world that you'll get to experience. The question is, well, how do you make it there? What is the way? Jesus speaks about the way. He says in verse four, Jesus said to them, you know the way to where I'm going. Yeah, you can't see me, you can't come with me right now, but you know how to get there.

And Thomas speaks up, he says, Lord, we don't even know where you're going. So how can we know the way? Jesus, we don't even know the destination. How can we know the route? I don't even know the address to put in my phone. How can I possibly get directions there? Don't you just love Thomas's honesty? I mean, I've been the disciple that's just quiet all the time. I don't like to ask dumb questions, so I just be quiet, and I just hope we get the answer later. But with someone like Thomas, he speaks up, he asks the question, and here we get the answer. Thomas says, we don't even know where you're going. How can we know the way? And Jesus utters this very important, pretty well-known words in verse six. Jesus said to him, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Seven times in John's gospel, Jesus says, I am, and he makes a statement about himself, and each one reveals something very important about Jesus. And here, Jesus says, I am the way, the truth, and the life. Notice how personal this is. This is why I say that Jesus' person reconciles us to God, because Jesus doesn't say, my teachings are the way. My commandments are the way. My example is the way. Jesus isn't saying, well, if you can just follow me well enough, then you'll know the way. Jesus says, I am the way. The hope of making it home is not in your ability to follow Jesus so closely. Your hope to be with God in his dwelling place forever is not found in, can you follow Jesus' example well enough? Your hope to make it home is that Jesus is the way. He is the one who reconciles you to God. Trusting in him, believing in him, he is the way. It's a very personal statement.

It's also a very exclusive statement. Jesus doesn't say, well, I am a way to God. He doesn't say, I am one way to God. In these statements, Jesus gives no indication that there are many ways, and he's just one option. In fact, he says, nobody comes to the Father except through me. It's a very exclusive statement. In fact, in other parts of Jesus' teaching, he says there's only two paths that you'll follow. You can either follow a broad path that leads to destruction, or you follow a narrow path that leads to life. And he says here, I am the narrow path. There's only one way to life, and it is by me. It's a very exclusive statement, but at the same time, Jesus is the most inclusive person you could ever imagine. Jesus says, there are plenty of rooms in my Father's house. Jesus says, you have to do nothing in and of yourself to get there. You don't have to offer enough sacrifices or offerings. You don't have to do enough good works. In fact, he says, if you are tired and burdened, you're just the person for me. Come to me and I will give you rest. You can come to the Father. You can make it to heaven. You can be at home simply by trusting in what I've done for you.

This is our confession as we come to the table this morning, that he alone is our hope. We're just saying, he will hold me fast. After communion, we will sing that we can do all this, but not because of us or in us, but because of Christ in us. He is the one who does all this work. He is the one who reconciles us to God. What hope do you have to make at home? What hope do you have to stay close to God in his presence? It's not in and of yourself. It's that Jesus is the way. He is the

way to God because he is the truth of God. These three statements about himself aren't separate statements. They're all one and the same. He is the way to God because he is the truth of God revealed. This is what we celebrate at Christmas, that he is God come down in the flesh. He is God revealed to us. In fact, that's what he says in verse seven. He says, if you had known me, you would know my father also. From now on, you do know him and have seen him. Why? Because you've seen me. I am the truth of God, therefore I am the way to God. Jesus is the way to God because he is the life of God.

John began his gospel by saying that Jesus is the light of life. This light had come into the world at Christmas and it shines in the darkness. The darkness has not overcome it. Jesus is the way to God because he is the life of God, come down as the light of the world. I've never loved how early it gets dark during the winter time. If I leave work at five o'clock and it's just already dark, that just kind of makes me a little sad. But I do always love like during this month of December to see Christmas lights as I'm heading home. People's houses, businesses, it's so fun to see Christmas lights. The reality is in the coming days, weeks, let's be honest for some people, even months, those Christmas lights will come down. It'll just be dark again. But for some people, it's really representative of how this whole Christmas season goes. There's this warmth that they feel as they get to gather with friends and family. There's this hope that they feel with just this time of year, this longing to be at home. But just as quickly as it comes, it fades away. When the Christmas lights get taken down, it's like their light has gone.

Jesus's words to his disciples and to us this morning, the light of the world is coming to, the light is coming to the world and the darkness can't overcome it. The light of life is there with you in every moment and is going to bring you home safely. Jesus is just as present in your life on Christmas day as he is today. Even when the nativity scene gets put away in your house, he will still be there in your home. Even when you can't feel him, when you can't sense him, when you don't understand what's happening in your life, he is still holding you close. He is still the way, the truth, and the life. So allow those promises to comfort you this morning. If your heart is troubled, if you're looking for the way home, if you're wondering how you can ever make it there, believe in Jesus, trust in him. He is the way, the truth, and the life. Allow him to bring you home.