

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.“

Thanks be to God for allowing us to continue studying the Gospel of John today. Our prayer request for this Bible study is to recognize who Jesus is, God Himself, and to have life in His name through faith (John 20:31). Through chapter 13, we have learned about Jesus' love for His disciples. Jesus loved His disciples despite their pride and washed their feet as their servant. He even loved his betrayer Judas Iscariot by giving him the morsel of bread, his body. Jesus also gave us the new commandment to love one another as he loved us on the cross and to form the holy communion of love with his power through which the world will know that we are Jesus' disciples. We thank God that this past weekend we were able to form this community of love by making the first Masters Seminar 2021 as blameless workers of the Gospel through which we went deep into the New Testament. We also thank God that the next generation put on a wonderful house concert to the praise and glory of our God.

In today's text, Jesus teaches his disciples about the coming Kingdom of God in vivid words. He did not say "kingdom of God" in the abstract, but announced that He was preparing many rooms for us in His Father's house. When Thomas did not know where the way to the Father is, Jesus shows himself as the only way to God. In our life of faith, let us put away all worldly dreams and earthly fixed ways of thinking that only make us restless in our hearts, and follow Jesus to His Kingdom through Him, the Way, the Truth and the Life. May God help us to pray so that we may see God's great work hap-

pening in this generation and thus practically follow the way of Jesus.

1. In my Father's house are many rooms (1-4)

Let's look at verse 1: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God ; trust also in me.“ When Jesus announced both His departure and betrayal and denial to the disciples in the previous lesson, it was unimaginable to the disciples. Their hearts were greatly troubled. As Jesus put it, they were terrified. When the disciples began to follow Jesus, they had renounced various things in their lives and made a clear decision for Jesus. Peter and the other fishermen had renounced their jobs as fishermen and their dreams of perhaps owning their own fish restaurant. We also know that Peter left his wife behind. Perhaps Peter Junior was eagerly waiting for him at home. Levi had quit a secure job with a good income. Other disciples renounced their religious standing in society. But they followed Jesus not only with the hope of the kingdom of God, but because they found in him even greater earthly dreams. They even wanted to sit on Jesus' right and left in his earthly messianic kingdom (Mark 10:37). But the more often Jesus announced his sufferings and now there was even a betrayal, the more these dreams were in danger. It seemed that they had come to a dead end. Therefore, they were very troubled.

What is Jesus' remedy to this restlessness in our hearts? Let's look again at verse 1:

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me." We may believe in God and His Son alone. Because we fix our eyes on the eternal God and His Son, we experience deep peace. The solution to all the problems of this world is first to believe in Jesus and then to hope in the eternal Kingdom of God.

There are numerous people who, although they had everything in the world and enjoyed great security, did not experience peace but were restless until they finally even became insane. Thus, many employees are in vague fear that they may be laid off and become very agitated when there is the slightest hint of restructuring in their department. However, there are also numerous heroes of faith who enjoyed peace in Christ in the midst of life's fiercest storms. For example, Horatio Spafford, after many setbacks, additionally experienced a great family tragedy in that all four of his daughters drowned in the sinking of the S.S. Ville du Havre. Many friends attacked him like Job in the Old Testament, that he had some hidden sin. But he did not become bitter, but looked to God, writing the song "When peace with God pervades my soul." Through faith, he overcame his fate and turned to God. He founded a Christian church with Christian life community called "The Overcomers." Through faith in God and Jesus, we can go far in overcoming any adverse situation in life: "Do not let your heart be troubled! Believe in God and believe in me!" Because of the spiritual situation in Germany outside and inside the church, we have been frightened in the last year. Many have also been frightened because of their sheep and children, because of the conditions or other unexpected occurrences. But we were allowed to hold on to faith in God and Jesus in every situation. God blessed us. We were allowed to lead GLEF 2020 at a higher level and God is allowing us to go to a new level this year as well, preparing the spiritual formation of the next generation through the first master seminar. In the past, at GLEF, older predecessors in the faith shared about their faith life and gave instructive talks. But we see

this ministry moving on to the young people. Soon all will see the faith of the overcomers of the next generation. God desires us to be disciples of Jesus who do not become frightened, angry or disappointed when everything threatens to break, but believe in God and Jesus and draw from God all strength for our ministry in forming one-on-one Bible study teams and making disciples.

To help His disciples practically, Jesus now spoke figuratively about our eternal home, the Kingdom of God. Verses 2 and 3 say, "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. 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 gave a vivid picture of the kingdom of God. He said that every disciple would have a dwelling place in the kingdom of God. In the kingdom of God, there is a beautiful and large dwelling for each of us with every luxury imaginable. Revelation 21 says that in the eternal city there is exuberant wealth, so that no ordinary stones were used for its construction, but the city is made of gold. Even the most precious gems are set into the foundation stones of the walls, and the gates are made of whole huge and precious pearls. But even more, the riches of the soul reign in this city. The Lamb will shine to the city day and night. There will be no more weariness, physical or spiritual. Revelation 21:4 says, "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." What a glorious city we will go to one day and Jesus has already prepared a dwelling place for us. At the word "dwelling place," the disciples listened. They did not even have their own little apartment with a toilet, nor did they have their own bed. When they heard the word "apartment", they were looking forward to their own bathroom, bedroom and probably a magnificent living room with a great view.

People are sinful to the extent that they cling to 100 EUR in this world and think that the glorious kingdom of God is worth nothing. They are sinful in that they place their hope in one person. We lost paradise with the Fall. Now we have to do our work with toil and even die one day. We no longer even lift our eyes to the Kingdom of God. We also depend on other people only when we seek their approval. But Jesus bought our souls anew for the Kingdom of God by dying for our sin and God's Spirit raising Him from the dead.

The predecessors in the faith placed all their hope in the eternal kingdom of God. At the beginning, Abram was still excited about Genesis 12:2 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing." But later he longed for the kingdom of God. Hebrews 11:10 says, "For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God." Paul had a burning vision to reach the whole world with the gospel. That was his hope and that was what his heart beat for. But his true hope is found in 2 Corinthians 5:1: "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." Peter had previously been full of earthly ambition and self-confidence. He thought that he could love Jesus out of his own strength even unto death. But he also grew in the hope of God. In 1 Peter 1:3, 4, he testified to his true hope: "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."

We may know that our lives are full of restlessness if we do not place our hope in the Kingdom of God. Many try to justify their restlessness with the unfortunate situation and want to improve their conditions. But this does not help. Restlessness is caused by the fact that we live in a fundamentally uncertain world and do not look to the kingdom of God. Many students struggle a lot to

study and somehow get a secure job. But every job in this world is insecure. Unfortunately, many Christians also cannot experience peace in their lives because they are born again but do not build on the eternal kingdom of God and put all their hope there. I know a young man who may start his internship at my company DHL next month. However, because he has so many worldly dreams, he is very worried about the uncertainty of the job and is full of anxiety, so he cannot even organize himself well. May God give him peace by placing his only hope in God and His kingdom. He is such an important person for God and His work. As God has guided him in the past and always entrusted him with the best, such as the most suitable place to study when he trusted in God, so God will guide him in the future because he is relying on God's kingdom alone. May God help all pupils, students and German examiners who are in learning and future worries to look to the kingdom of God and enjoy true peace. Matthew 6:33 says, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

2. I am the way (5-11)

How did the disciples respond to the glorious prospect of dwelling in the kingdom of God? Let's look at verse 5. One of his disciples, Thomas, now asked Jesus, "Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Thomas asked the way. Jesus loved Thomas to the end and passed on to him the penultimate of the famous I Am words of John's Gospel. Verse 6 says, "Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." In this sentence we learn that

- Jesus is the way to the kingdom of God,
- Jesus himself is the truth that solves all our life problems, and
- Jesus himself is the giver of life, who gives us eternal life.

These three things are mutually dependent in a philosophical sense, so we can create a dependence triangle:

Basically, all people are looking for the way for their life. Young people ask themselves what they should do with their lives and what the essence of their lives should be. Some think that this would be done by their choice of career or life partner. But the path includes more. The Way includes how to live a blessed life and be happy for eternity. Because no one knows this way, there are so many religions, philosophies and life coaching YouTube videos in this world that teach ways. But they all have in common that they can only tell people what to do and suggest this as the way. However, then at some point it becomes clear that people cannot do enough and the question arises whether in the end the goal can be achieved at all. For example, the Muslim faith only says that man can strive, but acceptance into Allah's kingdom depends on Allah's mercy in the end, but one does not know if he will have mercy. Faith in Jesus is different because the Bible says from the beginning that man is a sinner and hopelessly lost. However, Jesus became our way as a result, dying on the cross for our sins, shedding His blood as the innocent lamb, and thus opening the eternal kingdom of God to us. Romans 3:23 underscores our utter lostness, "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Hebrews 10:20 speaks of Christ, the way: „by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body," Jesus became the Lamb of God as John 1:29 says: "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Some people claim that there would be many ways. They say that all religions would have their place after all. But the Bible clearly says that Jesus, the Way, is the only Way. Verse 6 clearly says, "...no one comes to the Father except through me."

Why this is so is understandable: Jesus is the only one who has come from the Father. John 3:13 says in this regard, "No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven--the Son of Man." Jesus is also the only One who has been tempted in this world in all things as we are, but has no sin, as Hebrews 4:15 states: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin." Jesus is the only mediator between men and God as 1 Tim. 2:5 emphasizes, "But women will be saved through childbearing--if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety." Acts 4:12 exults, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." Above all things, let us leave behind the popular way in the world that we could be justified by our own performance. Let us take Jesus as our only way to the Father.

What does it mean that Jesus is the truth? In the philosophical sense, the way includes the truth. The search for truth is a fundamental question of human beings because we cannot be satisfied with our existence alone. Philosophy has sought the truth. But although the philosophers have racked their brains for generations and were educated and wise men, they did not get beyond a human attempt at explanation. Some among them even declare that we could not know the fundamental truth at all because we are limited human beings. But Jesus is the truth that not only solves our life problem and gives us the absolute meaning of existence. In Christ our search for truth has found its goal. This truth makes us free. Verses John 8:31, 32 say, "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."

Last, Jesus is also life itself. All people want to live. However, what is life in the first place? Certainly, this does not mean biological life, because biologically we live. In our

corona age, public life is severely limited, which is why we long for public life to return, such as finally going to a restaurant and eating a delicious schnitzel. But the real life is the life that pulses deep in our soul. It is the life that makes life truly worth living. It is the life that God alone can give us. Christians possess this life by finding deep peace and joy in Christ. This joy and this life are much greater than anything else in this world. The new life is not a continuation of the old earthly life in sin. It is a qualitatively completely new life. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

When we follow Jesus, the way, the truth and the life, we may know that we are not liked by all people. Those people who live with their hearts in the world speak ill of us and even persecute us in the end. Jesus, the way, the truth and the life is not a comfortable life, but a life full of suffering. 2 Timothy 3:12 says, "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted," Many Christians, in order not to lose this life in Christ, have decided to lay down their lives under persecutions because this life is preserved for eternity. In fact, all other ways are only convenient and deceptive because they do not lead to the eternal goal, which is eternal life. Paul, even in danger of death, recorded this true and eternal life in Philippians 1:21: "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."

Before I came to faith, as a young man I pondered endlessly about the path of my life. This resulted in me lying endlessly on my bed in agony, philosophizing about the meaning and purpose of my life. I was much less educated than the philosophers, nor had I spent hundreds of years pondering this question. Nevertheless, I tried to outdo them and find a clever answer to the question of all questions without God. However, even after racking my brains, I could not find a goal of my life. I thought that although I was only 19 years old, my life had already failed and there was no meaning of existence in this world. In my distress, I wanted

to run away and live free from society in the wilderness like the possessed Gerasener. I felt my life was like a dense jungle without a path, where I laboriously worked my way through the thicket of my own ego and in the end realized that I had gone in circles. Everything in life seemed pointless and meaningless and not worth striving for. But through a message about Jesus, the way, the truth and the life at the summer conference in the Netherlands, I picked up that Jesus had already prepared a place for me in my Father's house as well and that Jesus was the way I had been searching for so long. I decided to let Jesus be the way in my life and I am standing on it today. In Jesus, the way, I experienced loud blessings. Jesus healed the restlessness of my soul. He gave me peace so that I could build something in my life. He gave me confidence in the kingdom of God, so that he used me as a witness of the resurrection. He made me a blessing to my fellow men.

In verse 7 Jesus continues: "If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." This was truly a wonderful promise. But Philip was not yet satisfied. Jesus had revealed himself as the Way. But he asked, "Lord, show us the Father and it will be enough for us."

Then Jesus rebuked Philip in verse 9: "Jesus answered: "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'?" Through Jesus, the disciples were allowed to see the Father. Whoever receives Jesus receives the Father Himself, for Jesus and the Father are one. Thomas and Philip had a problem in their lives. They were looking only at the here and now. They looked at what they could control themselves and denied the spiritual world. This train of thought is like the train of thought of modern philosophers who adhere to empiricism or even follow existentialism or phenomenology and end up knowing nothing. But Jesus nevertheless patiently ministered to these doubters even a few

hours before his own death, helping them to see the eternal kingdom. Thomas was later able to lay hands on Jesus' nail marks vicariously for all doubters of humanity of all generations (John 20:27-29). His life changed completely. He placed all his hope in the Kingdom of God, where he would see the Father. Thus, he could even die a martyr's death on the east coast of India and completely dedicate his life to the gospel.

Nowadays, we cannot have Jesus among us. But we can also see Father by deeply studying Jesus' life in the Bible and getting to know him. We can see the Father through one-on-one Bible study. We can see the Father by committing our lives to Jesus.

3. What you will ask in my name (12-14)

Verses 12 to 14 explain to us the implications of this for our practical lives when we follow Jesus, the way, the truth and the life. Following Jesus, the way, does not mean just standing on the way, but it means taking steps on the way. By following Jesus, the way, we experience answers to prayer. Let's 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." The answer to prayer does not refer to small works, but it refers to great works. We are even enabled by the answer to prayer to do quantitatively greater works than our Lord and Master Jesus. What is a great work? A great work was when the apostles preached with the Holy Spirit and 3000 people came to faith at the same time (Acts 2:41). In fact, this work did not happen in the distant future, but a few weeks after Jesus spoke these words. It is a great work that the gospel spread like wildfire throughout the whole known world at that time, so that the Roman Empire finally became the Christian Roman Empire in 313 AD. It is a great work in our times that our next generation not only cares about studying well for school or college, but that they form prayer circles and pray for their classmates. A

great work is the work of 10,000 one-to-one Bible studies, 5 million prayer workers, and 100,000 missionaries by 2041, for which we pray and which will be fulfilled. These numbers are so great that sometimes we feel dizzy. With our own strength, we cannot even serve one person and lead one person to Christ. However, with the answer to prayer and the power of Jesus, it is quite easy for God to hear our exceedingly great prayer and change this world through us and use us preciously for the spiritual revival of Germany and Europe. Therefore, let us pray with great prayer requests. Let us also pray for our Next Generation that God will give them the good equipping with the Word of God in this time. Pray for them that God will abundantly bless the GLEF ministry and raise up many spiritual leaders as them for their generation through it, who will go and preach the gospel in the Muslim world at three bases, in Cartagena, in North Korea and to the ends of the earth. God will do such a great work through them soon, as with Peter's Pentecostal preaching.

Let's look at verse 13 and 14: "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it." We learn here that the goal of answering prayer is that the name of God may be glorified. Many people have prayer requests of some kind, usually self-centered prayer requests that they bring to God and are surprised that they are not answered. However, if we pray with the prayer request that through the fulfillment of the prayer God may be glorified, then God will gladly answer the prayer. Therefore, let us pray that God may be glorified through our lives and make ourselves completely available to Him and experience the powerful answer to prayer through Him.

In today's Bible text, Jesus has given us the prescription not to be afraid, namely by believing in God and Jesus. Jesus has given us a very vivid preview of the Kingdom of God. In his Father's house are many rooms! How wonderful! He also showed us how to get there, namely that Jesus is the way, the

truth and the life and that we may follow Jesus in this time. Let us practically follow the way of Jesus, asking greater works than he did from him and glorifying God in this world.