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## Growth Group Spring 2020

### *Is Jesus the Only Way?*

Week 1 – April 19, 2020 - John 14:1-14

**Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at a church. In this time of Corona19 and “social distancing” please don’t meet in person, but do continue to check in with each other. If your growth group would like to meet online or if you are aware of needs that the church can help fill, please let us know at [connect@ljpres.org](mailto:connect@ljpres.org). Thank you for loving and caring for each other.**

### Setting the Context

For the next five weeks we are going to be looking at some of the questions that the people of LJPC asked. We will look at the exclusive claims of Christ, the issue of evil and suffering, heaven and hell, sin and finally, prayer. These are not the easiest of topics to cover, but they are issues that we must consider as we live out our faith.

Today we consider a passage that is often read at memorial services. Jesus comforts his disciples who were troubled by his words in John 13, when he had talked about his betrayal and death. As was often the case, the disciples simply did not fully understand the mission of Jesus. Jesus speaks words of hope by telling them that he is going to prepare a place for them. Jesus will not abandon them or leave them, but instead is preparing the way for them.

Thomas responds by telling Jesus that they don’t know the way, and Jesus responds with the well-known words, “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” Over the years this verse has been used to say, that if you don’t know Jesus, you are not going to spend eternity in heaven. One thing we should note is that when Jesus shares this idea of being the way, he is only talking with his disciples. There is no crowd there, and this is not an evangelistic sermon. He is trying to help the disciples understand his love and concern for them. He wants them to know he is the way to God.

Jesus is trying to get his disciples to see something that is very important, but they still don’t fully understand. We know that because Philip says, that if they could just see the Father, that would be enough. Obviously, the miracles had not been enough for Philip! The key to what Jesus is talking about in this passage is a relationship with God and knowing God. Jesus tells Philip and the rest of the disciples that they do know God and have seen God because they have been with Jesus.

Jesus provides the way for us to be in relationship with God. The Christian faith is the only faith where God becomes a person and lives amongst humanity. Jesus is the one who serves as the bridge between God and humankind. His calling to the disciples, as well as those who follow him, asks for our exclusive allegiance to his message and his way so that we can truly know God.



# Exploring the Text

## Read John 14:1-14

<sup>1</sup> “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> You know the way to the place where I am going.” <sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” <sup>6</sup> Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” <sup>8</sup> Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” <sup>9</sup> 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’? <sup>10</sup> Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. <sup>11</sup> Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup> Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup> And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

## Questions

*If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.*

- 1) In a couple of weeks we will spend some time talking about heaven, but for now, when you think about heaven, what kind of images or thoughts do you have? How have the words of Jesus from John 14 impacted your thinking about heaven?
- 2) Jesus tells the disciples to not let their hearts be troubled and to trust in God and him. Much has changed for us over the past several weeks. How have you found yourself trusting in God? Have you been doing something that has enabled you to “keep the faith”, during this pandemic?
- 3) Many of us have friends who find this particular teaching of Jesus troubling. We have Jewish friends, or Muslim friends who find these words disturbing. We have friends who believe in God to some degree, but don’t like that Jesus says he is the only way, truth and life. How do you understand this seemingly exclusive statement of Christ?
- 4) Do you think it matters that when Jesus says I am the way, the truth and the life he is only speaking to the apostles? Would he have said the same thing if it was a crowd filled with non-believers?
- 5) It has been said that, “it is very difficult to have the truth, but not hurt anybody with it.” Do you think that is a valid statement? Have you ever been hurt by the truth? What does it mean to “speak the truth in love” (see Ephesians 4:15)
- 6) Why does Philip respond the way that he does to the statement that Jesus had made, in verse seven? Philip had already seen a lot of the works of God and now he asks to see God. Why does he make this statement?
- 7) Jesus asks for our exclusive allegiance in our relationship with him. It is consistent with what God told the people of Israel with the first commandment when He said you shall have no other gods before me. What do you do in your own life to try and make God your highest priority?
- 8) Jesus makes a remarkable statement in verses 12-14. How can the disciples do greater things than what Jesus had done? What could those “greater things” be?