**“Way to Go”**

Acts 6:1-9; 7:2a, 51-60

1 Peter 2:2-10

John 14:1-14

Easter 5

Jesus said: “’**Let not your hearts be troubled**. In My Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have 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?**’ Jesus said to him, ‘**I** am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

Christ **is risen!** He is **risen, indeed!** **Alleluia!** And a **blessed and happy Mother’s Day to those of you with that vocation** / that **task** / that **blessing**, and that **challenge**.

Where Jesus is, **so we are going**. The disciple (Thomas) **was troubled** by Jesus’ claim … “way to go” Thomas. But Jesus stuck with it. “You **know** where I am going” (to prepare a place for you all to be with Me). “And I will return to take My disciples there”, He says. And the **path to get there** / the **way** / the **only way** which is in “**truth**” and “**life**” … to a place with “many rooms” that He’s, Himself, preparing for His own where He’s, then, at … a way to get there that’s “**in Him / in His name**” as a journey / a pathway there to that glorious place, is “**He**” **Himself**. And **Him you know** (and, more importantly, **are known by Him and His Father through baptism**), so “**Let NOT your hearts be troubled**”. “**The Way**” is **known to you … and in you**.

As a matter of fact, one of the greatest things about **baptism** is that the **knowing of the way** is never a matter of our **brainwaves of consciousness**. Thomas we would all agree with (and be, ourselves, unsettled) if an alignment with the path of life to Heaven was a matter of our mental (or even emotional) aptitude. But our **connection and existence in the channel of the Way** that is **Jesus** is not in our minds (it’s not abstract like that … and of our work), but God’s and concrete in our **baptismal connection-to-Him (as Paul reminds us in Romans 6)**: “do you not **know** (and, **yes, we all should know this**) that we who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death” (this is **us being put in** “**The Way**”)? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, **we too** might walk in newness of life.” And that walk (as you are hearing about it again) is connected-to (and “in) **the One** **who calls Himself** **“The Way”:** **The “Way”, “Truth”, and “Life” is Jesus**. So “**if** we have been united with **Him** by baptism into a death like His” (and that’s the only question), “we **shall** **certainly be** united with Him in a resurrection like His.” The rest is, just, **receiving the promise of that (taking God at His Word)** … and that **receiving of it (knowing it)** is “**faith**”. And “he that believes” (**has that faith**) “and **is baptized** shall be saved”, Jesus said. You **KNOW THE WAY, BAPTIZED INTO JESUS!**

**Text**

Now, you may not be looking at my sermon manuscript, but I’ve capitalized the word “The” when talking about “The Way” every time I’ve used it as such. There is only one Way to the Heaven and Paradise to which Jesus is going and preparing rooms for everyone. **He’s it** **… there is no other**. No short-cuts, nor cut-arounds, nor by-passes, nor other optional paths or good ideas (other than God’s One idea … His “Way”). **This One’s IT!** **Jesus as The Way / The Truth / The Life (and baptized and believing in that) is the only path (“The Way”)**. He says (Jesus) that “no one comes to the Father” (that’s Heaven and Paradise and salvation itself) “except **through Me**”. The **bad news** is that Heaven (and the heavenly kingdom of God … even here on earth) is **exclusive … it’s exclusively through Jesus and a person’s baptismal- and receiving faith-connection to Him**. The **Good News** is that Heaven (and the heavenly kingdom of God … even here on earth) is **inclusive** **… it includes everyone (without exception) through Jesus and a person’s baptismal- and receiving faith-connection to Him**.

The “**inclusiveness**” says to **you**, “let not **your** hearts be troubled” … “**your hearts**”. The beautiful Gospel for today is that, for baptized believers, the “you” of Jesus’ entire promise here is secure by means of **Him as “The Way” connected to you** … the pathway is set, and **baptized and believing you are in it** **(in HIM)**. I look out over the faces of, certainly, my parishioners and friends (family) and know of all of you as the baptized and believing (**“in” Christ Jesus / Romans 6 connected-by-promise baptismally**). There might be some watching, though, **not yet among the baptized**, but **that is** **invited you (**actually **insisted of you)**, to **grant** **and bestow** this alignment of gracious gift and security of which Jesus talks. Call me **please** if you’ve not **gotten there** for whatever the reason. There may be some who’ve been told that being “in Jesus” by baptism and faith **isn’t for** the young or the children (babies yet to grow into that so-called “decision” phase first), but you’re **neglecting** God’s promise and Words that “**are for you AND for your children**” **(Acts 2, of every age / “all nations” inclusivity not of will or cognizance, but of promise and connection / GIFT that God does “born of water and Word”)**.

For mothers (fathers even), align **all your children** with “The Way” Jesus makes all these promises about. Baptize them into the faith given by God. Connect them to Jesus (“do you not **know**”, and, **yes, we all should know this**, “that we who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death, **so RESURRECTION**?”) Mother’s Day gifts do not get any better than **securing whole families (children) in what all Jesus (here in this text) promises (“truth” and “life”, “The Way”, not of choice or decision or mental capacity, will, or emotion, but of GIFT AS PROMISED)**.

**Application**

**“Let not your hearts be troubled”, Jesus says**. The **by-product** of the GIFT of being “in The Way” is not just the certainty of **God’s promise upon us to put us there**, but also **perspective on the whole thing**. An author says that, **looking back** (from those rooms we get in Paradise, but also from here and now while yet in the struggle of earthly challenges), any “vale of even seeming misery turns out (when **looked back upon**) to have been a **well; where present experience seen only as salt deserts are discovered to have been (since attached to the Lord) forever full of water**”.

So “**let not your hearts be troubled**”. I know some of you with health challenges (treatments now and tough treatments ahead / new diagnosis) or financial strains (things aren’t as comfortable as they were). I know frustrations and restlessness, missing what we had in in-person togetherness and companionship, freedom of movement and recreation, family around and hugging and unencumbered / unconcerned about virus’ we can’t see and don’t know how close we might be to one. I know about missing gathering around the Holy Supper and being in one room singing.

**To all of that**, Jesus says the words over-arching every moment of any day upon this earth: “**Let not your hearts be troubled**. Believe in God; believe also in Me. I am in the Father and the Father is in Me”, and, of course, through baptism and believing “I am in you and you are in Me” is promised. Today and tomorrow, **in That Way** (“**The** **Way**”), **God has everything for us taken care of**. There is a **wonderful “Way to Go” … in Jesus** … and He **is risen!** He is risen, **indeed!** **Alleluia!** In +His name. Amen.

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