

Sermon for Sunday, May the 10th.

We begin today with:

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY TO ALL MOMS,
AND ALL WHO DO MOTHERING... Including
some single dads and two mom households
– and foster moms and grams and aunties....



It is hard to define the “work” of mothering,
but I sure know it when I see it, and whatever loving form it takes, it is precious
beyond words. Yes, it is a Hallmark Occasion, but sincere thanks to loving mothers
is an authentic expression that means so much to so many.

Readings for Sunday, May 10th

Acts 7:55-60 Psalm 31: 1-8 1 Peter 2: 2-10

The Holy Gospel: **John 14: 1-11**

14 “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God;^[a] believe also in me. ² 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?^[b] ³ 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. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going.”^[c]

⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”

⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you had known me, you would have known my Father also.^[d] From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

⁸ Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.”

⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who

dwells in me does his works. ¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

The Sermon:

I have learned many things by sitting at the bedside of the dying. After the prayers and the anointing, if it is possible for them to speak, a dying person just wants me to be quiet. Shut up and listen. Why? Because it is at precisely this time that the flat-out truth can be spoken. No need for cover ups, not important to impress, no strength anymore to try to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps, and so we finally get really real, and speak the truth to one another.

Jesus is speaking His last words to His disciples, His best friends. His words demand our attention. His dying proclamation is what He wants His disciples to remember. Everything is summed up and clarified in one's last words. Of all the things my own father ever said to me, the most important words by far were his "I love you, Judie" given with a firm handshake (a time honoured traditionalist was my dad) right while he lay dying. I would wish such last words for every daughter and every son.

Feeling choked up a little? Let's pull ourselves together and listen carefully to Jesus.

First He clarifies things. He says "**You believe in God**" Well, they certainly did. Every Jewish person of faith believed fully and radically in the great One God Jehovah. Then He says "**Believe also in Me**". With the same trust, and rock-solid commitment that you believe in God, you are also to believe in Me. To any ears but those who loved and knew JESUS those words would have been heresy, blasphemy, unspeakable. **And only Jesus could speak them.** Why should they believe also in Him? He explains...Listen: "because the Father is in Me and I am in the Father, and the words that I speak come from Him and the things that I do I do for Him, if you can't believe my words, look at the deeds I have done, and know that I am in the Father and the Father is in me". Too hard for Phillip. Hear him sigh"Never mind the words or the deeds: just show us the Father and we will be satisfied." . And Jesus sighs too I think, "Do you still not know Me,

Phillip...we've spent so much time together...do you not yet see the Father in Me and Me in the Father.

So that's who Jesus is. He now speaks of what He is **about to do**. He is going to leave them. The lives of His disciples are about to crash and burn. Everything they have hoped for in Him is going to be blotted out by a dark cross against a darkening sky. Jesus, who told them that He and the Father were One, would die. It was beyond all comprehension. Jesus doesn't want them reeling in confusion forever, but rather wants to prepare them with hope through words like these..."When I leave, I'm going to prepare a place for you. There are many, many rooms in my Father's House –rooms like mansions- and lots of room for everyone...You will be at my place, and that will be your home. I'll even come back and take you there, and then where I am, there you will be also. Do not doubt this. If it were not so, I would have told you." And Jesus does not lie.

Such good news for those men who loved Jesus. When people we love die, we LONG to be reunited with them. We do not LONG to be reunited with people we do not know. And so the disciples would LONG to be reunited with Jesus whom they already knew. Whom they have followed. Whom they have honoured. Whom they have loved. Who loves them with such grace and mercy. To be with Jesus, at His place forever. That is the legacy, last will and testament of Jesus for His friends. Including us.

Do you wonder what it will be like there? I do. Sometimes I think of it like John's vision: it looks something like a big city with jewels at the gates and jasper and streets of gold and with a big river flowing through the center and a new tree in the garden called The Tree of Healing for the Nations. Sometimes I think of Heaven as another dimension, rather than a physical place. Sometimes I think that Heaven is right here and my consciousness of Heaven will change when I die. I often hear people say things like: Heaven for Dad will be birdwatching and a glass of Scotch at night and a place prepared for Mom would surely need organizing and dusting. When we talk that way, we just mean that Heaven will be a place where their individual personalities will be happy and fulfilled, and that is absolutely right and proper even if, perhaps, there is no scotch. Sigh. We do

know one thing, though, for absolutely sure. Heaven is where Jesus is, and we will be with Him, at His place. Such is His promise. "But how" asks dear Thomas, the brave man who never hides his doubts or questions, "will we get there? We don't know the way!" A good question. Here is the answer:

Jesus is the Way. We do not need a map, a GPS, a final destination code, a car, a chariot or a horse to get us to His Father's place. We only need Jesus. He is the Way. The **Way is a Person, not a route.**

Jesus is the Truth. The truth is not found in particular facts, or information, or interpretations. Truth is about a Who, not about a What. Jesus is the Son of God. That is Who He is. To us He has given the power to become the Children of God. That is Who we are. Jesus is the Truth and He does not lie. **The Truth is a Person, not a fact.**

Jesus is the Life. In Him we are born and have our being. He makes us a new creation. We are reborn. Because He lives, we too shall live. **Life is a Person, not an experience.**

And then Jesus -the Person who is the way, the truth and the life- puts into words what must by now be obvious. **If you come to the Father you will find Me. If you come to Me, you will find the Father.** We are so close that we inseparable. We are One. "No man can come to the Father but by Me" are not words of exclusive religiosity or legalism. I believe that they are, taken with the promised sending of the Holy Spirit, the clearest definition of the Trinity I have ever known and loved.

And if that is too much to take in this morning, be encouraged! It will all make sense when we are all together with Him at His Place. Thanks be to God. Amen.

The Collect: Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Give us grace to love one another and walk in the way of His commandments, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy spirit one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Prayer Of Response to the Gospel: Lord Jesus, You are the Way....when I am feeling lost, confused, disoriented, encompassed by circumstances and swirling changes which I cannot control, help me to remember that my place of safety is with You. Help me to hang on tight to Your sleeve and simply go where You are going. Help me to trust that anywhere with You is where love is, where peace is, and where hope abides.

Lord Jesus, You are the Truth...help me to always check-in with Your Word when I am full of doubt or fear.. help me to love You with all of my mind as well as my body and my heart and my soul...remind Me that You were also dismayed and surprised at times, and when that happened, You always returned to the Will of your Father. May You reshape my hearing and my understanding of the Truth. You are the Truth.

Lord Jesus, You are the Life. You have given me rebirth and sealed me in the waters of baptism. You have prepared a place of me. You will see that I get there. And that the Life I will live in your place will be the Life which you live in me. Fullness of life, goodness of life, challenges of life all find their "Yes" in You.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for being the Way, the Truth and the Life. Amen.

For those in need:

O Lord, open my eyes that I may see the needs of others;

Open my ears that I may hear their cries;

Open my heart so that they need not be without succor;

Let me not be afraid to defend the weak because of the anger of the strong..

Nor afraid to defend the poor because of the power of the rich

Show me where love and hope and faith are needed and use me to bring them to those places.

And so open my eyes and my ears that I may this coming day be able to do some work of peace for Thee. Amen. (Alan Paton: South African author of "Cry,the Beloved Country", 1948)

Be Blest, dear friends, and rest in the peace of Christ! - Judie+