

## How Can We Know the Way?

John 14:1-14

Growing up I was enamored by truck drivers. I had a couple of uncles and a pastor that were long haul truckers. My uncle Bill would tell us about his long drives and it just seemed like such a different life. A life of a vagabond. A modern-day cowboy riding the range. I would have had a big Hess semi-truck to play with as a kid for Christmas if my father had not given it to a cousin instead because I had accidentally seen it. I am not in the least bitter.

I remember singing the song convoy by CW McCall. I remember pretending that I was talking into a CB with my friends saying, "Breaker, Breaker, 1-9. I've got a Smokie on my tail. 10-4!"

I even tried to get my daughter into country music by making her listen to Trucker songs during her impressionable early years.

There are three things that barred me from being a successful truck driver:

1. My tendency to doze off on long drives.
2. The fact that I am an atrocious driver.
3. I lack any sense of navigation.

It is that lack of a sense of direction that often gives family and friends a bit of a fright. When I was the pastor in DC someone always made sure I made it to meetings. Getting lost has been a sort of art form with me. I have found myself in the completely wrong state. My sense of direction and map reading skills are wanting.

Right now I don't know where we are going. It has been over 8 weeks of quarantine. Today over 80,000 people will have lost their lives in the United States alone to this virus (and we know the count is low), with 1,340,000 infections. These deaths and infections have happened in such a short period of time. This is nothing like the Flu as some said, it is not going away completely with the warm weather. There are not millions of tests a day as promised, nor are there consistent reopening strategies across the country. On top of that we have just heard of 14.7% unemployment, the worst employment report since the great depression. It has been an absolute disaster and tragedy.

Whether it is to mansions made far away, or attempting to keep our faith in the midst of a pandemic we sympathize today with the question of Thomas. Too often we focus on Thomas as the who will later doubt Jesus' resurrection and miss that he asks this important and essential question of Jesus. It is a question that many of us are asking to this day.

“Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”

Remember Jesus' answer to Thomas after revealing himself after the resurrection was a question to Thomas.

“Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

Jesus talks to Thomas about you and I. We are the disciples who have not seen and yet have come to believe. Yet, we are still left with Thomas' earlier question, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”

How can we know the way?

Jesus simple, and perplexing answer is, “I am the way ,the truth, and the life.”

We are already believers in Jesus, that he is the living water, the door we knock at and have opened for us, and the one who promises abundant life to us in faith. So, what is the way?

A little later in this question and answer session with the disciples we get clues to the broader answer. When Philip wants Jesus to reveal to them the Father, Jesus is incredulous. Have you been with me all this time and not known me? If you have seen me you have seen the father.

Here we go back to the problem of Jesus question later to Thomas. “Have you believed because you have seen me?

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

Most of us have not had the terror or joy of seeing visions of Jesus. So, how can we know the way?

Jesus tells two places in his answers to guide us on our way to a healthy faith. First, there are the words he says. This only makes sense since at the beginning of this book we are told that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. We are called to study the teachings of Jesus to understand how that they can guide and change us through even these most challenging times.

Second, and equally important is to observe the works of Christ in the world. How do we do that? We do them as a church. It is when we put these teachings of Jesus Christ into action in our worlds that we will begin to refocus on the living Word. The words on the page will conspire to bring justice, institute peace, navigate mercy, conspire for hope, and resolve to love in a world that is clearly suffering.

We will know Christ only if we practice the teachings given to us by our teacher Jesus Christ. It is with this great call to act that we will have something better than mansions in heaven, we will know our savior here on earth. Thanks be to God.