

## **EASTER: A TIME TO REJOICE**

**Fifth Sunday of Easter**  
**April 20, 2008**

**Acts 7:55-60**  
**Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16**  
**1 Peter 2:2-10**  
**John 14:1-14**

### **Jesus Is the Way, the Truth, and the Life**

Perhaps the hardest question that Christians have to ask of themselves is “what does God want of me?” Those of us who have totally committed our lives to Christ want to know how to follow the God who has given his life that we might know what freedom is. It is part of our Christian commitment.

The Gospel reading for this week takes place following the final Passover meal that Jesus celebrates with his disciples. He tells them he will not be with them for much longer and bids them to love one another so that others will know that they are his disciples.

It is clear that Jesus is preparing his followers to carry on the work that he has been doing and that he will return to take them with him. Thomas, who in John’s Gospel is often the one who asks the important questions, asserts that the disciples don’t know the way. Plainly, Thomas does not understand that Jesus is speaking of his death. And so he asks the important question: “How can we know the way?”

But Jesus answers saying, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life!”

There is more than one level of understanding this story. There is the understanding that Jesus’ first disciples would have had about where Jesus was going and there is also the understanding that later followers of John would have had hearing this story some sixty years after the event.

Thomas wants to know if Jesus is taking them back to Galilee or some such destination where Jesus carried out his ministry. But Jesus is trying to prepare his disciples for his death and his resurrection. John, on the other hand, is trying to assure his followers that Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection is the *way* to know that the place of which Jesus speaks is one that is prepared for them within God’s family.

The word in Greek for *way* can be understood at many different levels. It can mean a geographical location, or it can mean to a geographical location, or it can mean a level of knowing. In John, the *way* is knowing Jesus.

Jesus' mission was to show the world the Father—to show us how to love one another. Philip requests that Jesus show his followers the Father. Once again, Jesus is speaking on another level. “If you know me, Philip, you know the Father,” Jesus seems to be saying.

Today, Christians need not worry about how to fulfill God's will. We have been promised by Jesus that, if we follow him, we will know the Father. We search the Gospels for ways to more surely follow Jesus' *Way*, but still we know that we are called to participate in God's family. We live out the 'destination' of God's house when we, too, show others the Father by the way that we act and live. When we live lives that welcome others to God's all-inclusive love, and become living examples of that love, we know the way that Jesus took.

This week's Reflection was prepared by the Rev. Lauren Gough, an Episcopal priest serving as pastor at St. Luke Lutheran Church, Sidney, New York.

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**This week we pray for the work of the Bible Societies in: Papua New Guinea** – With prayers for the revision of the Motu Bible and the completion of the Hula Old Testament, and with prayers for the work in Bible translation and publishing in seeking to reach people in a country where more than 700 different languages are spoken; **Indonesia** – With prayers for the publication of the first Indonesian Study Bible, translation and revision projects, the broadcasting of Bible texts on the radio, and for the work of the Bible Study Centre and the Literacy and New Reader program; **Singapore** – With thanks to God that initial approval has been granted to rebuild Bible House, and with prayers that final authorization will be obtained for construction work to commence, and with thanks to God that a link has been established for the provision of Scriptures to Brunei, and with prayers that the door to Scripture distribution will remain open, and with prayers for those who are preparing reflections for a Lenten devotional.

**Activity Corner:** “Living Stones” Walkway

Supplies needed: Bible; \*small stones; glue; poster board; marker; individual photos of each household member (optional) (\*small pieces of construction paper in the shape of stones may be substituted)

Read John 14:6 and 1 Peter 2:4, 5.

Across the top of a piece of poster board, write “Jesus said: I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.” Across the bottom, write “We are Christ's living stones” and include photos of each household member (optional). Starting in the lower left-hand corner of the poster board, glue the small stones in the shape of a winding path that leads to the top right-hand corner. Discuss what it means to follow Jesus and be a “living stone.” Along the sides of the path, write down the comments from members of your household. Conclude by reading verse 3 of Psalm 31. Display the poster throughout the week where you gather for devotions. Incorporate the comments into your closing prayers.