

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster
Sunday, May 7th, 2023, Easter V
Acts 7:55-60; Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16; 1 Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14

Today's gospel has many themes, and ways of understanding the passage. I often use it for funerals. But there's other ways of looking at it.

I was struck by what Angela N. Parker said about this gospel passage on the Working Preacher website. She begins by commenting on the phrase: *"Let not your hearts be troubled."* In essence she is saying that your is plural and heart is singular. That the disciples together can have one heart or view, even in the fact they are feeling the loneliness and disconnect with Jesus about to leave them.

And when we look at verse 6; *I am the way the truth and the life, no one comes to the father except through me.* The temptation is to emphasize the second part, no one comes to the father except through me. We get caught up in belief and by extension saying the right words. That Christianity is the only answer. Now let's look at the first part with Jesus saying I am the way the truth and the life.

Angela N. Parker suggests the Greek word for the way can mean a road or highway or a journey or trip, but it can also mean a way of life that suggests behavior and a way of understanding the world.

Therefore, way and life come together, but what about truth?
We tend to think of truth as the opposite of a lie or falsehood. *Liddell Scott suggests, an understanding of truth can be considered "a true event, realization of dream or omen."* A line from Maya Angelou's poem, *"Still I Rise"* makes sense in this context *"I am the dream and the hope of the slave."*

This would mean that Jesus as the truth, is the dream and hope of God. The embodiment of the truth, the embodiment of the dream and hope of God. And as I have said before Jesus is the model, the one who goes before us and the one we are to imitate.

This small, disconnected group of disciples facing Jesus leaving them for good, is being asked by Jesus to be of one heart and not be troubled. Perhaps, that is the message for us to be singular-hearted. Be people of the way, being the dream and hope of God for all including those on the margins, as we participate in abundant life while here on earth together. Not only with those of our own group and loved ones, but strangers and those in need.

Therefore, the abundant life is not just for us and those we love, but to be shared with those beyond our circle. Isn't that what Jesus means when he says, *"the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these."*

We can do greater works, not on our own but together, with a single heart, with a unity of purpose. We can live a way of life which brings the dream and hope of God to others so we can all share in the abundant life.

Amen

May the path that you walk
be ever guided by justice and light
By the truth that you stand.
May it show, into the land.
May the words of Christ
disturb you all your life.
The road you've chosen is not easy
– yet, here you stand!
(from the song, The Path, by Jason Mann, adapted)