

## Sermon for 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2018

### John 14:1-14

In Jesus we see the God who enters into the daily life of his people; in our highs and lows our victories, struggles, and defeats. We know what lay ahead for him and because of what he did we know what lies ahead for us also.

In his book, "The I Am God" Woodrow Kroll writes, "Apart from death, there is probably no more sorrowful time than when we move."

He goes on to relate how in 1990 he and part of his family moved from New York to Nebraska to become part of an international ministry called "Back to the Bible."

Some of you may have heard of that ministry.

All but one of his children were going to Nebraska. They were leaving behind Tracey their married daughter.

Woodrow wrote about the day they drove away.

"I will never forget the look on her face as we pulled away. We had left her behind! I have seen sad eyes on a beagle puppy that were not as sad as hers at that moment."

I am sure that most of us here have experienced that kind of loss when someone we loved died or moved away.

If that is true then we can easily grasp how the disciples must have felt as Jesus told them he was going away.

John 14 is a seeming oxymoron. On the one hand Jesus is going away but on the other he will be with us forever.

Jesus says to his friends, "I will never leave you or forsake you". But then he says that where he is going they cannot come at that moment.

Where was he going? Thomas reacts, "No, we don't know, Lord, we have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Perhaps had we been there we would have reacted in a similar fashion.

We of course know now where he is going don't we.

By way of his passion, death, resurrection and Ascension Jesus was going back to heaven to prepare our eternal home.

The wonderful news is that he will come again to get us and take us there.

Jesus wants us to know that our future is secure in his hands.

I believe that as each of us grows older, and perhaps nearer to our departure date from this earth, this news becomes an increasingly great comfort for us.

"I will never leave you", Jesus says.

Seven times in John 14 Jesus makes reference to his abiding presence.

He won't be visibly present but will nevertheless be closer than our very breath.

That is indeed our great hope and comfort when life is not so easy.

In joys and sorrows we are invited to trust that Jesus is always there for us.

In verse four Jesus says "You know the way to where I am going".

Straight talking Thomas basically responds; no we don't Lord.

Jesus responds to Thomas with those well know words (and the second last I Am statement in John's gospel account) "I am the way, the truth and the life."

Friends Jesus is the way. He is the only way to God. No one comes to God except through faith in Jesus.

Apart from Jesus, the bible tells us that God is a consuming fire; utterly unapproachable.

The bible tells us that when God appeared on Mt Sinai he hid Moses in the cleft of a rock and only allowed him a view of his back as he passed by.

The bible tells us we can only approach God through the redeeming grace and mercy of God that was won for us through Jesus death and resurrection.

The hymn writer penned the words, Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide, myself in thee.

Jesus is that Rock. He is the cleft in which we hide.

If the way to God in Eden was closed because of our sin, that way has been opened by a new and more glorious way through Jesus.

We see in this truth that Jesus is our peace. Our world is not a peaceful place.

Since the year 3600 BC Historians have calculated that there have been 14,350 wars.

That doesn't include the wars that go on in families or between friends and neighbours.

Perhaps most of all it is our hearts that cannot seem to find lasting peace.

St Augustine who lived 354 – 430 AD said,

“The heart is restless until it finds rest in Thee.”

Friends, in the midst of turmoil Jesus is the way to peace.

Jesus is also the way to Joy.

Joy is different to happiness. Happiness depends on outward circumstance. Joy comes from a heart at peace with God.

Joy is an abiding sense of contentment, satisfaction and serenity found only in Jesus.

If happiness is a thermometer than Joy is a thermostat.

A thermometer only measure the surrounding temperature.

A Thermostat regulates the temperature.

Joy is not dependent on circumstances it depends on our walk with Jesus.

Joy and peace are ours because we know we know our eternal home is secure.

Joy and peace are ours because we are the friends of God.

Joy and peace are ours because we have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit as our comforter, teacher and counsellor.

Joy and peace are ours because we have access to God through prayer.

Joy and peace are ours because we have not been left as Orphans. Christ's promise is that he is with us always even to the end of the age.

Joy and peace are ours because while Jesus has gone to heaven to prepare our eternal home, he is still with us now.

In Jesus we see the God who enters into the daily life of his people; in our highs and lows our victories, struggles, and defeats. We know what lay ahead for him and because of what he did we know what lies ahead for us also.