



# SERMONS AT SAINT MARK'S

---

THE REV. CANON RICHARD C. WEYLS, COMMUNITY LIFE & SENIOR ASSOCIATE RECTOR

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, MAY 3, 2026

PROVERBS 4:10-18; PSALM 119:25-32; 1 PETER 2:2-10; JOHN 14:1-14

## YOU HAVE A PLACE

***John 14:1-14** [Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 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; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it."]*

Easter is a funny season. Many of us expect to be filled with resurrection joy and hope, knowing in our bones that all experiences of suffering and death lead to new life. That's what our faith teaches us, and I think most of us really believe this. But even

during Easter, our regular lives move on. Yes, it's Easter but our country is still at war, people we love are still getting sick and dying, corruption and injustice are rampant, and our real lives are full of struggle and loss.

I gave a talk on grief this past week as part of our Wisdom School. As a group we learned that life is full of change, and with change comes loss. Experiencing grief is what it means to be human, and grief is a normal and natural human response to any kind of loss. That's right, grief is our response to loss, and because of constant change, our lives are full of loss. So, I find it providential that we hear this Gospel today. Yes, it's Easter, but the church gives us this Gospel that's a bit grim and somber. Jesus has just finished a last supper with his disciples. He has washed their feet, given them a new commandment, predicted Peter's denial, foretold Judas's betrayal, and told his friends that he is about to leave them. "Where I am going," he says, "you cannot follow now."

I had a similar thought when I was giving my talk on grief this past Wednesday. I presented the most updated theories on grief and found one researcher who said that we are constitutionally hardwired to survive grief. That the intense emotions we feel when we experience loss make us resilient so that we can survive and move on. But then I thought about losing my spouse and what that might feel like.

If he dies before me, I have no idea what I'd do. I imagine feeling broken and completely lost. It was a very uncomfortable feeling.

"Where I am going you cannot follow now." Ouch. Those words sting and fill me and the bewildered disciples with fear. What is Jesus talking about? How will they survive if he leaves them? Where will they go? What will happen to their cherished plans? Why is everything changing?

Unsurprisingly, the anxious disciples respond to their predicament by demanding certainty. We do that, don't we? Certainty helps us cope with the unknown. Thomas asks Jesus for a roadmap: "How can we know the way?" Philip asks for proof: "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." What they want – what we *all* want, if we're honest, is a clear path. Tell us what to do to get through this and we will do. Give me the stages of grief I must pass through to get over it, and I will do it. Confront the unknown with certainty. Tame the pain of uncertainty with a clear path.

Jesus's response? "Do not let your hearts be troubled." "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "If you know

me, you will know my Father also.” Well, that doesn’t seem very helpful, Jesus. It’s like telling an angry person to calm down or advising a grieving person to “just get over it” and move on with their lives. Jesus gives no roadmap – no master plan – no PowerPoint presentation. He just gives himself. Just the messy, intimate, ever evolving, and often confusing work of relationship. He invites his friends to trust, patience, and vulnerability.

Maybe it feels like a tall order right now, to “not let your heart be troubled.” To trust that you *do* in fact know the way – the quiet, unglamorous, risky, but ultimately life-giving way of Jesus. *But you do know the way.* Like Thomas, like Philip, like Peter, like the others, you know Jesus. If you don’t, read the Gospels, read the Christian scriptures, listen to some sermons, read some beautiful reflections from other Jesus followers. Find Jesus in others. Hang out with Jesus in prayer. You will come to know Jesus. You will know his life. You will know his love. You will even know his death. You will come to know his resurrection. Most importantly, you will know what it is to hunger for

him, to seek him, to listen for him, to hope in him. *You know the way.*

No, the way isn’t what we thought it was going to be. The way is demanding. The way is precarious. The way takes time. But the invitation of this Gospel is still an invitation to confidence. Not because we’re experts at finding God, but because God has always and already found us. With every unknowing we embrace, God finds us one more time.

“In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places,” Jesus tells his sorrowing disciples. Meaning: God is expansive. God is roomy, generous, and hospitable. God can handle your doubts, your fears, your questions and your sins. And God’s offer of belonging extends far beyond the confines of this mortal life. “I go and prepare a place for you,” and for those you have loved and lost. Jesus says, “I go and prepare a place for you” as he looks down at you from the cross. In his suffering, Jesus prepares a place for you from before time began. Jesus, “The Way,” says, “you have a place with me.” You have a place in this church, you have a place at this table, and you have a place with God. ***You have a place.***

A grim setting. Lots of loss. Tons of grief. Real questions. An offer of comfort. The promise of home. The Way.

This is a Gospel for our time. The story – your story, my story, our collective story of this precarious, overwhelming moment in history – will not end in death. Though we

might feel alone and frightened right now, the Way is open before us. We know it. We know Jesus, and because we know Jesus, we know God. The Way will safely bear us home. ***You have a place.*** Do not let your hearts be troubled.



SAINT MARK'S  
EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

*Saint Mark's Cathedral lives in a grounded faith and spirituality; we seek to liberate people for ministry. We are grounded in ancient Christian scripture and tradition while at the same time remaining open to the insight and truth of contemporary life. You'll find Saint Mark's Cathedral actively involved in service and outreach to our community. Together we pray, worship, study the scriptures, and explore the richness of twenty-one centuries of Christian experience. Wherever you are on your journey of faith, you are welcome here!*