

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER [A] [APRIL 28, 2002] (A Sermon by Rev. Ron Friedrich)  
Gospel lesson

JOHN 14:1-12

1. Jesus says, "Don't feel troubled. Believe in God, and believe in ME.
2. In MY Father's house are many rooms. If that wasn't true, then I would tell you, because I am going to prepare a place for you.
3. And happens I leave and prepare a place for you, I will come again and bring you home with ME so that you will be in the same house that I live.
4. You know the way to the place I am going."
5. THOMAS said to Jesus, "Lord, we don't-know the place you are going. How can we know the way?"
6. Jesus answered, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through ME.
7. If you learned to know ME, you will also know MY Father. From now-on you know God and finished seen God."
8. PHILIP said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father; that's enough proof for us."
9. Jesus answered, "I stayed with all of you a long time, and you don't-know ME? PHILIP, if you see ME, you finished seen the Father. Why do you ask to show you the Father?"
10. Do you believe I am in the Father and the Father is in ME? The things I tell you don't come from ME, but the Father living in ME tells you these things.
11. Believe ME; I am in the Father, and the Father is in ME. Or believe ME because of the wonderful works I do.
12. I tell you the truth, if you believe in ME, you will do the same wonderful works I do, and you will do greater things, because I am going to the Father."

sermon

## A REVELATION, A WARNING, A PROMISE

April 28 -- Easter 5-A

Text: John 14:1-6

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2. In MY Father's house are many rooms. If that wasn't true, then I would tell you, because I am going to prepare a place for you.
3. And happens I leave and prepare a place for you, I will come again and bring you home with ME so that you will be in the same house that I live.
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All of us are different... different... different.

Some people are men, some women.

Some people are tall, some short.

Some are black, some white.

Some are young, some old.

But we all have the same two things:

(1) We all were born, and

(2) we all will die.

We now live between those two times: birth and death.

It is easy to think only about life between birth and death, life now.

But Jesus forces us to think about life future, life after death.

We are born, live, die. THEN WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO US??

The world offers many answers, various ideas.

Some people in the world say, "When we die, life ends. Finish. We 'blow-away.' After death, nothing happens. No more life. No heaven. No hell. Nothing."

That idea is not new. Do you know that many Jewish people in Jesus time believed that. Those people named themselves SADDUCEES. You can same that name as "SAD YOU SEE."

They did not believe in heaven.  
 They did not believe in hell.  
 They did not believe in angels.  
 They only “believed in God.” Period.  
 But they rejected everything God said in His Word about life after death.  
 You can understand why Sadducees hated Jesus. He taught much about heaven.  
 He taught much more about hell.

That’s one group, one idea: “We live. We die. That’s all. Finish.”

Other people in the world say, "ALL people will go to heaven. Everyone.”

They say, “Yes, we have heaven, but no hell.”  
 They say, “All people will be saved. Jesus doesn't-matter. You don’t need Jesus.  
 Any religion is fine. All religions are the same.”

That is a very popular idea. Why? We don’t like the idea that  
     God is holy,  
     heaven is holy,  
     and God only lets holy people into heaven.  
 We don’t like that idea, why? Because we are not holy!  
 And we don’t like God to criticize us.

Today that idea is popular in “NEW AGE” religion. Go visit big book stores.  
 Next to the religion books, you will find New Age books for sale. A lot of them!

So what will happen after we die?

Another idea people have, says "No one really knows what will happen after  
 death." That makes sense. Who can really know?

Do you think that maybe GOD KNOWS?

Yes, HE knows what will happen to us.  
 And God tells us what will happen.  
 Either God tells the truth, or God tells a lie. Which?

Today’s Bible lessons give us God’s clear answer.

Today's story happens the night before Jesus died on the Cross. Jesus had the Lord's Supper with His 12 Disciples. He gave them a long teaching, important things He wanted them to remember.

FIRST, Jesus informs us true facts about heaven. Jesus knows! Jesus is Himself God. Heaven is His home. He knows! Jesus can tell us what will happen.

Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many rooms... I am going to prepare a place for you... then I will come again and bring you home with Me, so that you will be with me in the same house with me." A house with many rooms is picture language. But Jesus tells us very clearly that after we die we can have life with God forever! No doubt! No secret!

SECOND, Jesus gives us a big promise about our life after death: "...I will bring you home with Me... You know the way to the place that I am going." Really? Do we really know that way to heaven? Jesus says, "Yes!" Why? Jesus is the way.

Remember we said that

God is holy,  
heaven is holy,  
and God only lets holy people into heaven.

Jesus makes us become holy people.

Jesus takes all our sin,  
all our guilt,  
everything we do wrong,

Jesus accepts responsibility Himself.

Jesus accepts punishment Himself.

Jesus forgives us, and makes us clean.

Yes, in God's holy judgment, Jesus makes us perfect for heaven.

Many false cults teach, "Jesus shows the way." No! Jesus says He Himself IS our way to heaven. If you know Jesus, you already know the way to heaven. That is His promise. No doubt!

Jesus tells us

(1) true INFORMATION about heaven,

(2) a true PROMISE about heaven,

and third, Jesus gives us a WARNING about heaven:

Jesus said that if we don't know Him, then we don't know the only true way to heaven. Notice Jesus very famous words: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

That third part is hard for people to accept. People don't like to think that Jesus is the only way. People want to go to heaven without Jesus. So people hate Jesus. That is the reason people killed Jesus, nailing Him to the cross. But through His death on the cross, that is the way Jesus opened the way for us to go to heaven.

Who can really know what will happen to us after we die?

A person that invented life.

A person that joined our life in a man's body.

A person that died as Savior and came back to life as Lord.

A person named Jesus.

Death can scare us, because we can't see what will happen next.

Death can scare us, because death often comes with sickness, suffering, and pain. But Jesus said, "Don't feel troubled. Believe in God, and believe in ME. In MY Father's house are many rooms.... I am going to prepare a place for you... I will come again and bring you home with ME."

A story:

A long time ago two Christian Missionaries - a husband and wife - served many years in Africa. The time came for them to leave and go back to America and retire. They took a ship to Europe, then another ship to America.

While they crossed the Atlantic Ocean, they found that on the ship was a very famous movie star. When the ship arrived in New York, a large crowd of people were waiting to welcome the movie star. They had signs, and banners, and flags. They made lots of noise.

Then the party left and everyone rode away. The missionary couple stood on the dock alone, with only their suitcases.

The husband was sad. He said to his wife, "We gave our lives serving God in Africa, but no one is here to welcome us home."

The wife wisely answered, "But we are really not-yet Home."