

## **“We Keep Missing the Point”**

**Rev Terrance Jacob on John 14:1-14 at SALC on 5/3/26**

A newly married couple was having problems, so the husband went to see the pastor. He confessed to the pastor that he had done wrong and that his wife was now rejecting him. He wanted the pastor to help with his life and faith. Later the pastor met with the couple and the husband said to his wife, “You know I have changed, give me a chance.” The wife told the pastor, “He has not changed. He says he has, but the proof is in the pudding.” The pastor responded, “Well mam, firstly, the expression is “the proof of the pudding is in the eating!”. That’s the proper English usage. and secondly,.. The wife cut in, “But pastor, who cares about the expression, my husband just won’t change. You are missing the point, pastor!”

We all often miss the point when something significant is being said, right! I’m sure you have stories like that. Hmm “the proof of the pudding is in the eating”. That’s the King’s English. You could have asked him - he was in the US this week. He’ll school you, as he schooled Congress about the Magna Carta, the rule of law and the limitations of the executive branch, even if you are King, King Charles III said. What a diplomat, but I’m missing the point.

Jesus had many examples of people, even those close to him “missing the point”. In the text today, Jesus is telling the disciples not to be troubled. He says that he is going to prepare a place for them. Then he goes on to say, “You know **the way** to the place I am going.” Thomas answers, “Lord we don’t know **where** you are going, how can we know the way?” Jesus had said, “you know the **way**” His point was about the way! Because He is the Way, and all they need is to know Him! Thomas missed that point and

asked about the destination - where are you going? Jesus does not name the destination in his answer, but once again speaks about the Way. "I am the Way the truth and the Life, no one comes to the Father except through me." Thomas you know me, the Way and that's all that matters! We often get caught up in the where. What will it be like in heaven? What does The Revelation and all that mean? Will streets be paved with gold? "Thomas, knowing where does not matter if you are not on the Way. Show me you trust me, by simply following me," says Jesus. I know if I said that, no one will trust or follow me - and please don't - but Jesus is saying that and inviting us to follow him.

How often, we miss the point of who Jesus is. When He is trying to tell us through His Word and Spirit, that we need not be troubled, we are looking for details. "How are you going to solve this big problem troubling me, Jesus? Where is it all going?" Faith simply says, "Believe!" Believe in Jesus, is what the Word says. He is the Way!

Just after the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr was killed and the country was in shock and on the brink of turmoil, his successor Rev Ralph Abernathy proclaimed into this crisis, "I don't know what the future may hold, but I know who holds the future." That helped to center the movement. That assertion can change your life, "I do not know what the future holds, but I know God holds our future."

Was Jesus saying that there was going to be no turmoil, no trouble or panic. Far from that. We know what happened later in the Gospel narrative when He was crucified. Jesus is simply saying, don't be afraid. Believe in me. Trust me. I have your future.

To be fair, I don't blame Thomas for missing the point. Jesus had just told them that he was going to be killed and he was going away. The disciples just had their world shattered, their dreams dashed and their hopes lost. They saw the future torn from them. When that is happening to you, it's hard to focus on Jesus as the Way, the Truth and the Life. We want to know what's the endgame!

Jesus's response is special. He seems to understand Thomas and exercises patience. Since Thomas had missed the point, He makes things plain for him and explains what He meant. We don't know if Thomas then understood. We don't need to know. The question is, "Do we understand what it means to get on the Way?" Leaning into and on Jesus. Our humanness gets in the way. We want to be in control. Faith is the leaning of the whole human self on Jesus.

Jesus does exercise patience, but what if we are stubborn and would not hear? Let's go a little further down in the text today. Jesus goes on to say, **7** If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him." To which Phillip says, **8** "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied."

Then it seems Jesus was not so patient, "Have I been with you all this time, Phillip and you still do not know me?" When Jesus is showing us the way of hope and we continue to miss the point, He may need to be a bit harsh with us to jolt us into reality. Some tough love. He'll smack you upside the head - don't ask me to explain that American English slang' all I know is the smack will get me to sit up and listen.

Phillip was thinking, "I don't care what you say, I don't care if you patiently gave Thomas an explanation. But what about me. I'm not accepting this. You're just making it harder for us to understand, Jesus! You start with, "Don't worry" then "You know the Way" and now you say, "If you've seen me you've seen the Father". Jesus, do you know how I am feeling? Things are getting more complicated for me, and you are playing word games and messing with my mind! Where is God? He too was missing the point. Jesus was saying, "I am God!" If you have seen me, you've seen God!"

When we start doubting the existence of God and in our own way say, "Show me God, so I can believe.", we may need to be set straight in a tough love kind of way. In a way that gets to our core. Like: "Do we really believe the Creed we say each week, yet some in the church still ask if God is real?" And Jesus says, "Have I been with you all this time and you still do not know me?"

So, if you are like Thomas today - missing the point - hear Jesus say, I am the way. And if we are like Phillip, even for a moment wanting to see God before you believe, and also missing the point that Jesus is God, hear Jesus say, "I am who I am! I am love, so I love you no matter what!" "Stop missing the point and come over here," says Jesus, "let me give you a hug and we'll walk together!" Sisters and Brothers, let's trust the Way, only the way. Not our intelligence, not our knowledge, not our wealth, not our government, our party, our kin or our own agenda. Jesus will not be like the pastor and correct your grammar. Come as you are. Trust Him. He loves you, and love never fails! Amen.