



Hear the Word

from Pastor Sara H.S. Yoos

Gather... Encourage... Equip... Send...

Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 14, 2017

John 14:1-14

Alex's wedding:

- Bike from church to reception – except me. I drove!
- All started out fine. I followed close behind the caravan of bikes, watching pedestrians stop and wave – and other drivers honk in celebration.
- But then we got to downtown Des Moines. I lost the bikes on a one-way street.
- Didn't know where the reception was... I was *at my brother's wedding*. I was supposed to be with the wedding party the whole time – and I didn't really foresee a scenario where I wasn't surrounded by a group of people.
- No smartphone – but I did have a phone, so I took it out and started calling everyone – my brother, sister-in-law, parents... no one answered.

So there I was, stranded on the shoulder of some road in the middle of Des Moines, Iowa.

Needless to say, I can identify a lot with the disciples in today's gospel.

Jesus just had his last supper with them. He's saying goodbye - that he will only be with them a little while longer. He's leaving them to go to his Father's house. But not to worry; they're all invited to come join him there later.

And Thomas, who *never wants to miss out on a good thing* is like, "Cool cool. But can you like, tell us the address so we don't end up lost?"

The disciples' panic here *over not knowing the way* is coupled with the panic of *having just been told that Jesus will die*.

The invincible Messiah they expected to be *with them forever* was going to leave them.

And the disciples start to flounder, wondering how to go on without him.

They are feeling lost and directionless.

TV show *This is Us*.

- The storyline follows a family of triplets, and it alternates between their lives growing up and the present day as adults. But the main difference between the past and the present is that somewhere in between, their dad dies.

- This super-dad / super-husband, is central in the flashbacks – in the lives of the triplets as they grow up. So much so that his absence is strikingly noticeable in the present. In fact, the triplets as adults, all have significant insecurities and issues that they wrestle with. Questions of belonging, beauty, and worthiness.

Do I even belong in this family?

Am I wanted?

Am I worthy?

Am I loved?

They are wandering around adulthood, completely lost, because the one who had answered all of these questions for them was no longer with them.

In one episode, Kevin (who is an actor) is nervous before a big performance. So he goes from family member to family member trying to calm his anxiety. Trying to answer those questions.

Am I wanted?

Am I worthy?

Am I loved?

Finally, one of the characters suggests Kevin talk to his dad - who made everyone feel wanted, worthy, and loved. And just because he was dead didn't mean Kevin couldn't still turn to his father to know that he is valued.

Kevin is then told how similar he is to his father. He has "so much of his father inside of him" that he keeps him alive whenever he acts the way his father would.

These essential questions are the same ones the disciples ask Jesus.

And Jesus' answers are similar to the answers Kevin receives:

Do not be troubled. Even though I'm going to be with my Father, talk to me. I'll do whatever you ask in my name. Just as my Father is in me, I am in him.

A lot of people have interpreted Jesus' saying "I am the way, the truth, and the life," like he is making a major theological claim about how salvation works – but consider the setting: He's just told his dearest friends he is going to die. They are all devastated. He's trying to *comfort* them. It's a promise: **"I am all you need. Where I am, there you will be also."**

We, like the disciples, might look to Jesus and say "That all sounds great – but we're still lost! We don't know where to find you. Tell us so we can go there too." Because when things get hard, and we feel lost, we need to know how to get to the place where everything is going to be okay again.

When Jesus says here "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father," this echoes the very beginning of John's gospel, John 1:18 where it is written "No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is *in the bosom of the Father*, who has made him known."

Jesus came from the bosom of the Father and is now returning there.... To God's bosom.

That's where we all belong.

The same bosom that the tender shepherd carries his sheep in.

The same bosom that mothers nourish their children with.

The bosom that we rest our heads on when we are exhausted and sick.

The bosom that holds us while we sleep.

The bosom that we cling to when we are scared, and that we turn to for comfort.

There is room in God's bosom for us.

When we feel lost, whether we are wandering the streets of Des Moines or navigating life after the loss of a loved one we never expected to live without, Jesus tell us "wherever you are, there I will be also."

There may be times when the future is uncertain and we find ourselves wandering in search of the way forward. But we are not lost and directionless and alone.

We are in *the bosom of God*. Held close to the very heart of God. Fed by the love, and forgiveness, and grace that is ours through Jesus Christ.

And here, in the bosom of God, we have the comfort and assurance...

We are wanted.

We are worthy.

We are loved.