

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

(JOHN 14.1-10)

JESUS, WHO IS THE **WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE**, GIVES US THE MOST COMFORTING WORDS OF COUNSEL WHEN HE SAYS, **LET NOT YOUR HEARTS BE TROUBLED. BELIEVE IN GOD; BELIEVE ALSO IN ME.** IN THOSE BRIEF LINES, JESUS IS TELLING US THAT **HE AND THE FATHER ARE ONE** (JOHN 10.30) AND THAT ALL OUR CONFIDENCE CAN BE PLACED IN THE FATHER AND THE SON.. THIS IS OUR FAITH. WE ARE NOT TO BE TROUBLED WITH WORRY. WORRY CAN BE A BIG PROBLEM, EVEN FOR CHRISTIANS. MY MOTHER WAS A WORRYWART FOR MANY YEARS UNTIL IN HER OLDER AGE SHE FINALLY GAVE UP ON WORRYING AND WAS AT PEACE WITH HERSELF AND WITH THE LORD. (WE ALL REMEMBER OUR MOTHERS WHETHER HERE WITH US OR IN HEAVEN).

NOW THE COMFORT OF OUR LORD CONTINUES IN WAYS THAT GRANT

US THE BLESSED ASSURANCE: **IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE 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, THAT WHERE I AM YOU MAY BE ALSO.** FROM THESE WORDS YOU CAN SEE THAT IT IS NOT WITH PHILOSOPHICAL LANGUAGE THAT JESUS SPEAKS TO US ABOUT HEAVEN BUT WITH COMMON, DOMESTIC WORDS, WORDS OF THE HOUSEHOLD, WORDS OF THE HOME—HOME WHERE THE HEART IS. SOME ARTIST ONCE PAINTED A PICTURE OF JESUS SITTING AT THE TABLE WITH A FAMILY AND HAVING LUNCH WITH THEM: THAT KIND OF HOME. WE WHO THROUGH OUR GIFT OF FAITH IN JESUS HAVE RECEIVED THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN WILL ALSO HAVE RECEIVED AN ETERNAL HOME, "A HEARTY WELCOME INTO HIS HEAVEN (WILCH). JESUS HAD NO OTHER PLACE

IN THE INN (AFTER HIS BIRTH IN BETHLEHEM) SO THAT WE MAY HAVE MANY DWELLING PLACES IN THE HEAVENS" (AMBROSE). AS ONE CHRISTIAN TEACHER SAID, "THESE DWELLING PLACES HE WILL NOT GIVE TO TRAVELERS BUT TO CITIZENS—CITIZENS OF HEAVEN—TO ABIDE FOR EVERLASTING LIFE" (AUGUSTINE). THIS HEAVEN PREPARED FOR US BY JESUS HIMSELF IS A TRUE HOME, A HOUSE TO LIVE IN FOREVER WHICH IS BEYOND BEAUTY. IT IS THE HOUSE OF GOD "WHERE HE MANIFESTS HIMSELF IN HIS FULL LIGHT TO THE ELECT [OURSELVES] AND TO THE HOLY ANGELS" (GERHARD). IN THIS HOUSE—THIS MANSION, THIS DWELLING PLACE, THIS HAVEN OF JOY, WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL IT (REVELATION CALLS IT THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH)—WE WILL EXPERIENCE "THE ENVIRONMENT, THE CONDITIONS FOR HIS GLORIFIED HUMANITY" BESTOWED ON US BY HIM (LEWIS). ANY WISH WE MIGHT HAVE HAD

FOR A BEAUTIFUL ESTATE, OR MANOR, A CHATEAU IN THE ALPS "IS GONE AWAY, AND NOW WE ONLY WANT OUR FATHER'S HOME" (NOVALIS).

THAT PLACE JESUS HAS PREPARED FOR US. THAT IS HIS PROMISE, AND JESUS, BEING MOST HOLY AND JUST, NEVER BREAKS A PROMISE. WE HUMANS ARE VERY GOOD AT DOING THAT, EVEN AS CHILDREN WHO SAY THEY WILL BEHAVE AND THEN DO BAD THINGS. HEAVEN IS PROMISED, THAT ETERNAL PLACE OF "TIDINGS OF COMFORT AND JOY." IT IS PREPARED FOR US IN ADVANCE. AND THEN AT JUST THE RIGHT TIME HE WILL RETURN TO US TO TAKE US THERE WHERE HE HIMSELF DWELLS SO THAT OUR LOVING GOD WILL LOVE US FOREVER. JUST THINK ABOUT THAT; THINK ABOUT IT EVERY DAY AND NEVER FORGET IT. A CHRISTIAN WRITER (C.S LEWIS) ONCE SAID THAT WE CHRISTIANS DON'T THINK ABOUT HEAVEN ENOUGH, SO IMMERSSED 2

WE ARE IN THE PLEASURES OF THE WORLD WHICH ARE ANYTHING BUT EVERLASTING. IT IS A SINFUL THING TO TELL SOMEONE IN ANGER TO GO TO HELL. WHAT WE SHOULD INSTEAD IS "GO TO HEAVEN!"

IT IS AS IF JESUS SAYS, "LITTLE HUMAN BEING SAVED BY MY BLOOD, HOW DO I LOVE YOU AND HOW DO I WANT YOU TO BE WITH ME FOR ALL ETERNITY WITH ME IN MY HOME." ONE OF THE APOSTLES ALWAYS HAD A QUESTION MARK ON HIS HEAD. YOU SEE THAT IN THE COMICS, DON'T YOU: SOMEONE WITH A QUESTION MARK ON HIS HEAD TO DISPLAY HIS CONFUSION. WELL, IN THE BIBLE THAT WAS THE APOSTLE THOMAS. HE SAID TO JESUS, **LORD, WE DO NOT KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING. HOW CAN WE KNOW THE WAY?** HE HAD THAT QUESTION MARK ON HIS HEAD TOO WHEN HE HAD ASKED TO SEE THE WOUNDS IN JESUS' HANDS. WELL, JESUS ANSWERED HIM JUST AS HE DID WHEN HE WAS LOOKING FOR

PROOF OF HIS RESURRECTION. THIS TIME HE HOLD HIM DIRECTLY: **I AM THE WAY, AND THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE. NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH ME.** THAT'S THE WAY TO HEAVEN: THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS WHO DIED FOR YOUR SINS. JESUS HAD SAID EARLIER ALREADY **I AND THE FATHER ARE ONE** (JOHN 10.30)

THE APOSTLES WERE ALL LIKE US. THEY JUST COULDN'T COMPREHEND THE EVERLASTING, UNCHANGEABLE ENORMITY OF GOD. ANOTHER APOSTLE, PHILIP, ALSO DISPLAYED THIS PROBLEM. HE BELIEVED THAT HE WAS HEADED FOR ETERNAL LIFE IN HEAVEN, BUT HE DIDN'T KNOW THE WAY AS IF HE FIGURED HE NEEDED A ROAD MAP. **SHOW US THE FATHER,** HE SAID, ALMOST IN DESPERATION. JESUS SAID, **DO YOU NOT BELIEVE THAT I AM IN THE FATHER AND THE FATHER IS IN ME?** PHILIP WANTED A ROAD MAP, AND HRE RECEIVED IT. IT WAS SO SIMPLE, 3

SO RIGHT THERE IN THE OPEN. IT WAS JESUS HIMSELF. BELIEVE IN HIM, AND YOU ARE ON THE ROAD TO HEAVEN.

THAT WE WILL GO TO HEAVEN, TO GOD'S HOME, IS REALLY NOTHING NEW. THAT MESSAGE HAS BEEN FOUND WAY BACK IN THE OLD TESTAMENT ALREADY. READ LEVITICUS: **I WILL MAKE MY DWELLING AMONG YOU, AND MY SOUL WILL NOT ABHOR YOU. AND I WILL WALK AMONG YOU AND WILL BE YOUR GOD, AND YOU SHALL BE MY PEOPLE** (26.11-12). READ EZEKIEL: **MY DWELLING PLACE SHALL BE WITH THEM, AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE** (37.27). YES, MY FRIENDS, THE BIBLE—THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS—ARE ONE BOOK, AND THOSE BOOKS PROCLAIM JESUS CHRIST AS LORD AND SAVIOR. SO KEEP THE FAITH IN THE **WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE**. AMEN.