

Message for Sunday, May 3, 2026

Communion

Scripture: John 14:1-14

### **Welcome**

Announcements: Giving Options-Special Offering for May Verde Valley Sanctuary; Scholarship applications are due by June 1. Learn to Knit Crochet Class Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup> at 10AM in the Atrium. Celebration of Life service for Tom Spring will be on Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup> at 11AM.

### **Fellowship of Love**

#### **Song**

#### **Call to Worship**

L: Come to Christ, our cornerstone.

**P: Christ has called us here.**

L: Trust in God, our firm foundation.

**P: God is with us here.**

L: Rest in the Spirit, our peace beyond peace.

**P: May the Spirit guide our way.**

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#### **Unison Prayer**

**Faithful God, you are our refuge and our strength, a mighty fortress in a world of chaos and turmoil.**

**Protect us, but also encourage us to be brave.**

**Strengthen us to face this world and to make it a better place.**

**Inspire our worship, that in this time we may deepen our faith and place our trust in you. Amen.**

#### **Offering/Song**

**Scripture: John 14:1-14 NRSV**

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“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe<sup>[a]</sup> in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> 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? <sup>[b]</sup> <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> And you know the way to the place where I am going.” <sup>[c]</sup> <sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” <sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you know me, you will know<sup>[d]</sup> my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

<sup>8</sup> Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” <sup>9</sup> 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’? <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, but if you do not, then believe<sup>[e]</sup> because of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> If in my name you ask me<sup>[f]</sup> for anything, I will do it.

### **Meditation:**

Last week we delved with a passage of John where I walked you all through it and picked it apart. If you’ve forgotten or weren’t here the purpose of that was to see how we can closely look at a passage and see how what we’ve been taught it says may not be the only way to understand the passage. In that message I quoted part of this passage we are dealing with today, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” When we were dissecting the last set of verses I was talking about how the verses we were reading don’t necessarily mean confession in Christ, or salvation.

Well, here we are. I might even be inclined to say, “out of the frying pan and into the fire,” with this passage. We need to look at what this passage is intending to do before we look at how it’s been used. So, what is the point of this section of verses? I’ve preached these words many times at funerals, they have been quoted and used as verses of comfort. Christ has prepared a place for you, and when you

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are no longer here you are with him and that in turn means you are with God. Guess what? That is the point of these verses.

These verses are part of Jesus' end of life discourse. Where he is giving final instructions to the disciples on how to live their lives and what to believe. In this pericope he points to the fact that through him we have been brought into a special relationship with God. This is a reminder of comfort in the face of uncertainty and fear. Both Philip and Thomas voice this. Both are concerned; they have anxiety about what is ahead. I think all of us do. Yes we may feel comfort from God about eternal life, but we can recall times of feeling anxiety, some of you still have anxiety about it. Jesus reminds both of these disciples and us in turn that he is there to provide comfort and to affirm our relationship with God.

The key to understanding this passage in this manner is to remember who the audience is. The audience is the disciples. It is believers. Here let's put it another way, have you ever comforted your kids or someone in your family that you love them no matter what? Why did they need that comfort? Did they not believe you would love them? They probably did or said something they thought hurt you or would exclude them from your love. Instead, you offer love, you say I love you no matter what. Now walk up to a stranger in Fry's grocery store and say, "I love you." If they don't run you out of the store maybe then you'll be able to explain yourself.

We need that comfort sometimes. We need to be reminded that we are in a special relationship. We need this in our intimate relationships, we need it in our families, and we need it in our faith. That is what is offered here in these verses. Often these verses are turned around to mean something else though. When Jesus says, "no one comes to the father except through me," we've taken these verses and run towards saying you need to have a confession of faith. There are theological jumps happening here. We are jumping to the idea that there is something we need to do or we need to tell others to do. Instead of seeing this statement where it is, as a reminder that you have a relationship with Christ and he has a relationship with God. It's a comfort not a barrier.

I think when we interpret scripture we often come to it with so many barriers that we forget that Jesus came to remove the barriers. What if we offered people comfort and love? Instead of offering them a tough choice. What if we reminded people that everything Christ has done was done for them out of love

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and that he invites us into a relationship not based on threats of eternal punishment but based on comfort and love. I really do wonder if we would all be in a better place if we could remember and even ask these questions of ourselves. Amen.

### **Communion Liturgy**

#### **THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

#### **Communion Liturgy**

#### **UMH pp. 13-16**

L: The Lord be with you.

**P: And also with you.**

L: Lift up your hearts.

**P: We lift them up to the Lord.**

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**P: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

L: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**P: Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

L: Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

L: On the night in which he gave himself up for us he took bread gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

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L: When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

L: And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**P: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

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L: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

L: By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.

**P: Amen.**

**Communion**

**Benediction**