

The Way I Am Going! The Truth I am Telling! The Life I Am Living!
Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16
John 14:1-14

She was running late!

She'd driven from her rural farm to a big city to see her daughter who was about to have life threatening surgery.

The towering hospital looked like a big city too—and parking garage was nearly full.

She had to drive all the way to the top to find a space.

Upon reaching the reception area, she realized she had no idea how to find the surgery preparation area where her daughter was only a few minutes from being taken to the operating room.

Frantically, she asked for directions!

The person at the desk simply stepped out from behind the desk and said,

“Come with me. I'll take you there.”

Later, after the hours long surgery, the woman said, *“In the state of mind I was in, it was as though Jesus had stepped out of the shadows and walked along those hallways with me, talking with me and comforting me every step of the way.”*

What a difference there is between being told the way to go—and being shown the way to go—by someone who already knows the way.

But isn't that the heart of what it means to affirm that Jesus is— in your life—the Way?

I was driving a car in another country

We came to a small town where, as you entered town, the numbered highway route signs ended.

And all the street signs were posted, naturally, in their national language. I had no idea how to go through the town and beyond. Then a car pulled up alongside, the driver rolled down the window. As best as I could, I blurted out the name of my destination. He waved to follow, then led me on a twisting and turning, up and down route to the road leading out of the other side of town.

When you can't get **there** from **here**, you need more than directions. You need a personal guide!

So in John's gospel, when Jesus said, "*I am the way.*", he was describing a compelling spiritual experience that many of us can confirm in our own lives:

It takes a Person to show you the way to God.

It takes a person saying, "*Let's try the way I am going.*" to take you there.

Isn't there an analogy to this idea amidst the **consternation** of the apocalyptic virus **situation!**

The way to **find** our way—is to **take** the way Dr Fauci is taking.

The way to find our way is to take the way Kansas City's Health Director Dr. Rex Archer is taking!

The way to find our way is to take the way Dr. Lee Norman in Kansas is taking!

The way to find the way here at Westport Presbyterian is to take the way Dr Brooke Sweeney, our health safety team leader, is taking.

And if you are wondering when it is really safe out there, pay attention to when the hospitals are allowing visitors. That will tell you when it's becoming safe.

People who know the way!

And who—themselves!—are taking the way they know.

And if they are not sure, wait until they understand the way we need to go.....

They aren't THE way.

It's the way they are going that is the Way!

It's the same in the spiritual realm.

Jesus wasn't so egotistical or narcissistic to think he was the...only...way.

Anyone of any faith identity, or no faith identity at all, can take the way Jesus is taking.

It doesn't matter if you are a Christian or a Jew, a Buddhist, a Hindu, Muslim, Haudenosaunee, Navajo, a seeker, a doubter, an atheist, a none,

Anyone!—taking the way of mercy and generosity that Jesus is taking—is taking the way.

Anybody!—taking the way of compassion and forgiveness that Jesus is taking—Is taking the way.

Our faith is not an EXclusive local, social club.

Our faith is an INclusive global community.

A woman in Africa explained this better than I can.

Here is her answer as to why she found God through the Jesus way, yet was open and welcoming to others finding God in other ways.

“I have a mother.” She said.

“She is my mother.

My only mother.”

I have experienced motherhood and being mothered through my one mother.

However, there are other mothers.

And many other people are experiencing motherhood and being mothered through their mother.....Their only mother.

And there are many, many mothers through which motherhood may be found.

The way I am taking....that is the way!

Jesus also said, “I am the truth.”

Again, he is the truth in the sense that he is telling the truth.

And his basic truthful message was, “Pick up your cross & follow me.”

What does that mean today?

The truth is that we are in the midst of a global tragedy---**AND**—we must make something of it.

This is a cross! And we must turn it into power!

It is a global crucifixion, and we must look to God to show us a way to global resurrection.

You may think that is impossible, but let me give you two illustrations of what I mean.

A few weeks ago, there was a terrible mass shooting in Nova Scotia, Canada. Twenty two people were killed.

The same darkness descends again and again.

But instead of doing nothing—as our government has for years—done nothing—Prime Minister Justin Trudeau soon announced.

“Today we are closing the market for military grade assault weapons in Canada. These weapons were designed for one purpose only, to kill the largest number of people in the shortest amount of time. There is no use and no place for

such weapons in Canada... So, effective immediately, it is no longer permitted to buy, sell, transport, import, or use military grade assault weapons in this country.

Bill Blair, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, followed Mr. Trudeau's announcement with his own remarks. According to him, the banned guns are not designed for hunting or sport shooting, but are "*guns that were designed for soldiers to kill other soldiers...guns that belong on a battlefield and not on our streets.*"

And I hear Jesus saying, "*Pick up your cross and follow me.*"

This pandemic is a cross! And we have no choice but to turn it into power!

It's a crucifixion, and we must look to God to show us a way to resurrection.

A 2nd illustration of this truth is a story many of you are familiar with, and ironically, also comes from Canada, via the great mystic, minister and writer, Howard Thurman.

After traveling in Canada, Thurman wrote a Canadian forest service agent to ask about the factuality of an observation he had made concerning the jack pine which abounds in British Columbia.

Thurman was always intrigued by trees. As a boy in Florida, he found refuge from the horrors of racial segregation by going out in the woods, sitting under and talking to an oak tree.

"I could reach down in the quiet places of my spirit, take out my bruises and my joys, unfold them, and talk about them. I could talk aloud to the oak tree."

The agent replied to Thurman's inquiry about the Canadian trees this way: "You are correct that the jack pine cones require heat to release the seed from the cone. The cones often remain closed for years, the seeds retaining their viability.

In the interior of the province, the cones which have dropped to the ground will open partly with the help of the sun's heat. However the establishment of the

majority of our jack pine stands undoubtedly has been established following forest fires. Seldom do the cones release their seed while on the tree.”

Thurman then commented: The seed of the jack pine will not be given up unless the cone itself is subjected to sustained and concentrated heat. The forest fire sweeps all before it, and there remains but the charred reminders of a former growth and a former beauty.

It is then in the midst of the ashes that the secret of the cone is exposed. The tender seed finds the stirrings of life deep within itself—and what is deepest in the seed reaches out to what is deepest in life—the result? A tender shoot, gentle roots, until, at last, there stands straight against the sky the majestic glory of the jack pine.

It is not too far afield to suggest that there are things deep within the human spirit that are firmly imbedded, dormant, latent and inactive....But there they remain until our lives are swept by the forest fire:

It may be some mindless tragedy, some violent disclosure of human depravity or some moment of agony in which the whole country or nation may be involved.

The experience releases something that has been locked up within all through the years.

If it be something that calls to the deepest things in life, we may, like the jack pine, grow tall and straight against the sky!”

“A moment of agony in which the whole world may be involved....”

If it be something that calls to the deepest things in life we may, like the jack pine, grow tall and straight against the sky.”

Here is the truth we must be telling each other.

And the way we will be walking with each other.

Every day. One day at a time. *(use rattle)*

We make the way by walking

There is no one way.

The way is made by walking.

**But if you try the way Jesus is walking.
You may find a wonderful way made just for you.**

Rev Scott Myers

Westport Presbyterian Church

May 17, 2020 during Covid-19 pandemic