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## *Which Way Is Jesus' House?*

John 14:1-7

Over the last few days I've had to break the news about my dad to many people. Sometimes it's been easier, although it's never been easy. But the hardest was to tell Evelyn, my two-year old daughter. Evelyn loved Granda. Granda played Duplo with her, Granda danced with her, Granda her took her out for ice-cream. She loved Granda. So how do you tell a two year old that her Granda is gone?

Well, Rachel and I said to her: 'Evelyn, when we go back to England, and we go to Nanny's house, Granda won't be there. Granda's gone to Jesus' house. And Jesus' house has lots of rooms. One day, you can go there too, when you're much older. And mommy can go there, and daddy, and Nanny, and Aunty Esther. But Granda has gone there now.'

The passage that Trevor just read comes from Jesus' last night with his 12 closest friends—his disciples. They were eating their last meal together—we call it the Last Supper. And as Jesus is speaking to them, he drops some difficult news: in a very little while Jesus is going somewhere, and the disciples cannot come. Obviously the disciples are worried; they've spent 3 years with Jesus and they believe he is God's chosen king to reign over their nation. So where is Jesus going? That's when Jesus says this:

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. 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. And you know the way to where I am going." (John 14:1-4 ESV)

Jesus says to his disciples: 'I am leaving. I am going to my Father's house. My Father's house has lots of rooms. And I'm going there to get the rooms ready so you can come too. And you don't need to worry, because I'm going to come back and get you and bring you to my Father's house so you can be with me. You know the way I am going, so don't worry.'

When we drive with Evelyn in the car she loves to know where we are going. Over time, Rachel has begun to draw maps for her so she can follow along, and we tell her: 'We're turning left; we're turning right.' Evelyn's got to a point now that when we are driving she will say: 'Where is our house?' Or, 'Where is Cyndi's house?' And

we tell her: 'We need to go straight here, then turn right, then turn left and then we are there.'

So it was no surprise that two days after we told her that Granda had gone to Jesus' house she asked Rachel: 'Where is Jesus' house? Is it left or is it right?' And when we turn to this passage we realize that one of Jesus' disciples, Thomas, was asking the very same question. He says: "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" (John 14:5) 'Jesus, we don't know where your father's house is. How do we get there?' Thomas is asking the very same question as Evelyn. 'Where is Jesus' house? Is it left or is it right?'

It's a question we all want to know the answer to; we all want to know what will happen when we die. Nothing? Something? Something good? Something bad? And if it is something good, something we might call heaven, we want to know: how do I get there? Do I have to be good? Do I have to do more right than wrong? Do I need a certain feeling in my chest to know I'm going there? Do I need to believe a certain thing? How do I get there?

We all ask this question. Where do I go when I die? How do I get there? And in light of the suddenness of my dad's passing, I think it's a question we all need to ask, because we just don't know how long we have left. Evelyn is asking it: 'Where is Jesus' house? Is it left or is it right?' And Thomas in our passage is asking it: 'How can we know the way if we don't know where you are going?'

Listen to Jesus' response. 'Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" (John 14:6 ESV) "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Jesus' answer to this question is radical. Jesus says: The way to my Father's house is not through a certain set of beliefs, a cognitive truth. The way to my father's house is not about a certain set of deeds, a certain way of life lived. And it's not about a certain feeling: 'this feels like the right way.' Jesus says it's not about those things, it's about a person. Jesus says, 'I am the way.' The way is not a set of directions, a set of actions, a feeling that 'this seems like a good way.' No. Jesus says, 'The way is a person. The way is found by journeying with a person. Following them... allowing them to lead you. And that person is me: Jesus.'

My dad first met this person... my dad first met Jesus in 1992. And for the next 24 years Jesus directed his life. Every decision that he made he asked Jesus what to do. He treated life like it was a journey where Jesus was taking the lead. He didn't rely on his own thinking, or feeling, or philosophy... he relied upon Jesus. Sometimes it made little to no sense at the time, but he followed nevertheless.

I look back on a period of time when I was in primary school. Dad was out of work for almost 2 years. He felt Jesus was leading him to be still... to wait. Obviously, we struggled financially, but we never lost our home, and we never ran out of food. But that isn't what I remember from that time. What I remember is that for two years, I

would come home from school every day and my dad would be there. My dad would play with me, he would play Lego with me, he would play football with me, he would take walks with me. And for two years I had a father who was wholly present. At the time it might have seemed ridiculous to my dad, to my mom, to everyone around us that he wasn't even looking for a job. But as I look back now, I see that I got something other kids didn't: time with my dad. And as I stand here today, aged 27, and know that I will never get any more time with my dad in this life, I am so thankful that Jesus led him to be still for those 2 years.