

5 Easter A—April 20, 2008
John 14:1-14
The Rev. David Wilt

The first part of the Gospel today is probably as familiar a passage as is found in the Bible. It is read at the majority of funeral services. Its words are a reassurance of all of the promises of eternity that Christ has given us. For Christ it may have been the culmination of his teachings to his disciples.

And yet, two of the disciples still seem to flounder in darkness. Thomas says, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" To which Jesus answers, "I am the way." Philip get more specific and perhaps even denser, "Lord show us the Father and we will be satisfied." Take away all of the mystery. Remove all of our need for searching. And Jesus replies, "Have I been with you all this time Philip, and you still do not know me. The Father and I are one.

Then he adds, "Very truly I tell you, the one who believes in me will do the works that I do, and in fact will do greater works than these."

The power to change the world lies in that one phrase! If we believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, we cannot be satisfied with the world as it is today.

I did a little traveling this week. In fact, in this short span of a week, I visited two worlds, and in doing so never

left Palm Beach County. And I dare say many people visit many different worlds every week and never leave the county.

On Tuesday evening Sandy and I went to Bethesda By the Sea, in Palm Beach, to hear our Presiding Bishop Katherine. Beautifully done, perfect liturgy, wonderful reception. In a word, sophistication.

But, even in that setting Bishop Katherine could not help but talk about the fact that there are other worlds out there. Worlds ravaged by war, famine, and disease. Worlds living in starvation and drought.

Then yesterday I visited my second world of the week. A group of us went gleaning not more than an hour from here. Now for those of you who may not know what gleaning is and until yesterday I really didn't know either. Words kept coming up in people's explanations; snakes, mud, ants, sunburn, and dehydration. I always thought of gleaning as coming to an awareness—and I guess it really does mean that. But, in the sense in which we did it, gleaning means going through the fields, row by row, and manually picking the crops that the machine pickers leave behind. This is sometimes estimated at 20% of the crop. And this food is taken to feed the needy, the hungry, the destitute.

We gleaned for three hours--plenty of time to get the feel of it. But my thoughts went to those who spend 10-12 hours a day in the fields. My thoughts went to those who, if they were the lucky ones would soon have some of this gleaned food on the table.

And my thoughts turned to the different worlds we live in:

**From South Beach over the causeway to Overtown
From Palm Beach over the waterway to Belle Glade
From Singer Island to St. George's soup kitchen
Different worlds separated only by miles.**

And my thoughts went to Thomas, "How do we know the Way?"

And my thoughts went to Philip, "Make it specific, show us exactly what the answer is"

And my thoughts went to Jesus' reply, "Very truly I tell you, the one who Believes in me will do the works that I do, and in Fact will do greater works than these."

**The power to change the world lies in that one phrase!
If we believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God we cannot be satisfied with the world as it is today.**

**Because by his actions he fed the hungry
By his example all were treated like precious children of
God**

By his touch people were healed

By his grace people were forgiven

**By his life, all people can come to some expectation of
A better life.**

Part of the responsibility of being a follower of Jesus Christ is to pay attention to those things around us that would have immediately drawn Jesus attention. Part of our responsibility of being a follower of Jesus Christ is to not get to the end of our journey and still not have recognized that the one along the road with us throughout the journey was the Son Of God.

For a universe under one loving and caring God there are far too many worlds. World's that we can't ever imagine wanting to be part of yet through circumstances may find ourselves in the middle of: Race, ethnicity, race are some. Broken Families, loss of jobs and income from profit driven reduction of forces, foreclosures, savings draining illnesses are others.

Countless circumstances, countless worlds. Worlds that we, through our generosity and compassion can help those in those worlds find a bit of comfort, a meal, a ray of hope. Worlds, that we through our actions, can help those in those worlds feel a connectedness, a oneness through us, a oneness with Christ.

The answers are complicated. The answers are not always specific and clear. But when we follow the examples

of the Christ who lived the examples, then the works that we do will be greater than the One who teaches us.

And we will change the world, one world at a time, into one world, into one body in Christ.

That is Christ's promise to us.