

# FIX YOUR EYES

## Introduction

*There is plenty to distract when life is “normal.” In this moment, we’re still distracted. We’re distracted by a relatively unknown virus, by adjusting to an altered way of life (if only for a short time), by talking about life and death more often, by financial uncertainties, by a constant barrage of ever-changing and often conflicting information. What can we do to remain calm, grounded, and at peace? Listen to Jesus.*

## Devotion

**John 14:1-6 – “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life.”**

It is the night of Jesus’ betrayal. It is the night on which he has instituted that most precious of gifts, the Sacrament of his body and blood. It is the night on which he has made one precious promise after another about the gifts he will soon win for them through his holy passion. He has told them often of that coming suffering and the resurrection that will follow it. . . . Surely by now the disciples understand what he is doing and why. Surely by now they are prepared to face down all the temptations to doubt and despair that might afflict lesser men in the hours of Jesus’ impending suffering and death.

But no! They have heard everything and it seems they have understood almost nothing! In the face of some of the most beautiful words in the Bible, some of the most comforting and reassuring words that Jesus ever spoke, what does Jesus get for a response? Thomas speaks for them all; his response is, “Huh? We don’t know what you’re talking about!”

How often have you felt like Thomas? I have heard a hundred or a thousand sermons. I have read some, much, most, all of the Bible. And still: Huh?! So often I just don’t get it! How can God permit such suffering in the world? How can he allow me to suffer so often and so much? How come he didn’t prevent this and then that from happening? He says he is going to prepare a place for me and that, therefore, my heart should not be troubled. But I am troubled, afraid of what I see around me, even in me. I just don’t get it. I don’t understand half of my life. And there are doctrines in the Bible that sometimes just don’t make sense to me. I repent of my sins. But my temptations don’t go away. I get so tired of how weak I am and how foolish.

With Thomas we cry out, “Lord, I don’t know where you are going. I don’t see how you are leading me to the dwelling place of which you speak.” . . .

Oh, the incomparable love and patience of Jesus! On this night of all nights, when it would have been nice if the disciples had shown him some understanding, at least a little bit of sympathy for what he was about to endure, what does he get instead? Basically a confession that, for the most part, what he has said has gone in one ear and out the other. But what does Jesus say and do? Were we to give him advice, we might have suggested that it was time for him to get rid of these dull and dim-witted disciples and make some better choices next time. But if we would give him such advice, we would be the ones who would be cast off. Because their fear, their doubt, their weakness, their slowness to understand and apply what he has said is all too often our own.

So then, what does Jesus have to say to them and to us? The chalice of his love overflows with patience and grace beyond measure. He answers the disciples and us: “I am the way and the truth and the life.” That says it all! When we don’t—or won’t—understand, what should we do? When we are afraid of our own dullness and doubts, where should we turn? When nothing makes any sense to us, where should we go for answers? When we just don’t feel loved by God or redeemed by his Son, what’s the sure cure for our anguish? Jesus! Jesus alone!

The words that we pile up to express how little we know and understand Jesus answers with three short phrases. He says first, “Look at the path I tread; it is the way of the cross; that’s the path you will tread as well. But when you don’t understand its pain, its point, its purpose, look at me! It all ends in resurrection triumph, in eternal life and blessedness in the Father’s house.”

Then second, “When you don’t understand this or that part of my Word and promise, look at me! I am the truth! Your reason, your feelings, your understanding are not the source of truth; I am the truth. Abandon all that you think or want or feel, and look at me; then sigh in your heart, ‘It matters not what I think or want or feel; all that matters is what Jesus says; I abandon everything in me to him, to his sure and unerring Word.’ ”

Then finally, “When life seems to have little point, when death and its terrors frighten you, then too, look at me! I have come to win life for you by my death; your death will follow mine into life eternal; and that gives your life here, so long as it lasts, a point and purpose and meaning. For you live it in me and I, with Word and sacrament, live in you. . . .

So then, we are half-baked loaves. Our awareness of that fact is a good thing, if it prompts us to turn away from ourselves to Jesus and his Word. It took the disciples, who had been with him so long, still a long time to learn that. Therefore, don’t give up. With them, hear him say, “I am the way and the truth and the life.” And in hearing him say it, trust that what you don’t know yet or understand isn’t as important as the fact that he knows and understands. And then in looking to him and listening to his Word, let him increase bit by bit and little by little what you need to know and understand, until it all becomes perfectly clear in the dwelling place he went to prepare for you by his cross and resurrection. . . . Yes, then and there you will have an eternity to repeat it in amazement at how good and kind, how patient and persistent, he was in seeking and finding you, no matter how dull and slow you may often have been to understand or accept his leading.

—by Daniel M. Deuschlander from [On Giving Advice to God, Part 2](#)

## Prayer

Heavenly Father, ever since the beginning, Satan has been directing human eyes away from you and your Word and toward his lies and accusations. But now, in my trials and temptations, fix my eyes only on your Son, Jesus Christ, because it was his joy to endure the cross for my sake (Hebrews 12:2). He destroyed the work of the devil (1 John 3:8) and is not ashamed to call us his brothers and sisters (Hebrews 2:11). In every tribulation and affliction, let me always see Jesus—the strength of my heart, the joy of my life, and the hope of my salvation. In his name I pray. Amen.

—from [There’s a Prayer for That](#)

## Hymn-Sing

Jesus! and Shall It Ever Be (CW 347)

[PDF](#), [Organ accompaniment](#), [Piano Accompaniment](#)

Purchase [Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal](#) for 50% off (up to 5 copies)

## Children’s Activities

Learn about how [Jesus drew the eyes of his disciples to himself as he ascended into heaven](#).

Go deeper and have some fun with these [related activities](#).

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Fix your eyes on Jesus with these additional resources:

**Devotionals:** [Together with Jesus](#), [5-minute Bible Studies for Teens](#), [Meditations Daily Devotional](#) (subscription)

**Prayer books:** [God Our Refuge](#), [A Year of Prayer](#)

**Books:** [Four Portraits of One Savior](#), [The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ](#)

**Music albums:** [Heavenward](#), [Jesus Wins!](#), [A Mighty Fortress](#)

**Monthly magazine:** [Forward in Christ](#) (preview the April 2020 edition for [FREE](#))