

Sermon Title: **“How can we know the way?”**

Bible: **1 Peter 2:2-10 & John 14:1-7**

When: on the Fifth Sunday of Easter, May 7, 2023

Where: about 30 people (plus YouTube streaming viewers) at Gilroy UMC

### **Opening Prayer**

O Lord, you are the way, the truth, and the life. Let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.

### **1. How to Get There**

I still remember a time when we did not have GPS. When I was seeing my future wife, I lived in Marin County on the upper Golden Gate Bridge, and Mihyun lived in Irvine. When we had vacation time, I wanted to see Mihyun. Renting a car was not that easy, but it was possible. The biggest challenge was finding the way to her. At that time, I did not have any GPS. My phone was 2G. I needed to google the route from the google maps, and I needed to write down the directions. The route to Highway 5 was very challenging. And the route from Highway 5 to where she lived was another challenge. The locals were always challenging me. If I missed the turns, I needed to make a U-turn, because the way I knew was the only one on my memo. One time, I was lost. I missed the turns and the U-turns. I did not know where I was and where I needed to go. I stopped at a gas station, and I gave a call to my friend, and let him know the address of the gas station, and asked for directions. To make a long story short, I made it! It was very challenging, but there was a way, and I made it!

If we need to go to a new place that we do not know, what shall we do? Do you look at a map? Do you ask someone who knows the way and make note of the directions? Do you use GPS or map applications in your smartphones? Have you had someone in your car to guide you? Now the GPS or map application works like someone who knows the way. Probably, a person could get mad when we miss the right turns. Thankfully, that voice from GPS or the map application does not get mad, even when we make mistakes. It just says, “Recalculating” and guides us with the new directions.

## **2. Jesus is the Way.**

Do you have a map for your faith journey? Do you have any GPS or map application for your faith journey? From today’s scripture reading of John, Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” When we do not know the way, when we do not know the direction, when we are lost, do we look for Jesus as our way? Do we have Jesus as our GPS and our map application?

When we were all struggling with the COVID-19 pandemic, when we all needed to stay home and to be isolated, we were lost. I looked at the Bible, but I did not find anything about COVID-19, and Live-streaming the Worship Service. I was not trained to prepare for the pandemic from the seminary. And we, as Christians, were not ready, either. We all used to be lost. But we had Jesus as our way. We learned that our church buildings are not the church, but we, the people, are the church. We worship our Lord wherever we are. We also learned how much we missed each other, because we are the body of Jesus Christ together. Even

though we could not meet each other, what Jesus taught us was to love one another. Thanks to the presence of our Lord, Jesus as our way, we got here today. Thanks to your willingness to follow the way, we are here today. We got through it together.

As you might know, the federal government has announced that the COVID-19 public health emergency is ending on May 11, 2023. No more COVID-19 public health emergency. We cannot go back to before the pandemic. We are moving forward to another step, even though there will be other challenges.

### **3. Two Unavoidable Truths**

What are the differences between Jesus and GPS? For GPS, we need to enter our destination. After we enter our destination, the GPS guides us where to go. If we do not enter our destination, the GPS cannot tell us where to go. However, we all know our final destination in our faith journey and our lives. Our Lord Jesus prepares a place for us. What does this mean to you? Sometimes we try to forget it. Sometimes we want to deny it. But we already know our final destination. Do we accept this unavoidable truth? Then, how do we want to live on earth?

As 1 Peter describes, we are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and God's own people. We are all God's people. I am not the only one who is called. I am not the only one who is chosen. Each of you are called and chosen by our Lord. Do we accept this?

Another unavoidable truth?

In our faith GPS, our final destination is already entered. If we want to ignore, forget, or deny it, and if we want to go where we want, our faith GPS will say “recalculating” again and again. Our choices might look good to our eyes, but they might take more turns, u turns, and more tries. And if we start to follow the directions, it will be less turns—or the fastest way. I think that this is a paradox in following our Lord, Jesus Christ. At first, it looks difficult and challenging to follow Jesus. But once we follow Jesus, it can become easy and comfortable, like a joyful obedience.

#### **4. Cornerstone!**

I truly believe that all of us have Jesus within us. The living stone, the cornerstone, Jesus Christ, the living God is in us. Sometimes it is not that simple and not that easy to follow Jesus in us. Perhaps he is located in a corner, not in the center. But when we locate the corner as our center, we can build our spiritual house, and we can start our faith journey.

Today, when we take the bread, and when we share the cup, may our Lord, Jesus Christ, be the center for our lives. Our communion will be a time for us to confess that our Jesus Christ is our very head of the corner, our center in our faith journey and our daily lives.

#### **Closing Prayer**

O Lord, thank you so much for your holy presence as the living stone and the cornerstone in our lives. Please lead us to accept our final destination and to follow you as the way. In Jesus' name. Amen.