

Asking Directions

Intro. A few years ago after I got certified to scuba dive, friends invited me to join them on a group diving trip to a Caribbean island. The idea of spending a week on an island with people I didn't know sounded risky. I took a chance that the friends *my* friends had were probably people I would like also. Because my friends told me so much about them, by the time I met them, I felt I already knew them. We can *begin* to know someone through another person, but to really know them we have to meet them personally. The disciples struggled with knowing the Lord and wanting to know the Father.

I. This gospel is part of the Lord's farewell. He was preparing the disciples to lead the way to the Father when he returned to heaven. They still

weren't fully ready. Two disciples have serious questions for the Lord. Neither understood the Lord's words. Thomas wanted to know the *physical* place where the Lord was going and how to follow him there. And some people say men never ask for directions! He was confused because he didn't understand the *Way* – Jesus - led to the *where*. Then Philip asked the Lord to *show* him the Father. The Lord's response was, "If you know me, you know him." He had been telling them about the Father for **three years!** Philip wanted to physically see the Father, not understanding the Lord's words that he and the Father are one in the same. The disciples were beginning to realize their lives were about to change in a major way. And they were anxious.

Deciding *where* we are going in life is difficult enough. Once we figure that out, even with all the technology today, *getting there* is not easy. Often key information is missing. Two weeks ago I drove to St. Patrick Church near the airport. The GPS kept leading me to a restaurant parking lot. When I called the church office a staff member told me, “Because this area is still growing, we aren’t on the GPS grid yet.” I got directions the old-fashioned way: by asking another human being and trusting them.

Concl. One of the improvements with GPS systems now is they got rid of the annoying message which reminded us when we made a wrong turn, “Recalculating.” There are many good voices helping to guide us including family, friends and church. There are just as many bad voices trying to mislead us. But the most important one is the little

voice in our heart. If properly developed by prayer and an informed mind, that voice will get us pretty close to where we need to be. Ultimately we have to find the way to the important places in life like heaven, in large part on our own. Thomas wanted the road map, hoping that would make it easy to follow the Lord. The Lord was the road map. It is not so easy to follow the Lord even when we know the goal. The way to the Father is not simply a matter of plugging an address into a GPS. Our GPS is faith in God. It is kind of like the Cloud. We are assured it’s there but where is there? That is why it is important to know the Lord or at least know one of his friends.