

**Graphics, Audio and Video - Media Notes are highlighted with this background color**

## Key Questions, Metadata and Outline

### What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about how direction determines your destination in life and particularly in our spiritual lives

### Why is this sermon important?

This sermon is important because it clarifies the truth that moving in God's direction is the way to grow in faith as opposed intentions are enough to grow closer to God.

### What is the context of this sermon?

This series is between our back to school series and stewardship campaign. Key resources for this sermon and series include: Which Way Should I Go<sup>1</sup> and Trusting the Path<sup>2</sup> sermons by Rev. Paul Rasmussen preached at Highland Park United Methodist Church and the Nooma-Dust video by Rob Bell<sup>3</sup>.

### What are the next action steps?

The next action steps are to move in God's direction and follow Jesus' path.

### What is the good news (bottom line)?

The good news is that God's grace enables us to turn away from our own path and move in God's direction. Jesus is the way.

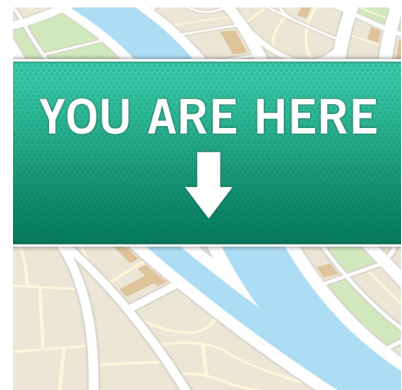
### Metadata

- Topic(s)
  - Faith, discipleship
- Sermon Books of the Bible
  - John
- Series
  - You are Here
- Speaker
  - Andrew Conard

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hpumc.org/sermon/which-way-should-i-go/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.hpumc.org/sermon/trusting-the-path/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://flannel.org/products/nooma-dust-008>



- Tags
  - path, pathway, disciple, discipleship, direction, destination, way, dust, rabbi, life

## Outline

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18th Sunday after Pentecost  
You are Here: Which Way Should I Go?  
First United Methodist Church of El Dorado  
Text online at <http://j.mp/1rVzoz8>

October 12, 2014  
John 14:1-11  
Target Word Count: 2,515  
Video online: Not Available

## John 14:1-11, CEB

1 “Don’t be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me. 2 My Father’s house has room to spare. If that weren’t the case, would I have told you that I’m going to prepare a place for you? 3 When I go to prepare a place for you, I will return and take you to be with me so that where I am you will be too. 4 You know the way to the place I’m going.”

5 Thomas asked, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going. How can we know the way?”

6 Jesus answered, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you have really known me, you will also know the Father. From now on you know him and have seen him.”

8 Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father; that will be enough for us.”

9 Jesus replied, “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been with you all this time? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I have spoken to you I don’t speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me does his works. 11 Trust me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or at least believe on account of the works themselves.

## Response to Scripture

One: The Word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God!

## Sermon Starter Video

- Play sermon starter video.

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## Introduction

### Series Review

Our mission as a church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. What is a disciple? How do I become one, much less make one?

The truth is, it can be a challenge to know the next step in your faith journey. There are so many options from which to choose, and it can seem as though each person is going in a different direction. In this series, we are exploring the challenges of growing in your faith in a way that, hopefully is simple, straightforward, and user friendly.

### Sermon Notes and Scripture Study

I invite you to open your bulletin to a place where you can take notes during the message

today. Today, I hope that you will hear:

- Something new or find new questions
- Perspective on your life or something in your life that gives additional meaning to the message today.
- Guidance about how to live as a disciple of Jesus.

I invite you to write down some of the things that you hear in the sermon today and take your bulletin home as a tool to grow in your faith outside of worship. You can reflect on what you heard today, pray for people of our congregation and read scripture to prepare for worship next week.

### **Opening Prayer**

Will you pray with me? O God, use these words to speak good news so that as individuals and as a congregation we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

### **Pace and Path**

#### **Vehicle Accident in Salina**

I was a sophomore in high school when I was in my first car accident. I had seen accidents before, anything from fender benders to a rollover on the highway. I had never been in one though.

It was in Salina, where we were living at the time. I was headed south on the frontage road along Ninth street near Wal-Mart. I stopped at the stop sign, looked both ways and pulled out into the intersection. What I had not seen was a little pickup that had turned off the main drag.

We collided.

I remember the sound of the metal grinding together. I remember the song that was on the radio – "One Headlight" by the Wallflowers. Anybody remember that song from the '90s?

I was okay. The other driver was okay. The vehicles were not really okay.

I will never forget that moment when I realized, "I am going to be in an accident. We are going to collide." The path that my vehicle was on was only going to end one way. The path that I was on.

#### **Home Runs in Postseason Baseball**

Mike Moustakas has hit four home runs in the postseason. He hit the game winning shot in the eleventh inning against the Angels in the first game of the Divisional Series. He has hit a homerun in each of the last three Royals playoff games.

You know what it is like to see a homerun when it goes off the bat and you know that it is going over the fence.

## **Path of Life**

On some level, we have all seen something like this. You have seen a friend, a child, a neighbor, a leader, a pastor, a politician. You can see where it is going. You can see the big picture. You can see the pace and the path that their life is going. You know that it can only end one way.

You know when you end up here, but you want to go there. You have hopes, dreams, ambitions and visions. You want to go here and you are intending to go here, but you end up way over there.

## **Transition**

We somehow think that hopes, dreams, ambitions, intentions, desires and prayers will somehow trump the daily decisions that we make that put us on the paths that we choose. There is a simple truth, which was true for me when I was in that accident and it is true for you as you watch other people on their paths in life.

## **Direction, not intention, leads to destination**

I learned this from another pastor, who found it in a book called “The Principle of the Path.” Here it is:

**Direction, not intention, leads to destination.**

Whatever road you are on determines exactly where you are going to end up.

Of course, this just makes sense.

Wherever you are headed on that path, that is where you are going to end up.

This is a truth of life.

No matter what you think, believe or intend. The path which you are on will determine where you go.

Direction, not intention, leads to destination.

## **Destination: Kansas City for Game 3 of the ALCS**

Imagine that this afternoon you wanted to head up to Kansas City to see the Royals play tomorrow in Game 3 of the ALCS. You splurge—get a hotel on the Plaza, go out to eat and maybe do a little shopping. You have your tickets. You are ready for the first pitch.

It doesn't matter how many travel sites you visited to get the best deal on your hotel or how many strings you were able to pull to get tickets. It doesn't matter if it is the most beautiful weather for postseason baseball or if you prayed in your garage before you left, “God, keep us safe on the road.”

If you get on the Turnpike and go south, you are never getting to Kansas City.

No matter what.

It doesn't matter how hard you try, how hard you pray, how hard you researched. Why?

Direction, not intention, determines your destination.  
You have to be on the right path.

### Transition

We see this in the passage of scripture which was read today from John 14.

## Being a Disciple

### Jesus said, "I am the Way"

Hear these words again from John 14:1-6:

[Jesus says,] "Don't be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me. My Father's house has room to spare. If that weren't the case, would I have told you that I'm going to prepare a place for you? When I go to prepare a place for you, I will return and take you to be with me so that where I am you will be too. You know the way to the place I'm going.

Thomas asked, "Lord, we don't know where you are going. How can we know the way?"

Jesus answered, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

These words are part of Jesus' farewell speech to his disciples before he is put to death on the cross. He says, don't worry, I am going to prepare a place for you. You know the way.

Then Thomas says, "Wait a minute! I don't know the way."

Jesus says, "I am the way."

### Transition

While we can interpret this statement in a variety of ways, for those first disciples, Jesus literally was the way for them. They followed in his footsteps. This was true from the beginning of the story.

### Jesus Calls the Disciples

Most rabbis would begin their teaching around the age of 30. We have Jesus walking on the shore, along the Sea of Galilee. He comes across Peter and Andrew. They are fishermen and Jesus says to them, "Come, follow me."

This path I am traveling, the direction I am going, come follow me.

At once they dropped their nets and followed him.

What is he really saying?

What he is really saying is "I think you could do what I do.

You can make it on this path.

You can be like me.

Of course you would drop your nets and follow him.

### Covered in the Dust of Your Rabbi

So imagine what it would have been like for these fishermen to follow Jesus or for any disciple to follow a rabbi. They are doing everything they can to keep up with the rabbi because they have devoted their lives to doing what their rabbi does. As a disciple you would follow your rabbi on these hot, dusty, dirty roads. You have whatever your rabbi has stepped in caked all over you.

In fact, a saying developed that you would say to a disciple—May you be covered in the dust of your rabbi.

This meant that you were headed in the right direction.

You are on the right path.

## **Conclusion - Destination: Life**

### **Good News**

The good news is that God's grace enables us to turn away from our own path and move in God's direction.

Jesus is the way.

### **Call to Action: Disciple at First UMC**

This brings us back to the principle of the path and how it connects with the way that we understand what it means to be a disciple here at First United Methodist Church

**Disciple: A person who follows Jesus by engaging in practices to worship, grow, give, serve and share.**

- **A person engaging in these practices will grow toward perfect love of God and neighbor.**

We align our life to Jesus' direction when we engage in practices to worship, grow, give, serve and share. This direction will lead us to the destination of perfect love of God and neighbor.

Direction, not intention, determines your destination. Every single time.

Wherever we go, the path that we are taking, it has a destination. It might be toward God or it might be away from God. We don't determine our destination, aside from moving forward step by step, by step by step and going to the end of wherever that path is.

### **Call to Action: Discipleship Pathway**

One of the challenges that we have had as a church is that we are not very good at telling people what a path to Christianity looks like. We love to get together for worship, have great music, share a meal together, be a church family and feel really good about Christ.

Then we say we want you to be a disciple. Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Then we give you no map and no direction. We just trust your intentions, your hopes and your dreams and your "want tos"

What we decided last year as a church is that we want to give you a map.

You want to be a disciple.



We want to help you get there.

We want you to know exactly what a disciple looks like and more importantly, this is the path to get there. This is the direction you should be going if you want to love God and your neighbor

Next week, I am going to share with you the work of our Discipleship team and what we hope is the path to discipleship. It is not perfect, but we believe that we have a map that will help you grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

### **Invitation**

Wherever you are in your life, I invite you to move in God's direction.

I want you to be the kind of person who does the right thing. Not just the big things, where right and wrong are obvious and easy. I mean, in the small things. The everyday decisions. What you do when no one is watching.

Set yourself in God's direction.

Follow Jesus' path.

May you be covered in the dust of your rabbi.