

**Kevin Powell**  
**John 14: 1-14**

“Show us the Father. Show us who God is,” Phillip demands of Jesus.

But he’s not alone. Phillip speaks for all of us. If you could sum up much of human longing in one sentence, I think that would be it. “Show us who God is.”

There’s a lot packed into that one request, isn’t there? But it needs to be asked. That could be why you’re here today.

You come hungry or merely curious, with great need or simply out of habit, or both. But the unspoken words on your lips as you join here for worship are “Show us who God is.”

And we all have our own expectations of what that looks like.

“What are you drawing?” a teacher leans over and asks a little girl who was drawing a picture in school one day.

“I’m drawing God,” the little girl responds.

The teacher laughed and said, “No one knows what God looks like.”

“They will when I get finished with this drawing,” said the little girl.

Everyone has their vision of what God is like.

So what do you think God looks like? If you could draw a picture of God, what would that picture be?

Would you draw a person? An old man? A bearded octogenarian with ripped abs scowling on a cloud, lightning bolt in hand?

Would you draw a woman giving birth? Since God is the God of creation, giving life to the universe, bringing into being to all that exists?

Would you draw a nature scene, with radiant sunbeams shining luminously through soaring trees, with just the right mixture of light and dark to signify presence and absence, intimacy and mystery?

Would you draw a self-portrait, believing that since we are all created in God’s image, and God lives within everyone,

God lives within you, God lives within me, so God looks just like each one of us?

Would you draw a group scene, since you believe that God is found in each other, in family and in community?

Would you draw Jesus? Or at least what you think Jesus would look like?

If you listen to today's gospel reading closely, that's just what you might do. That's the picture Jesus paints for Phillip, as an answer to his questions.

“Show us who God is,” Phillip demands. “Show us the grandeur and majesty of divine love. Show us God Almighty in splendor and magnificence. Show us ultimate cosmic power alive in our tiny planet. Show us God's brilliant light in an often dark and sinful world.”

“Show us what life and existence are all about. Show us that our mortal lives mean something, and that they are connected somehow to Eternal Life.”

“Show us God's vision of the future, where justice and peace, mercy and love reign over all of us, so the world today won't seem so scary.”

“Show us that God really cares about us. Show us that God is somehow active in the world and actually does something in our lives.”

“Show us goodness in a world seemingly overrun with evil. Show us life everlasting in a world consumed by death.”

“Show us wisdom in a world overflowing with mere information. Show us compassion in a world overwhelmed with self-centredness.”

‘Show us wealth in a world weighed down by mere riches. Show us something more than what we see in our daily lives.’”

Isn't that really what Phillip was asking? Isn't that maybe what you came here asking from Jesus? “Show us who God is.”

But Jesus can't believe his ears.

“Are you really asking me that?” Jesus asks.

“You've been with me all this time and you **STILL** haven't figured this out? If you want to know who God is, just look at me. If you're wondering what God is all about, look at

what I do. If you're trying to hear God's voice, just listen to what I say. God is in me and I am in God."

But Phillip wasn't asking anything from Jesus that everyone else wasn't wondering about, back then and even now. It was his voice that was speaking but it was our words coming out of Philip's mouth.

And Jesus' answer seems more like the beginning of a reply instead of a definite answer.

God is in Jesus and Jesus is in God. Christians believe that in Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension, we have seen God. That's the grand claim of today's gospel.

But that doesn't fully satisfy, does it? It doesn't totally answer the question.

We were told that we have a God who loved us too much to remain distant and unapproachable. So, Philip says, if that's true, show us who God is."

"If you want to know who God is," Jesus responds, "just look at me. I am the way, I am truth, I am life. If you want to get to God, you get to God through me."

To some, this passage sounds hopelessly exclusive, that he's drawing new boundaries, and creating needless divisions. At least that's the way this passage has traditionally been read.

But for Jesus' listeners, he was being anything but exclusive. In fact, he was doing just the opposite. He was drawing people in, enlarging the circle, reaching out to those who felt abandoned by God because they had no access to official religion.

They were searching for a love they could grasp from a God who seemed like a stranger. Because everywhere they turned they hit a religious roadblock when they went seeking God. It was like the game was rigged to keep them as far away from God as possible, and only a select few were allowed to get close.

Sacrifices they couldn't afford. Religious teachings that were irrelevant - or even dangerous - to their daily lives. The feeling that they were there for the institution, rather than the institution being there for them.

Prayers that went nowhere, cries for help that evaporated once they left their mouths, worship that dried up in the desert sun when they were longing for water to refresh their scorched spirits, teachings that left them more lost

than when they began, preaching that made them feel worse about themselves than when they walked in.

The more they sought God, the further away God seemed.

And then along came Jesus who said, “If you are feeling lost, like every road leads nowhere, where street signs keep pointing you in the wrong direction, where the highway takes you further and further away from where you need to be, and God seems like just a distant far off memory, then follow me, I am The Way.”

“If you are looking for truth in this muddled world, where nothing seems fixed, where there’s so much competing information demanding your attention, where the world’s noise is drowning out the voices that speak words of love, where fake news and ideologically-driven conspiracy theories get more attention than important information that you need, where self-interested media are trying to influence your daily decision-making for their own gain by massaging the facts to fit their predetermined agenda, just look to me, I am Truth.”

“If you are looking for life when there’s SO MUCH death around you, if you are looking for abundance amidst so much scarcity, if you’re looking for signs of vitality emerging from the chaos in this world; if you are looking

for a fresh start, a new direction, a clean break; if you are looking to explore new worlds that you didn't know existed and opportunities that you didn't believe were available to you, then follow me. I am Life."

"I will take you to God."

But what they didn't know, but perhaps suspected, was that Jesus was using words differently than what they were used to.

The Way that Jesus talked about, is the cross, the Way of sacrifice born from love.

The Truth that Jesus proclaimed is the God who walks among us, spreading seeds of wisdom, whose presence demands that we see ourselves and our place in the world with eyes of mercy.

And the Life that Jesus shows us is by wrapping a towel around his waist and kneeling down to wash the disciples' feet.

That's "the way, truth, life." Three different ways of saying the same thing.

So, if you want to see God, just look around and see where Jesus is and what God is doing.

God is at the hospital risking health and life for others.

God is in the kitchen, making meals, serving food, and washing dishes, present in the ordinary grace of hands at work, in the quiet offering of nourishment, in the shared table where no one is turned away, and in the lingering warmth that says: you are fed, you are held, you belong

God is at the funeral home, wiping away tears, offering hope and comfort in the worst moments of people's lives, whispering words of resurrection.

God is in the voice of protest against injustice. The words of forgiveness that bring people back together. The hand that reaches out in friendship.

God is in your caring phone call. The donations to Project Share or the Food Bank. The offerings to CLWR.

God is where life is celebrated and where love is freely given away. God is where mercy and grace are received with gratitude. God is where new possibilities emerge from discouragement. God is where promises of a new and better tomorrow are met with hope and trust.

God is not somewhere else. God is here. In your breath, in your longing, in the love that has not given up on you.

When Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” he is not pointing you away from this moment, but deeper into it. The way is alive. The way is present. The way is already holding you.

So if you feel lost, you are not abandoned.  
If you feel unworthy, you are not excluded.  
If you feel tired, you are not alone.

Nothing can close the door God has opened.  
Nothing can separate you from this love.

God is here.

Now.

For you.

May this be so among us. Amen.