

Sermon: Jesus Is the Only Way.

Text: [John 14:1-14 ESV](#)

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January 31, 2021

John 14:1-14 ESV ¹ “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way to where I am going.” ⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” ⁸ Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” ⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. ¹² “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

Introduction: We have jumped ahead in the church year as we go through John's gospel. We are taking a long look at the week right before Jesus goes to the cross to take away our sins. In the middle of Jesus' own struggle with life and death decisions, He is concerned for those who are going to be left behind. The disciples had left jobs and family to follow Jesus and now he was telling them he had to leave and go where they could not go for now.

Shakespeare said that “parting is such sweet sorrow”. And many times it is. But leaving people you care about brings up a mixture of emotions. A son or daughter goes off to college. There is happiness and sadness there. Moving, a new job, even death can create a variety of responses. Here, though, Jesus was well aware that his disciples needed comforting. They had lost their joy.

The words Jesus, and that we overhear for ourselves today, provide assurance and a soothing promise. Yet like any words that are spoken, it depends upon the audience how they are received. A good relationship provides for a good hearing, yet a poor relationship or one imbedded with hatred allows nothing to penetrate the heart.

There are many speakers today. Some even claim to speak for the church, but don't, at least not the church of which I am a member. I have heard religious leaders in the church say things like:

- 1. There are many ways to God. Jesus may be the best way, but He is not the only way.**
- 2. Just a few years ago there was a UMC minister who gave a prayer for the graduation at Eastern Illinois University which ended: "in the name of your sons Jesus Christ, Mohammed, Confuscus, Buddha and your minor sons Alexander the Great, Napoleon....Our Mother who art in heaven, and the latest a-men and a-woman.**

WASHINGTON— Faith leaders from many different religions — including a variety of Christians, a female rabbi, an imam, a Sikh activist and a Native American representative— prayed for the unity of the country and President Joseph Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris in a virtual prayer service broadcast from the Washington National Cathedral on January 21st.

Then and now Jesus' words are taken in differently by different audiences. Today's hearers, maybe even you here, hear Jesus say: "I am the way, the truth and the life," and you may take that to be an:

I. Outrageous Claim

Many people today do not believe in absolute truth. It is hard even within religious circles to get a majority to agree on any issue such as the utter uniqueness of Jesus or the trustworthiness of the Bible.

We have churches fighting over issues that are clearly defined in the Bible. Some churches cannot even agree as to whether it is Christian to go to Disney World or not. Other issues such as the acceptance and even ordination of gays will cause division in the Body of Christ, and I predict even within the Restoration Movement in the days ahead. How is it we have come so far from the black and white language of the Bible. Even the Psalms of the O.T. are opened with the claim that there are but two ways to live (righteous and wicked), and Proverbs teaches that there are only two ways as well - wise and foolish. If you are not wise or righteous, you are as good as dead!

Psalm 1:1-6 ESV 1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. 4 The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; 6 for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Post-modern man does not believe in the vengeful God of the O.T. Unsaved people today do not believe in any absolute statement of truth. That is why the ten commandments are so much a perceived threat in public settings.

We live in a so-called “tolerant” society. And that means we will put up with anything. We will put up with and even fund with tax dollars art that depicts a crucifix hanging in urine, but don’t you dare say this or that isn’t right. That’s intolerant!

It used to be that all truth claims were regarded as equal in value, every voice weighed the same, it should be no surprise that there is a decline in morals and standards in the world and at the same time an antagonism toward the church. Today, truth is decided by who is in power. As the Church’s influence wanes, her voice will be disrespected in the public square.

a few years ago, “A dean at Stanford University began to pressure evangelical Christian groups on campus to stop the practice of ‘proselytizing other students.’ Ironically, what angered the dean was not the content of the message that was being shared, but the practice of sharing itself. He believes that in approaching someone with the Gospel, you are implying that the person’s beliefs are inferior to your own. Such an implication is unacceptable because it is self-righteous, biased, and intolerant” (*The New Tolerance* by Josh McDowell and Bob Hostetler, pp. 46-47).

Tolerance does not extend to exclusive or ultimate statements of truth. Our times are much like what John’s church in Revelation experienced. (You can worship Jesus as long as you are still willing to worship Caesar - syncretism, customized religion. You can pick and choose what you like when it comes to what you believe based on how you “feel” about it!

We probably should not get too sanctimonious here. Words of life, words from Jesus must be shared or it becomes the same as being sanctioned. If we believe that Jesus is the only way to heaven, do we warn our friends, family and neighbors?

Jesus is not one of many ways, not even the best of the ways, but

HE IS THE ONLY WAY! Amen?

Today's hearers, maybe even you here, hear Jesus say: "I am the way, the truth and the life," and you may take that to be an:

II. Unbelievable Solution

Jesus *is* the "only" way for two reasons.

1. He provides salvation so that we may come to the Father.
2. He provides revelation so that we can know the Father.

Salvation can be found in no one else because no one else was worthy to go to the cross. Jesus was perfect. He is the perfect God-man, sent in the flesh to show us God. As the Hebrew writer would insist - Jesus is both our High Priest and faultless and sinless sacrifice.

Jesus went to the cross because he loved us even when we did not love Him. All the time Jesus is struggling with the finality of the cross, He is thinking about his disciples and us who would also follow Him.

Listen to [John 12:27 ESV](#) (Jesus is speaking here): ²⁷ "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour.

So Jesus did what we would never do -- only promise to do on our better days like Peter who said he would die for the Lord, yet denied Him three times. Or even Thomas who said the same thing in [John 11](#), yet he was one of the most difficult to convince of the resurrection. All these followers went away and hid when *their* safety was threatened, but Jesus, fully aware of being the Truth and that some would hate the truth went ahead and did what no one else could do or would do.

Jesus went to the cross so He could go to prepare a place for us who follow him. The cross is also in front of every person who claims Jesus as their Lord.

There are times when just like Peter and Thomas we will do anything for God and then comes a test of our words and integrity and sometimes we, too, fail. None of us will get all A's in this life.

We have trouble living up to our own standards, let alone His. That is why Jesus had to die on the cross and go to heaven. He lived the life we could never live and died the death we deserved to die. He was our substitute.

Illus. Civil war story. There is a grave stone in a cemetery with the inscription: "I want to stand where you're standing." The story goes that a 19-year old Yankee soldier came upon a Confederate soldier and leveled his gun at him, but did not shoot him because he recognized him, knew his wife and children and family. He went back to his Captain and asked if he could be executed in his friend's place. And so it was done.... Jesus did that for us.

We need Jesus because we are lost. He is the Way!
We need Jesus because we are easily deceived. He is the Truth!
We need Jesus because we are dead in our sins. He is (the) Life!

No one should be annoyed about being told there is only one way to God. I don't mind that there is really only one way to get certain places. When I go to visit my family in Michigan, there are certainly longer ways to get there, but I cannot get there by traveling south, etc...

Jesus reveals to us the Father and that He is the only way to *know* God. He repeatedly says believe and trust me:

Verse 1 - 1 "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.

Verses 8-9 - 8 Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Verse 10 - 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.

Verse 11 - ¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

These are, of course, all claims of His divinity.

Jesus makes it clear. Jesus not only knows the truth; He is the Truth. He not only knows God; He is God! Anyone who does not know Jesus is living a lie, walking in darkness and the truth is not in them.

Jesus is the great I AM! We have heard John speak of Jesus' deity before in the opening chapter of his gospel:

John 1:14, 18 ESV ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Illus. A little boy paints a picture. Teacher asks what it is. Well, it is God, of course. Teacher says, No one knows what God looks like, in fact no one has ever seen God. Well, they know now, says the little boy.

Many people have tried different approaches to life. Jesus is the Way!

Many are looking for answers. Jesus is the Truth!

Many are "alive", but not really living. Jesus is the Life!

So if what Jesus says is true (and it is!) and we do what he wants, there can be a:

III. New Beginning

(adapted from Peter Vibert, *The Way Home*, February 2, 2003) Here Jesus is about to leave his closest friends; first in his death, soon in his ascension. In just a few hours "the Way will hang on a cross, the Truth will be lied about by his accusers, and the Life will be in a tomb" (L. Morris). But to help them through this time that is rapidly coming, Jesus wants them to know that appearances can be deceiving, and that the great evil that will fall on Him is also the start of the greatest blessing that will ever be given to mankind - if they will only follow Him. It will look like an end, but it will be a beginning.

Indeed his “going away” will benefit them in ways they cannot imagine. Their place in heaven will be secured and prepared. Jesus will now pray for them at his Father’s side, and nothing that they ask that is in his name will God deny. Because he is going to be with his Father, the Comforter can be sent to be with them in this life. The result will be that Jesus’ followers will indeed do things as amazing as he did while on earth, showing men and women the way to God, bringing comfort and healing and hope, announcing the gospel of redemption and forgiveness, literally opening the doors of heaven to those who will believe. That was true of Jesus’ followers then, and it is true of us today. We can reach out and help other people find the way to God, too.

This is the way with good-byes - they can be the start of something new, as well as the end of something old - and what matters most is we know Jesus goes through all the partings of life with us. He has not left us alone. In fact, He has already gone ahead of us to prepare the way. If the day we commemorate with our communion represents his broken body and shed blood, and if the day he was taken from his friends, could be named “Good Friday,” we know that Jesus can take our darkest moments and our saddest good-byes, and make them into the start of something more wonderful than we can imagine.

So don’t be troubled. Trust God. Trust Jesus. There is a home just for you in heaven. If you will only believe, Jesus will take you there. There are many rooms.

If you have met him, you have met God, and you know there is nothing to be afraid of. If you believe in him and obey, he will bring you home.

Conclusion: Maybe you have tried different paths through life. Jesus is the Way. Or maybe you are still looking for answers to life’s toughest questions. Jesus is the Truth. Or you may be going through life “biologically alive”, but not really living - with no purpose or mission, just passing time. Jesus is the Life.

We who are Christians say we believe that Jesus is the **ONLY** way, the truth and the life, but do we *really* believe this? If we truly did believe this, there would be more people coming to Jesus. There would be more talk about God at the restaurants and malls, schools and workplaces, even in some churches. Don Carson describes the uniqueness of Christ as “the necessary start behind all fervent evangelism”.

Our society hates exclusive truth statements, but they will hate us more if they are excluded from heaven because we refused to speak a saving word about Jesus, the **ONLY** way to God and the **ONLY** way to heaven.