

Christ the Way, Truth, and Life

Text: John 14:1-6

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Over the past few weeks, we have been studying the “I am” sayings in the Gospel of John. Throughout his earthly ministry Jesus made a number of statements about who he is and his relationship to us. He said, “I am the bread of life.” “I am the light of the world.” “I am the good shepherd.” This morning we’re going to look at another of these statements in John 14:1-6 where Jesus said “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” This is a passage that helps us understand the ministry of Jesus and what he accomplished for us through his death and resurrection.

¹ “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ² “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ “And you know the way where I am going.” ⁵ Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do 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 but through Me. (John 14:1-6 NASB95)

These were among the final words Jesus spoke to his disciples on the night that he was arrested by soldiers and led away to stand trial before the religious leaders. That evening, Jesus spent time preparing his disciples for the events that would soon take place. He told them that in a little while they would no longer see him. He was going to suffer many things and would be crucified, but on the third day he would be raised from the dead. The disciples were struggling to make sense of these words. They spent the past three years by his side, listening to every sermon, watching every miracle. There was no doubt in their mind that Jesus is the Messiah, but they didn’t yet understand what that meant, or how the cross fit into God’s plan. They were confused, it wouldn’t make sense until later. After Jesus rose from the grave, he would open their eyes and allow them to see why these things were necessary. They would remember the words that Jesus spoke to them and realize why he came.

Maybe, like the disciples, you have struggled to make sense of the cross of Jesus. Why was he crucified? What does the empty tomb mean for us? In these verses, Jesus uses three pictures that help us understand what he accomplished for us through his death and resurrection.

Jesus tells us, “I am the Way...”

These days we are happy to get out of the house for a little while, and it doesn’t matter where we’re going. When I’m driving on familiar roads, I’m usually pretty confident that I’m not going to get lost. But if I’m going some place I’ve never been before, or if I’m taking back roads that are less familiar, then I start to get a little nervous about finding the way. What if I make a wrong turn? All these country roads look the same. What if I get turned around? A few weeks ago was using the GPS on my phone to find an address. I was driving along, following the

instructions. But after about 10 minutes, getting further and further away from town, I looked down to see how much further it would be. The screen told me I still had 45 minutes left. What? This is supposed to be an Ada address. I guess I forgot to tell that to my GPS, and it was trying to take me to Bellfountain. If you've ever been lost, that's not a very good feeling. There is a sense of confusion, helplessness, fear. It's nice to have GPS on our phones, but often, I would much rather have a real person show me the way: someone who has already been there, who knows where they're going, who has traveled these roads and is familiar with the surrounding area. Wouldn't that give you confidence if you lost, to have someone tell you, "Follow me, I will take you." That's what Jesus does for us. He leads us into a right relationship with God.

In John 14, Jesus told the disciples that he was going away, but one day they would follow him. As they listened, the disciples grew anxious. For the past three years, they had accompanied Jesus every step of the way, as he traveled from one village to the next. Wherever he went, they followed. But how were they supposed to continue on if he was no longer physically present among them? The idea left them feeling lost and confused. One of the disciples spoke up, in verse 5, and voiced his concern. "Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?'"

Jesus answered in verse 6, "I am the way." He was telling Thomas, and the others, they did not need to worry about trying to make their way through life on their own. They knew Jesus and so they already knew the way. He is the one who has gone ahead of us to conquer the powers of sin and death, rising victorious from the grave. He has taken away the barrier that stood in our path and keeping us apart from God.

This was the reason he came. All the world was lost without him, and our own we are unable to find our way home, so Jesus came to show us the way. It is through Christ that we experience forgiveness and grace. Through him we discover the purpose for which we were made. Through our Savior we find hope for eternity that will never fade.

Maybe there have been times in your life when you have felt lost and confused, adrift in the world. The path you were following hadn't brought you to a place of meaning or fulfillment as you imagined but it only led to disappointment. You wanted desperately to turn around, but weren't quite sure where to start. For those who are searching, Jesus does more than give directions or point us toward the right path. He says, "I am the way." If we place our trust in him, he will lead us to the Father.

One commentator explains,

Barclay What did he mean? Suppose we are in a strange town and ask for directions. Suppose the person asked says: 'Take the first to the right, and the second to the left. Cross the square, go past the church, take the third on the right and the road you want is the fourth on the left.' The chances are that we will be lost before we get half-way. But suppose the person we ask says: 'Come. I'll take you there.' In that case, the person to us is the way, and we cannot miss it. That is what Jesus does for us. He does not only give advice and directions. He takes us by the hand and leads us; he strengthens us and guides us personally every day. He does not tell us about the way; he is the way.¹

Notice that he doesn't tell us there are many possible roads ways that will take us there. He says, "...no one comes to the Father except through me." That may not be what our culture today wants to hear. Many people think that it doesn't really matter what you believe, one religion is just as good as the next, all roads will lead to heaven in the end. But that's not wasn't the message of Jesus. It is only through his death, burial and resurrection, that we are able to enter a right relationship with the Father.

He tells us the same thing in another passage. In Matthew 7:13–14 (NASB95) he warned the people,

¹³ "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. ¹⁴ "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

It isn't that God wants it to be difficult. He has gone to great lengths to save us. Christ died for the sins of the world, and wants nothing more than for everyone to respond to the good news. He is calling out, pleading with us to enter, but there are so many who refuse to listen. Jesus challenges us to make sure we are following the right path. Do you know him as your Savior? Have you trusted in him to wipe away your sin and to make you a child of God? If so, you already know the way

Jesus tells us, "I am the Truth."

It's very important for us to be able to tell the difference between what is true and what is fake. If I were to hand you this and say, "here is a twenty dollar bill," what would you think? It is real? No. How can you tell? It doesn't look like a twenty dollar bill. It's not right color, or the right size. It has the wrong face on it. And the word Monopoly is printed on it. This is only pretend money, for a game. If I tried to spend that at the grocery store, I'd get into trouble. They call that fraud. If you're going to the grocery store you need money that is true not fake.

Jesus said I am the truth, and that tells us he is who he claims to be. He is the Savior, the Son of God, the Messiah, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. All of his "I am" statements are true. He is all of those things to us and more. He is genuine, and sincere, the authentic revelation of God. Every word he spoke is faithful and true.

Truth is a theme that runs throughout the gospel of John. The word is used more than 25 times which is more than any other book in the NT. In John 1:14 we are told that Jesus is "...from the Father, full of grace and truth." And in John 8:32 he tells the crowd that those who listen to his words "...will know the truth and the truth will set you free."

This set Jesus apart from so many others who had come before him. During that period of history there were many false Messiahs who came and went claiming to speak for God. Some of them were popular for a while and managed to gain a large following, but before long people realized they didn't live up to all the hype and they faded from the scene.

This is what the Pharisees and Sadducees, the religious leaders of Israel, said about Jesus. They thought he was just another pretender, and accused him of deceiving the nation. But Jesus argued it was the other way around. They were the ones leading the people astray, but he came to proclaim the truth.

How do we know who to believe? The empty tomb is all the proof we need. If Jesus was only a false Messiah, as the Pharisees claimed, then he would have faded away like all others. But, if Jesus truly is who he claimed to be, then the grave would not hold him, and death could not defeat him. If the words of Jesus are true, then his followers would be willing to sacrifice everything to tell others, and not even the most powerful men on earth would be able to stop the message from spreading. If Jesus truly is the Messiah then the good news of his death and resurrection would continue changing the lives of men and women around the world thousands of years after these events took place.

There are many skeptics today, just as there were when these events took place. But Scripture challenges us to examine the evidence. Where does it lead us? If Jesus was a false messiah, all the religious leaders would have needed to do was open the tomb and show everyone that his body was still there. But they didn't do that, because the tomb was empty. How could that be unless Jesus truly is who he claimed to be.

I was listening to NT scholar earlier this week talk about the how the testimony of the empty tomb. The religious leaders argued that Jesus was a fake, a phony a fraud, but the empty tomb vindicates the words of Christ proving once and for all that he truly is the Messiah. Darrel Bock said,

“What God was doing is showing his vote in this dispute. There are really only two options. It's either blasphemy or exaltation... If God has acted to show who Jesus is through the empty tomb, and through the resurrection, that's God's vote in the dispute, and there's only one vote that counts, that's God's vote. If Jesus is who he claimed to be, then eternal life is possible and available to us.”ⁱⁱ

Jesus tells us, “I am the Life.”

Don't you enjoy beautiful flowers? This is one of my favorite things about springtime, everything comes alive again. During the long winter months, it is so cold outside. The world is dreary and gray. But then finally it gets a little warmer, and things start to change. The grass turns green and leaves begin to grow on the tree branches. Flowers break through the ground and begin to bloom. We see so many beautiful colors, white and purple and red. You can hear the sound of birds singing. The breeze feels so refreshing. It feels like a part of us comes to life as well, and we can't wait to get outside and ride bikes or work in the garden. Just a little while ago everything was dead, but now the world around us is full of life.

The same is true of Jesus, who tells us: “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” For three days his cold and lifeless body laid in the tomb. His disciples were ready to abandon all hope. They were so convinced that he was the Messiah who would bring salvation to this world, but now they couldn't see how that was possible. Their hearts were broken and their dreams were

crushed. Some of the women went to the grave early Sunday morning to anoint his body with perfume and say their final goodbyes.

But suddenly everything changed when the women reached the tomb and found it empty. While they were trying to make sense of what they saw, two angels appeared to them with a message saying, “Why do you seek the living One among the dead? ⁶ *“He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.”* ?” (Luke 24:5–7 NASB95) The women rushed back, as quickly as they could to tell the disciples and Jesus appeared to them that day proving that it was true. For three days, all hope seemed lost, but on a third day he rose from the dead.

Because he lives, Jesus is able to give us new life. Without him, Scripture tells us that there is a part of us that is spiritually dead. Deep in our soul, we sense that something is missing. There is an emptiness that we cannot fill. That’s because we are disconnected from the author of life. But when we come to know Christ as our Savior, he makes us alive again.

Ephesians 2:4–6 (NIV84) “But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus...”

We share in his resurrection. He awakens our soul to God and fills gives us a new purpose for our lives. There is joy that we never knew before. There is love that we never experienced before. There is a peace that was never possible before. He changes us, from the inside out and we are born again.

And this life will last forever. A few verses earlier, in our passage, Jesus told the disciples John 14:2-3, *“In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.”*

He is speaking of the glory that awaits his people, when our lives on this earth are over. Death will not be the end of our journey. There is a home waiting for us beyond this world. We can only dream of what it will be like to enter God’s presence, but Jesus could describe it perfectly because He had already been there. He came to open the way so that we can follow.

Jesus said he was going to prepare a place for us in his Father’s house. One day, we will leave this fallen world behind and step foot onto that heavenly shore. It will be more beautiful than we could possibly imagine: a perfect home where sickness and disease can no longer plague our bodies, a peaceful home where he will wipe away every tear, a heavenly home where we will stand in the presence of God and see our Savior face to face.

How do we know that will make it? Jesus tells us. “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” If you know him as your Savior and Lord, you can look to future with confidence knowing that our destiny is secure.

Looking to the “I AM”

These verses show us how the cross and the empty tomb make all the difference in the world. Maybe you are watching today and your heart is troubled. Our passage calls us place our trust in Jesus. Follow him. He has opened the way to a right relationship with God. Take hold of his hand and let him lead you. Believe in him. In a world of false messiahs, he is the truth and we can listen to his words with conviction knowing that he will never steer us wrong. Live for him. Allow him to awaken your heart in a way that you never thought was possible. And go out into the world and share this hope with others.

ⁱ Barclay, W. (2001). *The Gospel of John* (Vol. 2, pp. 183–185). Louisville, KY: Edinburgh.

ⁱⁱ <https://voice.dts.edu/tablepodcast/jesus-resurrection-vindication/>