

The Way, The Truth, The Life

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Date: 16 March 2025

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[0 : 0 0] entourage, I guess. But it's a pleasure to be out here with you guys, and it's also a pleasure to be in Scotland. We came yesterday, and I'm afraid to tell you that you've had your day of summer this year. I think that was yesterday. But if you'll open your Bibles with me to John chapter 14, page 847 in the church Bibles. I was saying to David, your church Bibles do me no good whatsoever. I cannot even begin to read the size of that print. But I'm impressed some of you, the age you are, can actually open up that Bible and read it. I chose this passage this morning simply because, well, Emery and I have a very good friend. She's 90 years old now. But I was out for coffee with her a few weeks ago, and she said that her father always loved to hear the gospel preach.

He'd been a Christian for many, many years. But every time he heard it preached, he would get a lump in his throat, want to be saved all over again. And chapter 14 of John was one of his favorite passages in the Bible for hearing the gospel. So for those of you this morning who are Christians, I hope this passage may put a lump in your throat and make you want to get saved all over again. And for those of you who aren't Christians, I hope this is the morning that the Holy Spirit moves to speak to you. So if you have your Bibles open, you'll see that, well, we're really at one of the most famous iconic passages in the whole of the Bible. And Jesus is gathered with his disciples in the upper room after the Passover meal. And later that night, literally just a few hours, he will be arrested and crucified. And if you have your Bibles open, you can see that back in chapter 13 in the closing verses. Jesus had just laid three difficult things onto his disciples.

In verse 33, he told them that, well, he was going to go away from them. And then he said to them that where he was going, they couldn't follow after him. And then in verse 36, he told them they would utterly fail him that night. And when Peter said in verse 37 that he would follow Jesus no matter what, that he would lay down his life for Jesus. Jesus said that instead, no, Peter, he will deny him three times that very night. And while he said this only to Peter, as we know, Peter was sort of the leader. He was the boldest of the disciples and making a statement to him like that did not bode well for the rest of the disciples either. And the disciples do have reason to fear. They have reason to be troubled and confused, maybe even to feel rejected. So with that in mind, let's hear from our text. So hear now these holy, inerrant and life-giving words from God's word here. And Jesus said to his disciples, let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my house, 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?

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. And you know the way to where I'm going.

Thomas said to him, Lord, we don't know where you're going. How can we know the way? And Jesus said to him, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my father also. From now on, you do know him and have seen him. Let me pray for us before we look at this. Our father, we praise you that you have sent your son, Jesus. And we thank you that he has revealed you to us and now speaks to us still in this portion of your holy word. Send us, we pray, your spirit, the spirit of Christ, to bring alive these words, to give light to our understanding, to apply them to our hearts and lives and to change and remake us after the image of your son. And we ask it in his holy name. Amen.

[4 : 28] Well, if you have your Bibles open there, in chapter 13, verse 21, we read that Jesus was troubled in spirit. Now, Jesus was troubled by the prospect of the suffering to come. But now, as we begin our passage, well, he forgets about himself. And he seeks to comfort his disciples who were troubled by the announcement of his imminent departure. I mean, these men had become followers of the Lord Jesus.

They had sort of, I guess, burned their bridges to the rest of society. They had come to think of their lives completely in terms of their participation in the Lord's ministry. And now, some three and a half years later, he tells them that he's leaving them. I mean, no one had ever said anything about the fact that separation from the Lord was going to be part of the plan. But Jesus tells them that the separation is not going to be permanent and that he's going to return for them. And then he tells them of his father's house.

He tells them of where he will prepare a place for them. His father's house is, of course, heaven. And his return is the second coming at the end of the age when he will take his disciples to be with him in the place that he's prepared. And the point here, I think, is not about the nature of the place itself, but the fact that there is a place for his disciples in heaven. And the disciples, although separated from him for a time, will be with him at last and forever. Now, I think that phrase, many rooms, indicates that there is room in heaven for everyone who believes in Jesus. At verse 4, Jesus tells them that not only is he going to leave them, but they know the way to where he is going. And then Thomas cuts in and speaking for all the disciples, he tells Jesus, no, no, they don't fully understand the destination. They understand very little and they're not really even sure what he's talking about. I mean, I think it could be easy to second guess Thomas here, but his question is not that unusual and it's really not that slow-witted.

It's a question that we would ask today. I mean, it's logical to think, isn't it, that unless you understand where you're going, where the end of your journey is, I mean, how are you going to choose a route to get there? The disciples may have been confused at this stage, but the image that Jesus used to comfort them and to point them, their attention toward his second coming, is an image that everyone can relate to. It's the image of home. Jesus wanted to put their minds at rest by telling them, well, what their future had in store for them. He referred to heaven as my father's house.

And then he said that there was a place or many rooms there. And everyone, I think everyone understands what he means when he used this image of home. At the deepest level of recognition, we understand and we appreciate the idea of home, don't we? Because house and home hold, well, the utmost importance for all of us. I mean, even those of us who have maybe bad memories of growing up in our earthly father's home, still, we have an image, an ideal of what home should be. And it's natural to have a longing for home. And we know instinctively what the Lord meant when he spoke of his father's house and our finding a place in it. I mean, it's been a long time since I lived in my childhood home.

[8 : 25] And still my memories of it are sharp and clear and warm and happy. In fact, I went to visit it a couple of years ago. And well, when I got there, it was it was empty, kind of sagging around the edges. I mean, there was lots and lots of mail behind the door. And it was apparent nobody had lived there for a very, very long time. Still, you know, as I looked through the windows, I could remember those rooms exactly as they were when I lived there. And I'm sure many of you have memories like that, too.

I mean, we can all relate to why Jesus chose this image of home and a father's house to describe the place where we would someday make our eternal home. And the importance here is really not to invoke an image of a mansion-like qualities of our heavenly home, but to evoke the atmosphere of a home, a place where we will belong, a place where we will live with our loving father and our elder brother and in the tenderness and delight of a home with the family of God.

See, elsewhere in the Bible, heaven is depicted in many other ways. But here in the upper room, Jesus uses this powerful, emotive, maybe even heartwarming image, which is common to all human life.

Heaven is home. Heaven is home. It's our father's house. It's our savior's home. And forever and ever, it will be our home, too. At last, salvation will actually take us home.

I mean, just think of the story of the prodigal son. I'm sure many of you have heard it preached using an outline of the three stages of home. Firstly, the prodigal son was sick of home. Then he was homesick. And then he went home. And you see, heaven is what Christianity is all about. Without heaven, Christianity, believing in Jesus, has absolutely no purpose whatsoever. It's just another religion.

[10 : 36] The covenant, the incarnation, the cross, the resurrection, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the second coming, they are all about how God brings us to our place in heaven. Heaven stands right at the end of it all.

And it's what everything points to and for which everything else gets its meaning. Heaven is the magnificent vision that we are given in the Bible of the final consummation and the fulfillment of life that awaits everyone who is in Christ Jesus.

Human beings long for home, just as they long for life and can never really make peace with the prospect of death. And just as eternity has been written in their hearts, so has a desire for an eternal home.

And what Jesus is telling us here is that finally and at last, heaven is the home for which all human beings long for human beings long for with an inconsolable longing. It's the destination that our hearts truly seek.

And surely, it's interesting, isn't it, that Jesus, as he covers his disciples, does nothing more than simply offer the image of home in the Father's house and tell them that there is a place there for them.

[12 : 03] Notice he doesn't elaborate on it. He doesn't try to explain it any further. He just says that he is going to prepare a place for us. But he never tells us what that means.

I mean, what does he do to prepare a place for us in his Father's house? I mean, what does that mean? I'm not sure. But Jesus seems content to simply leave us with this single image of heaven as home and a most solemn promise that he will see to it.

He will make sure that we make it there. He doesn't elaborate the image, but he does emphasize his promise. He says, I will come again and I will take you to myself that where I am, you may be also.

One ancient commentator put it, we understand how men are prepared for the place when we have no idea how the place is prepared for men.

So Jesus answers his disciples by saying that he is preparing a place for them to be with him. Now, if we look again at verse 4, there's a second part to Thomas' question.

[13 : 25] I mean, where can we find the right road to the place? How do we get there? How do we get to the home of the Father? And of course, one popular answer in our day is that all roads, any road, any road we choose, will lead to God as long as we are sincere as we take up our journey.

And so we should spend less time agonizing about which road to take and just get on with our journey. Let it be Christianity or Buddhism or Islam or Hinduism or environmentalism or even better, find your own path.

Find your own road to the throne. The more unique it is, well, the more special you are. And often those who promise these ideas, well, they want to stress what these roads have in common with each other.

They may appear to share the same moral convictions. They may share the same vocabulary. Some of their principles may overlap. There may be similarities in ritual practices that one can find.

And in the end, the conclusion is drawn that, well, they all do really lead to the same place. But the message of the gospel is that only Jesus can save.

[14 : 46] And it's a message that offends the tolerance and the relativism of this postmodern culture in which we live because it means Christians insist that it is only, exclusively, in Jesus Christ that relationship with God can be found.

All other religions are false. And either the root to God is simply a dead end. Objections to this doctrine have actually marked the world's hatred for Jesus ever since he spoke these words in this passage.

I am the way, the truth, and the life. And despite the world's disdain for John 14, 6, the content of Jesus' words tell us that we must never surrender his exclusive claims, no matter how offensive they might be to certain people.

Because Jesus is the only answer to the great needs of the world. Jesus has come as the answer. Really, the answer to man's tragic state.

Without Jesus, a person is alienated from God. They are ignorant of the truth and condemned to both physical and spiritual death. Jesus says he is the way.

[16 : 07] You see, he is the way for sinners to be reconciled to God. He says he is the truth. He reveals the truth of God which corrects our ignorance.

And he says he is the life. He is the life we need to regenerate us from the power of death. And like Thomas, if we are to understand what Jesus meant, we need to know our destination.

At verse 6, Jesus tells us our final destination. You can see it there. He says our final destination is to be with the Father. Our true destination, our true home, is God himself.

For as you know, God made us for himself. And our hearts are restless until we find our rest in him. And Jesus was going to the Father and that's where he's taking us.

And he says he is the way to God. You know, a way is a route or a path between a starting point and an ending point.

[17 : 13] I mean, it's everyday language that we use. Motorway, pathway, airway, passageway. And according to the word of God, the starting point for mankind is the utter condemnation for the guilt of our sin.

Paul says that you have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Which means it's our sin that bars us from God's holy presence and his blessing.

Therefore, our need is to be reconciled back to God. Moreover, we're not only condemned in sin, but we are utterly corrupted by sin.

And in the light of God's holy justice, well, our past haunts us, doesn't it? Do you ever have a thought come across of something you said or done to somebody or in some situation and it makes you cringe?

See, our present of our past comes back to remind us of our sin. And our present, well, it confuses us because of this constant battle that we have between what we want to do and what we don't want to do.

[18 : 23] And our future worries us? Well, because it's unknown. It's totally out of our control. And that's why sinful man cannot come to God in his fallen state.

We are utterly corrupted by sin. In fact, that's why sinful man doesn't want to come to God. It's like Adam and Eve as they tried to cover up their shame with a fig leaf as they fled from God.

We are alienated not only by God's justice but by our own God-detesting consciences as well. And it's here where we see the true offense of the gospel.

You see, the gospel offends because Christianity scandalizes the world because the gospel declares that man cannot save himself. God's way of salvation requires us to confess our sin, to humble ourselves, to surrender our claims of self-rule, the very things that sinful men and women don't want to do.

And yet, the good news that we find in the Bible is that Jesus came from heaven to reconcile sinners back to God. and it's good news.

[19 : 42] I mean, what could be better news for sinful men and women than Jesus has come back to reconcile them to God? In Luke 19, Jesus says, the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.

Matthew 20, he says, the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. And earlier here in John's Gospel, chapter 10, he said, I came that they might have life and have it more abundantly.

So when Jesus said, I am the way, he was saying that sinners may only come to God through him because God has provided for sinners to be reconciled to himself through faith in his Son, the Lord Jesus.

Romans 3, 23, which I referred to just a moment ago, it begins, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. but then it finishes by saying, we are justified by God's grace as a gift to the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, who God put forward as a sacrifice by his blood to be received by faith.

You see, Jesus is not just the way, he is God's way back to God. and after stating his claim to be the way to God, well, Jesus made two more statements about himself.

[21 : 11] Jesus is first and foremost the way to God, but he relates the way now to being the truth and the life. in order to recognize the way to be able to see it when it's shown to you, man needs the revelation of the truth, the truth of God because it was through our ignorance and our lies and our blindness that we first fell into sin.

Adam and Eve were led into sin by Satan. You'll remember the serpent lured Eve by asking, did God say, you shall not eat of any tree in the garden?

Now that was not what God said, that was just simply a lie. The Lord had actually said they could eat from any tree in the garden except for one. And Satan's lie suggested that God's command wasn't in the best interest of Adam and Eve.

It implied that if mankind wanted to experience real freedom, real joy, and real blessing, the man would need to ignore God's command and break his laws.

And that lie has been the source of sin ever since. But the Bible warns us that sin darkens our understanding.

[22 : 32] It prevents our minds from working properly and it alienates us from the life of God which makes us ignorant as sin hardens our hearts.

and in order to be saved we first must be enlightened. We must be enlightened by the revelation of God's truth of which the fullest expression is the Lord Jesus Christ.

You see Jesus can say he is the truth because he is the supreme revelation of God. He says only what the Father gives him to say.

He does only what the Father gives him to do. Jesus reveals the truth of God to overcome our ignorance so that we might believe and come to God through faith in him.

And if we think about this for just a moment we should note that when Jesus said he is the truth he is really speaking about all truth. If you think about it the great model of falseness or untruth is Satan who knows many truths but Jesus says of him there is no truth in him Satan is the father of lies.

[23 : 48] You see Satan knows many truths but in rebellion against God and his son well there is no truth in him. Just think about the demons that we read about in the New Testament.

They recognize Jesus don't they? They know who he is but they don't allow the truth of what they know to change them. You see we live in well educated times but for all of mankind's increasing knowledge in science and medicine and technology unless this knowledge is held in obedience to the one who is the truth it will only produce more ignorance more pride and even greater foolishness.

A.W. Pink a preacher from many years ago wrote this he said truth is not found in a system of philosophy but in a person Jesus Christ is the truth.

The apostle Paul tells us in Colossians in Jesus are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which means that as Christians we must be students of the Lord's word because as we study his word we learn and we absorb the truth about Christ and about God the real truth and Jesus said if you abide in my word you are truly my disciples and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free now when we stand there on the final day in the light of heaven I think all Christians will wish that they had spent more time reading their Bibles and less time watching TV and looking at the internet but think about this how much more will that be true of those unbelieving men and women who spent their lives ignoring or even rejecting

God's truth the one who is the ultimate! truth and therefore will they find that they have entered! into eternity unsaved unreconciled unforgiven and out of relationship with God Jesus said he is the way the truth and lastly he says he is the life Ephesians chapter 2 the first three verses they tell us that apart from Jesus we are just spiritually dead we are helpless to do anything for our own salvation we cannot save ourselves which means that life increasingly becomes a living death we eventually find ourselves living with no real happiness no satisfaction no real joy in anything no hope but Jesus said he came so that we might have life and have it more abundantly in the opening verses of

[26 : 55] John's gospel we read in Jesus was life and this life was the light of man you see Jesus is the source of eternal life for all who believe in him and if Jesus think about this if Jesus had only made the way for our reconciliation with God and then granted us the truth so that we could see the way well we would still be dead we would still be morally corrupt and spiritually incapable of following the way or believing in the truth Jesus told Nicodemus unless a person is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God and in order to be saved we must be forgiven as well as made spiritually alive so that we can believe so that we will be willing!

and able to follow! Jesus Jesus is the source of life and he conveys his power of life to us through his word Jesus said whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life John 3 he says whoever believes in the son has eternal life whoever does not obey the son shall not see life but the wrath of God remains upon him and just think about the prodigal son again when he returned home his father said this is my son who was dead but is alive again you see this should be great encouragement for the Christian man and the Christian woman because if the life that Christ gives to us is God's life then that life is eternal which means the Christian can no more perish than

God himself think about that Jesus gives you eternal life which is God's life which means you can no more die than God the father himself can die and this is the teaching of that famous verse isn't it John 3 16 for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life you know there are many things about Christianity that offend people in the world and in the culture but the chief offense of Christianity is its founder and his extraordinary claims James Montgomery Boyce is quoted saying that John 14 6 is probably probably the most exclusive statement that has ever been made by anyone in history and it is the exclusive claim that Jesus makes here that offends so many people in fact on the basis of this statement

Jesus gives us no other choice than either to reject him totally or trust him as Lord and Savior there's no third way in the way he says this and people don't like being backed into a corner with only a yes or no choice and just in case there was any doubt about the exclusivity inherited his words Jesus says no one comes to God except through me and think about how self assured these words are especially in light of the context of the situation he's speaking them I mean he is going to be arrested and crucified in just three or four hours he said I am the way knowing that in just a matter of hours he would be hanging helplessly from a cross he said that I am the truth knowing that the lies of his enemies were about to experience a great victory over truth and he said

I am the life on the eve of his dead body being sealed in a tomb I mean how could he be so self assured and appear so confident in those circumstances when his crucifixion is just it's looming on the immediate horizon well it can only be that he knew he would rise from the grave his truth would be proclaimed throughout the world and a multitude of people so vast that it's too large to number would be reconciled to God through him in the eternal kingdom of God you know since Jesus is the way and the truth and the life he calls us to have faith in him all truth is God's truth and all true life is God's life and the way the truth and the life are all made incarnate they're all intangible in

[31 : 57] Jesus and notice that when Thomas asked Jesus the way to the father Jesus didn't hand him a road map or a list of good works or some achievements that needed to be done no he directed Thomas to himself he said I am I am it's through me that you get there you see we are saved by Jesus who is the way who is the truth and who is the life therefore we need to see Jesus I mean we don't need to find a way for ourselves we need to trust Jesus and follow him as he leads us to the father we don't need to discover truth but we need to know Jesus and to grow in the truth as he teaches us in the wisdom of salvation which will free us from the darkness of sin and we don't need to find life instead we need to receive the life of

God in Jesus as he blesses us with entry into the courts of heaven and eternal life in the presence of God and that is the destination we are promised home home in the courts of heaven and eternal life in the presence of God you know I know that it can be very hard at times to believe in something so wonderful as we might imagine our heavenly home to be a home so perfectly home that we can't imagine how perfect it actually is and I mean it can be very hard in this world of sin and death just to hang on to it to believe that not so long from now all of us not so long from now we'll step through the door into our father's house and we will be at home at last and Jesus knows precisely how hard it can be to believe that and to keep that prospect alive in our hearts and so he said not only that he would return to this world to take us home but he solemnly emphasized his promise by saying that if this weren't true he would never have said it to us you know

I love those words are there any more words that are more consoling more comforting in all the Bible than those if it were not so! which therefore must be true that we are going home that he knows the way that it is a home of eternal happiness eternal bliss in the father's house and that there is a place there for us and that's well that was what the Lord Jesus thought his disciples needed to know in their fear and in the confusion that night in the upper room before his arrest out of all the things he could have spoken to them about this is what he chose to tell them the world without Jesus offers many things but they are all godless and dishonest dark deadly and very temporary

Jesus said I am the way I am the truth and I am the life and he offers himself to us without demanding from us any achievements or improvements or even any good works Jesus calls us simply to receive him in trusting faith and in return he promises that by grace he is ready to give us everything he has and everything that he is you and I will never receive a better offer and there will never be a better time than now to receive Jesus let's pray shall we father we thank you that you have given to us your son Jesus your only son whom you love and what a display of love for wretched rebel sinners you have made in the gift of him to us we set aside all claims to personal lordship casting our crowns of the feet of our true king and blessing him the lord

Jesus Christ who is our only refuge our only hope and our only savior and so we rest on him and in his name we pray amen to