

I am the Way, the Truth and the Life

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[0 : 0 0] Now, while the boys and girls are heading out to their classes, perhaps we can turn in our Bibles to John chapter 13. We're going to read from verse 18 to chapter 14 and verse 11.

For our sermon, we're going to focus on chapter 14 and the first 11 verses, but these verses from chapter 13 helpfully introduce us to the context. So again, the words will be up on the screen if you need them.

John chapter 13, beginning at verse 18. Let's hear God's Word. I'm not referring to all of you. I know those I have chosen, but this is to fulfill this passage of scripture. He who shared my bread has turned against me. I am telling you now before it happens so that when it does happen, you will believe that I am who I am. Very truly, I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me. And whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me.

After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, very truly, I tell you, one of you is going to betray me. His disciples stared at one another at a loss to know which of them he meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, ask him which one he means. Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, Lord, who is it?

Jesus answered, it is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish. Then dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. So Jesus told him, what you are about to do, do quickly. But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival or to give something to the poor. As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out and it was night. When he was gone, Jesus said, now the son of man is glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the son in himself and will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little longer.

[3 : 0 0] You will look for me. And just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now where I am going, you cannot come. A new command I give you, love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. Simon Peter asked him, Lord, where are you going? Jesus replied, where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later. Peter asked, Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you. Then Jesus answered, will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows, you will disown me three times. Do not let your hearts be troubled.

You believe in God. Believe also in me. My father's house has many rooms. If that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me, that you also may be where I am.

You know the way to the place where I am going. Thomas said to him, Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way? Jesus answered, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you'll know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him. Philip said, Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us. Jesus answered, don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time?

Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, show us the Father? Don't you believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you, I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father living in me who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves.

[5 : 27] Amen. And we'll leave it there. We'll turn back to that in just a few moments. But before we do that, we're going to sing again from Psalm 61. And Psalm 61 is interesting. So we've just read, here's Jesus speaking to troubled disciples, and he speaks of heaven as home, and that he's gone to prepare a place. And Psalm 61 finds David struggling and feeling faint. And what does he long for? He longs to dwell where God is. The longing of God's people to be at home and to be at rest is really spoken to powerfully in Psalm 61. So let's stand and sing the first five verses together.

Amen. O hear my urgent cry, my God, and listen to my plea.

From earth's remotest bounds I call, when my heart faints in me.

O God, conduct me to the rock that's higher far than I. For you're my refuge from the foe, my tower of strength on high. Oh, let me dwell within your tent, forever there to live.

O for the shelter of your wings, the refuge which they give.

[7 : 51] For you have heard my vows, O God, and you have given me the heritage of those who fear.

Your name continually. Now, can you turn back with me in your Bibles to John chapter 14 as we come to the sixth of the I am sayings of Jesus in John's gospel. John 14 verse 6, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

I wonder when was the last time you found yourself asking or somebody asked you, do you know the way? It used to be such a feature, I think, of life in Edinburgh, especially as you got anywhere in between the church and the Royal Mile towards Prince's Street. There was always loads of tourists around, always wanting to know where was the way to the castle or to St. Giles or one of the prominent tourist attractions. And the assumption that would sometimes go with that before they asked, do you know the way? Are you from here? The assumption being, if you're from the place, you should know directions, you should know the destination. Now, for some of us, that's going to be a fairly safe assumption. Some of us know the streets really well. In my case, if you ask me the directions, you're on very dangerous ground. I can think of at least twice chasing after tourists, having given them dodgy instructions, thinking, no, actually, you need to go that way, not this way. You need to be careful who to ask when it comes to directions.

Do you know the way? Well, think about John 14 in this context. Here we have some disciples. They're confused. They're distressed. Jesus is talking about he's going somewhere. He talks about being the way. And they're not sure what he is talking about. Now, what's Jesus doing? He's announcing himself as the ultimate authority, isn't he? He's announcing himself as the ultimate authority on direction and destination. And it's not just to some geographical spot. Jesus hasn't come to answer a fairly trivial question where the answer doesn't matter. Jesus is saying, I am the way to heaven.

Now, I am the way to know and to see God. And so, within these words, there is an invitation to trust him, to trust his authority, to follow his words, to understand that he is the way.

[10:57] And when we think about these words, we can understand as well that he's going to help us to answer some of life's biggest questions. Perhaps some questions that we find ourselves asking ourselves, or perhaps others have asked them of us. Perhaps as Christians, we've wondered some things, what is heaven like? Perhaps we've asked if heaven is real, how do we get there?

Are all religions equal? Is Christianity intolerant? What is God like? We can begin to answer all of these questions, and probably many more, from the words of Jesus in this text.

And it's really important when we have those questions to think about, who do we take them to? Same as with directions, you need to ask the right person. When we have big questions, we need to know, who do we take, who is the authority to speak to these questions? So, we might be tempted to listen to the voice of popular culture. Well, let's let the culture determine how we think about these big questions. Or maybe we think about, let's trust my friends and my family. They'll be the ones that we'll listen to. What Jesus would have us to do would be to listen to him, to take our direction from God and his word. We've spent probably three months now in John's gospel thinking about Jesus, thinking about, first of all, we thought about the seven miracles that John records. And he says, these are signposts. He records seven, there's many more. He records seven so that we might know Jesus is the son of God, that we might know he's the Messiah, that we might believe in him, and so we might have life in his name. And we've listened to him now six times say, I am. The Old Testament name for God, I am God.

And he's beginning to show us his character as God. And so here, when he says, I am God, and I am the way, it's an invitation to trust his words, to trust his authority, to trust his path, the path that he offers, which is nothing less than himself, as the way home to God, as the way to know God, as the way to see God and to have life with God. So let's get into our text and let's see some of this together. First of all, in the first four verses, we can see that Jesus is the way home to God the Father. So we read a little bit in chapter 13 to remind us of the setting. So this is the night of Jesus' arrest.

It's the night before the cross, when Jesus will, as it were, take the cup of judgment, God's judgment against sin and against sinners, and Jesus will drink it down in the place of his people so that we might be forgiven. So we might take today the cup of salvation. And what we find in Jesus at this time is that he, because he is as well as being fully God, is also truly human. He is troubled.

[14:00] So we read it, chapter 13, verse 21, After he'd said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, Very truly, I tell you, one of you is going to betray me.

In chapter 12, Jesus is predicting his death again. And in verse 27, he says, Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. No, it's for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name.

And here is Jesus. He knows the hour of his suffering and death has come, the reality, where he will be the sin bearer of the world, where he will experience in his body that sense of separation from his Father. He is beginning to anticipate in a new way that the horror that that brings to him. And so Jesus is troubled.

We also find, chapter 14, verse 1, the disciples are troubled. This is a time of great distress and confusion for them. What have they just heard Jesus say? They've just heard him say that one of them will betray him. Jesus has just said that Peter will deny him. And within a few short hours, all of them will run away in fear as Jesus is arrested. This is a difficult time for them also.

But here's one of the beautiful things about Jesus. And where is his heart right now? His heart is for his disciples, isn't it? He wants to comfort them. I am troubled, but don't you be troubled, Jesus says to his disciples. And we think, well, it's natural. They're about to lose their friend.

[15 : 44] Well, of course, you would expect them to be troubled, but there's something that Jesus knows. He knows his trouble has a purpose. His suffering and dying has that purpose of bringing them eternal comfort, of bringing forgiveness of sin, of bringing them to God. And so he can say, I'm troubled, but don't you be troubled. He gives them a command as well in verse 1.

Believe in God. Believe also in me. Now, we shouldn't miss this. We'll not just breeze past it. Here is Jesus once again saying to his disciples and saying to us, I am the appropriate object of your faith.

Just as you should believe in God my Father, so you should believe in me as the Son of God. That he's going to once again speak about himself in equal terms with the Father. So verse 9, anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. We've heard this so often from Jesus in the last few months.

And if we will recognize his authority, and if the disciples would recognize his authority and trust him and heed that command to trust him, then what will Jesus bring to them? What will Jesus bring to us?

He'll bring comfort. He gives this wonderful picture of heaven. What is heaven like? Heaven is home for the people of God. To be home with the Father, to be at home with the Son, and to be a perfect rest.

[17 : 25] My Father's house has many rooms. If that were not so, would I have told you that I'm going there to prepare a place for you? This is the beginning, I think, of the season of people movements around the world. It's kind of started, so perhaps some of us were remembering Thanksgiving this week. And Thanksgiving would be a time when people would be on holiday and typically go, if they could, to be with family. And then we hope, I guess, many of us in a few weeks time for us to welcome people to join us or perhaps we'll go elsewhere to be with our family for Christmas. And then not long after that, we come to Chinese New Year, the greatest of all people movements. But why do all of them happen? What do they have in common? Isn't it a longing to be both in our place and with our people? To be at home with family?

And as we think about those, we anticipate joy, no doubt. But also I'm sure we recognize that with every celebration, there's that tinge of sadness mixed in because we know that with the joy of every sort of reunion, there's also the sadness that comes with parting. We have to say goodbye, we have to go back to our jobs and so on. And some of us know too that those family gatherings are also marked by a sense of sadness of those who aren't able to be there, those who are no longer with us.

But what Jesus is saying, as we recognize that deep longing in our hearts for our people and our place, Jesus is saying, trust me and you will find the deepest longing of your heart met, not just for a moment and not just for a season, but for eternity. An eternal home, eternal rest, an eternal feast of love and joy is found in trusting in Jesus.

So it's good. How do we get it? Well, Jesus has told us, I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place, I'll come back and take you to be with me. Jesus prepares a place for us. And what does his preparation involve? It involves his going to the cross and dying for our sin? And it involves the resurrection, him rising in victory over Satan and sin and death. And his promise there is that he will return to bring his people home. Having done the hard work of making preparation, he will not fail to bring all of his people to be home with him forever. Jesus says in verse 4, you know the way to the place where I am going. And that way, of course, as Jesus is about to make even more plain, is Jesus himself.

The way to this eternal home is to be trusting in Jesus as Son of God and Savior of the world. If we are to know this wonderful homecoming that lasts for all eternity, and we need to trust in Jesus and the preparation that he made. Now, how does this help answer some of those big questions we might have? Well, think about the question, what is heaven like? Perhaps especially children love to speculate and wonder about what heaven is like. And we get lots of wonderful pictures about heaven, maybe especially in the book of Revelation. But isn't this a wonderfully special one? Heaven is like home. Heaven is being home with our Father. Heaven is being at home with Jesus, our elder brother, our Savior, knowing his love, knowing his welcome. And we hear that there's lots of rooms and there's lots of space that's a reminder that we share in that world of love, not just with a few, but with the church throughout history, the church throughout the globe. We share that love with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Sometimes connected with that, we have the question, well, how do I get to heaven? It sounds good. How do I get there? And again, Jesus has told us it's all about what he has come to do, what he has accomplished. He has made that preparation in dying and rising. He has faced the trouble of the cross. And so what's left for us to do is to believe in him.

[22 : 15] The unique and wonderful thing about Christianity is it doesn't say to us, you need to be a certain kind of person. You need to be a particularly good person in order to earn God's approval. We don't need to be very religious. No, we need to trust Jesus and his perfection. And there's a wonderful assurance found in that. Jesus has gone to prepare a place. Jesus will come to take us to be with him. It's all about Jesus. So here is one reservation that you and I, by faith, will never lose. And perhaps we've had those disappointments. Here is one destination that we will not get to and be disappointed by.

And our guarantee in all of that is Jesus. We are secure in him. And again, perhaps it helps us to begin to think about what is God like? As we remember, and Jesus has taught us so many times that he reveals God. If we look at Jesus, what are we finding?

We're finding a God who is wonderfully generous and gracious. A God who lovingly provides. A God who longs for followers to be home with him. Indeed, it is true that Jesus has so bound his heart with his church, his joy with his church's joy, that Jesus' joy will not be fully complete until all his church is home with him forever. It's the love that Jesus has for his church.

So Jesus is the way home to God the Father. And then in verses 5 to 7, we come to that, the I am saying, and we recognize here, Jesus is saying he is the only way to know God.

To hear it again, verse 6, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. That's a huge claim on two levels. One, again, he's saying, I am truly God.

[24 : 25] And then he's also saying, I am the only way to know God, to know life from God and with God. Now let's pause to consider for a moment where we find ourselves this morning. We find ourselves in Edinburgh. What can we say about Edinburgh? It's a global city and it's a diverse city.

Lots of wonderful cultures mixing together and no doubt we all appreciate that. Most of us, I imagine, we find ourselves living with good neighbors. We recognize people in our lives, people of different faiths and of no faith who are generous and kind and who are patient and who go the extra mile for us and for others. We live in a society that values tolerance and values diversity. So the question for us as a church is, how do we handle this statement?

Because it's a controversial statement when Jesus says, no one comes to the Father except through me. For many people find themselves asking, how can Christianity claim it's the only way to God? That sounds so incredibly intolerant.

Sounds so disrespectful of people with sincerely held beliefs across other faiths. So how do we respond? How do we respond graciously? Perhaps if we find ourselves in those kind of conversations?

There's lots that we could say, only two things I'm going to say on that. One is to remind ourselves to recognize that all truth claims are by nature exclusive and intolerant.

[26 : 11] We need to recognize that the claim that all religions are equal is similarly an exclusive and intolerant claim because it's saying that any religion that says, no, we're different is wrong.

Every claim to truth is saying, my view is right, therefore yours is wrong. So Christianity isn't unique in that. So that's good for us to know that we're not instantly in a different category from everyone else. And the only other thing that I want to say here, and it's really important that we can recognize this and find our confidence as a church in this, is that when we say Jesus is the only way to God, is that something that the church has invented?

And the answer is no. This is coming straight from the mouth of Jesus. So our authority is not some human tradition that has been built up over time. No, we're standing on the words of Jesus. And so that says something really important for us as Christians. It means that that as difficult as we might find it in today's society, we must not deny Jesus our Lord and his authority. No, we must say graciously but truthfully that we believe there is only one way to God, and that's through Jesus. And similarly, as we recognize that this isn't an invention of the church, but this is coming straight from Jesus, what we want to do and what we want to pray is that people would listen to Jesus, perhaps to understand why Jesus says that.

Perhaps there are people in our lives who are full of those questions, and we could read John's gospel with them and help them see, well, here's why Jesus says it, because look at who he is and look at what he does. Because that's really what Jesus does. He says, I am the way to God because I am the truth. I am this unique revelation of truth from God as God, and I am the way to God, the only way to God, because I am the life. I am eternal life, and I am the life giver.

So Jesus' massive claim, and it is a massive claim, we need to recognize that, is absolutely tied up with his identity and his authority, and it calls for people to explore and then to respond to Jesus' claim.

[28 : 48] So Jesus said, I am the truth. And what I hope we've seen as we've spent some time in John's gospel, is that this is consistent with the message of John's gospel. It's also consistent with what Jesus himself has taught. So just to help us to see that, John begins his gospel with profound truth. Speaking about Jesus as the word, he says, in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. Jesus is the word. He is a word of truth. He is God's revelation, communication to us, and he is God. Verse 18, as John concludes his introduction, he says, no one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son who is himself God has made himself known. So Jesus is himself God, and Jesus makes God known. Go towards the ends of John's gospel. Now, we've already thought about the fact that he wants the signs to be a way that we would believe that Jesus is the Son of God and

Messiah, but we also see that happen in the case of Thomas. Thomas, who is full of doubts and questions, we find Thomas, chapter 20, end of chapter 20, on his knees confessing of Jesus, my Lord and my God.

And we've seen that through the gospel. It's the consistent message of Jesus himself. Chapter 5, verse 19, whatever the Father does, the Son also does. John chapter 10, verse 30, I and the Father are one. So the whole of John's gospel is wanting us to see that Jesus is this unique revelation from God as God, revealing God to us. And Jesus can also say, I'm the way to God because I am the life. And again, we find that in the introduction that John gives to Jesus in his gospel. In him, in Jesus, was life, and that life was the light of men. Jesus is the life giver. That we have life and breath today is a gift from Jesus. John chapter 5, verse 26. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. Just like the Father, the Son is self-existent. He is eternal.

Chapter 11, verse 25. We thought about it last week. I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live even though they die. Jesus has the power to give resurrection life, to give eternal life. Eternal life. And in that famous verse, John 3, 16, God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. Believing in Jesus means not perishing but having eternal life.

One more detail to notice before we move on from this little section. Verse 7. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. And then he says, from now on, you do know him and have seen him. From now on. As Jesus pointed, he's about to show them even more of himself. He's about to show even more of the Father's glory. He's about to show even more of the Father's heart in his own person and work. And what's he about to do to show us even more of God's glory? He's about to lay down his life for his sheep.

[32 : 51] He is about to die so that we, by trusting in him, might live and live eternally. So let's circle back to that question. Is Christianity narrow? Is Christianity intolerant?

How can we possibly say Jesus is the only way to God? Well, we've said, yes, we must insist on saying Jesus says you must believe in me. Jesus is really clear on that. He's the only way to God. But we also need to recognize this same Jesus who is himself, God, what's he about to do? He's about to sacrifice himself to open up the way of access to God, not just to a few, but to any who believe, so that weak, sinful people like us might come home to know and enjoy life with God. Anyone who believes in me, the gospel says, will have life and have life eternally. So yes, in one sense, Christianity is narrow, but in another wonderful sense, it's wide open because of the finished work of the Lord Jesus.

Let's have a look together at verses 8 to 11, kind of along the same lines, but Jesus says that he is the way to see the Father. But what we get in verse 8 is a sense of the distress and confusion of Philip and the disciples. Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.

Jesus, just give us something to show us some direct access to God. Just like Moses prayed, Lord, show me your glory. So Philip in his confusion wants to see something more.

Maybe we recognize a question in there, that wondering, what is God like? Is it possible to really know him and how do we do that? Perhaps we recognize in our culture there are lots of people today who would describe themselves as spiritual but not religious. And I guess in large part, what's driving that is a desire to connect with something higher than ourselves.

[35 : 07] Perhaps you have neighbors or friends or colleagues and they go on spiritual retreats or perhaps they use crystals or they engage in meditation or they explore world religions.

One thing that reminds us of, I think, is that as people we were made to know God. That search that goes on is a reminder that we are wired for worship and worshiping the true and living God. And so people are seeking. But many people, as it were, are kind of stuck and trying lots of different things but not sure how to really know God. And this is where Jesus is such a gift. He says, look, I am the way to God. I am the goal of the search. I am the way out of that maze that you find yourself in. I am the end of the search. Believe me and come to me.

There's two questions that Jesus asks. Verse 9, Don't you know me, Philip, even after I've been among you such a long time? Anyone who's seen me has seen the Father. What's Jesus saying there? He's reminding us that he is the invisible God made visible. To quote my favorite line of the Venny Christmas Carol, veiled in flesh, the Godhead see.

Hail, the incarnate deity. Jesus makes the invisible God visible to see. Jesus is to see the Father. And Jesus gives evidence. His evidence is his own words. Verse 10, The words I say to you, I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it's the Father living in me who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I'm in the Father and the Father is in me.

It's an invitation to Philip, to the disciples, to us to trust Jesus' words, to trust his authority, to trust that he is the I am God and we should listen to him. But he doesn't just stop with his words.

[37 : 10] He also points Philip, the disciples and us back to his works. Verse 11, At least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. So John recorded for us those seven great miracles, those seven signposts of turning water to wine, the healings, the raising of Lazarus, all to the point, all pointing to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God and we should believe in him.

And of course, the great sign, the great miracle in John's gospel is Jesus' own resurrection. There is proof positive and that's what will help the disciples to have that faith and to have that living hope when we see the risen Lord Jesus. Don't you know me, Philip? To know me is to know the Father.

The second question Jesus asks, verse 10, don't you believe? Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? Jesus and the Father are one. They're completely God. Jesus is completely God and he is absolutely united to his Father. Don't you believe? It's a reminder, I think, that that's something that all true Christians believe about Jesus, that he is completely, truly God, that he is the only way to God.

We cannot be a Christian unless we believe Jesus is God and the only way to God. Every Christian holds those realities to be true. So Jesus, in asking those questions, is asking questions of us. Do you know? It's a really important question. Do you know that to know Jesus is to know God?

I encourage you, if you don't know, to explore, to get into John's gospel or one of the gospels, to discover that truth for yourself. And coupled with that, do you believe?

[39 : 05] It's not just enough to know facts about Jesus. It's not even enough to say, yeah, I believe Jesus is the Son of God. Do we believe that he is my Savior? Is that reality making a difference to us personally? It calls for a response of faith. Jesus says, I am the way.

And as the way, I have the authority to answer all those big questions about life. To ask that question, do you know the way? It reflects a willingness, doesn't it, to trust the authority of the person that we're asking the question of. We find ourselves in a different city. We ask, do you know the way? We're putting ourselves in the hands of that person to be able to direct us wisely. And isn't that something we do all the time for decisions? We maybe think of a family member or a friend. There's someone who I trust their word. I trust their advice. I trust their decision-making. So I'm going to trust their authority. And we probably also discovered that we must choose wisely who we listen to as authorities. Maybe we've had that journey where we've been with a friend. Yeah, of course I know the way. In fact, I know a shortcut. And you find yourself hours later on the road to nowhere. You need to trust the right authority.

A lot of things don't really matter. When it comes to life and eternal life and knowing God and forgiveness of sin, then the right authority really matters then. And what's Jesus saying to us in John 14?

He's saying, I am the ultimate authority. I am the route to God. I am the way home to God, to know God, to see God.

And so as we close, as Jesus has done so many times, he's asked the disciples and he asks us, will we believe? Will we trust Jesus? Let me finish with three invitations. The first, if you're not a Christian, let me invite you to investigate. Having said how important these matters are and how big the claims of Jesus are. Investigate Jesus. Investigate the Christian faith.

[41 : 24] It's rooted in history and revelation. It invites us to investigate and to explore, to read, to ask questions, to pray all the time to God that he might show us true. True. And again, tied up with that, let me invite everyone to believe, to come to that point of not just knowing about Jesus, but knowing him personally and trusting our lives, our eternity to him. If you know Jesus is the Son of God, if you know he is the Savior, you need and you're not yet a Christian, let me encourage you to turn to him today, to trust in him, to turn away from sin and to live for him.

And let me invite, for those of us who are Christians, let me invite you into comfort, because that's what Jesus is doing for his disciples. He was bringing comfort to recognize that Jesus has made this incredible journey for us. He left his home in heaven.

He came into our world to suffer and die for us before rising and then returning home to glory. And he has made that journey home so that by faith, so will we. That his home will be our home. That his father is our father. That he is our hope.

There's a wonderful little verse in John 14, verse 23, as he continues to comfort his disciples. He says, anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My father will love them and we will come to them and make our home with them. That wonderful. We don't have to wait till heaven till we enjoy life with God.

We have this promise that by the Spirit, Jesus comes to live within us. The father comes to call our heart his home. And he will remain there loving until he takes us home to be with him forever.

[43 : 39] Let's pray together. Lord, our God, we thank you for the words of Jesus, these words of comfort, reminding us that in the midst of his trouble, as he anticipated the cross, he wanted to give his disciples comfort and to give us comfort, that he is the way home to you, that to trust him is to know life with you and from you, that he indeed makes the invisible God visible in his words and in his actions. And that as we consider him dying on the cross for sin and for sinners, we recognize that he is showing us the gracious and loving heart of our God.

And so we pray that you would help each one of us to trust him and to trust him all the more. Lord, for those here today who aren't Christians, may they have that desire to investigate, to seek further, to recognize the significance of Jesus' claims, and that by your spirit you would show them the truth of who Jesus is, so they might put their trust in him.

And for those of us who are already Christians, we pray that you would comfort and strengthen our faith. Lord, we thank you that we will soon take these elements, these reminders of Jesus dying on the cross, to show us to show us your love, that he dies so we might not die, that he rose from the grave so we might know eternal life ourselves.

And so please strengthen our faith and give us that wholehearted worship. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Now, we'll get the boys and girls in to join us, and then we will come to the Lord's Supper.

I'm just ready to come in. While they are a gathering, and here they come, perhaps we can take a look at words from Ezekiel, which I think are up on the screen there.

[46 : 22] Welcome, boys and girls. Come, come, come. If you find your mums and dads, that would be excellent.

Great.

There we are. It's about all present and correct. I've been reading through the book of Ezekiel this week, and a couple of days ago I came to Ezekiel 18, and I just wanted to share the words that are up on the screen there with us, again, to remind us of the heart of God.

Ezekiel 18, verse 23. Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the sovereign Lord? Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?

Now, bear in mind, these are words addressed to the nation of Israel, as they have, by and large, absolutely turned their back on God, giving themselves over to idolatry, rejecting God in so many ways.

[48 : 00] Verse 30. Therefore, you Israelites, I will judge each of you according to your own ways, declares the sovereign Lord. Repent. Turn away from all your offenses, then sin will not be your downfall.

Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, people of Israel? For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the sovereign Lord.

Repent and live. It's words that speak of the heart of God, reminding us his pleasure is not in the death of the wicked.

His desire is that we would turn away from sin, that we would turn to him, we'd turn to Jesus, our Savior, and we would live. And, you know, the Lord's Supper is such a powerful reminder of the loving heart of God.

God so loves that he gave his one and only Son. Jesus died on the cross so that we might not perish, but rather that we might turn and live.

[49 : 08] It's a reminder that the way home to God is through the sacrifice of his one and only Son, Jesus. Who is the Lord's Supper for?

Think about these words of Ezekiel. It's for those who know they are sinners, who know that we have offended our God. But what have we done?

We have repented. We have turned to God. We've turned to Jesus that we make no life in him. We are resting.

We are trusting in Jesus, the forgiveness and the eternal life that he has secured for us. So what we're going to do is we're going to sing a hymn together.

We're going to sing the power of the cross. And as we do that, our ushers will direct folks to come up and to receive. There's bread and wine up the front here. So if you take it and then take it back to your seat and then after we finish singing and everyone's got, we'll share.

[50 : 15] We'll be right back.