

# The Way, The Truth, & The Life

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[ 0 : 00 ] In what is now Belgium. And from that we have the Belgic Confession.! And it continues to be an explanation.

Confession of faith for Reformed Christians. So I'll ask some questions and I'll invite your responses to this confession. Congregation, what do you believe about access to God?

We believe that we have no access to God. Except through the one and only mediator and intercessor, Jesus Christ the righteous.

He therefore was made man, uniting together the divine and human natures. So that human beings might have access to the divine majesty.

Otherwise we would have no access. Suppose we had to find another intercessor. We would love more than he who gave his life for us.

[ 1 : 27 ] Even though we were yet with you. Who has had much prestige and power. As he who is seated at the right hand of God.

And who will be heard more readily than God's own dearly beloved son.

Christ himself declares, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to my father but thy name.

Why should we seek another intercessor? And call on my heavenly father through Christ our only mediator. And our text this morning will come from John chapter 14.

That passage where Jesus says, I am the way, the truth, and the life. So you can see the connection there. So our reading is from St. John's Gospel.

[ 2 : 29 ] Chapter 14, the first 11 verses. If you would like to turn there in your Bibles. In the Bibles that I found in the chairs. It begins on page 1067. And I will read that in a moment.

But before we hear the scriptures read. Let us pray for God's leading. Chapters earlier, the Greeks came to Philip.

And we are like these Greeks. We ask, O God, that as we read the scriptures this morning, that we will see Jesus.

And may seeing Jesus give us all of the satisfaction. Take our minds and think through them.

Take our lips and speak through them. Take our hearts and set them on fire with love for you. What we know not teach us. What we have not give us.

[ 3 : 38 ] And what we are not make us. For Jesus' sake. Amen. The Gospel of St. John. Chapter 14.

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms.

If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me so that you may be where I am.

You know the way to the place where I am going. Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not 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 would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and you have seen him.

[ 4 : 51 ] 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 the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not my own. 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 miracles themselves.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. I am the way, the truth, and the life. After John 3, 16, this is perhaps the most famous verse, second most famous verse in John's Gospel.

[ 5 : 57 ] A succinct proclamation of the good news coming from the lips of our Savior himself. These poignant words appear in a very distressing scene in the Gospel story.

So, where are we going this morning? First, I want to locate the context of this passage. Where are we in the Gospel story? And then we'll walk through the passages we have read, and then we'll spend some time reflecting on how Jesus' words may be speaking to us today, to our distress, to our concerns.

These words were for the disciples, but they are also for us. And so this scene, where does it happen?

This is Jesus last night with his disciples. They are in the upper room. It is a Thursday night before that fateful Friday.

Earlier in that night, Jesus informed his disciples that one of them is going to betray him. And the disciples are bewildered, each one of them asking, Lord, is it me?

[ 7 : 12 ] And eventually, Judas, the betrayer, which no one knew was the betrayer, we know as the reader, he leaves the room. Jesus announces his imminent departure, and he says, where I will go, you will not be able to follow.

You will not be able to go where I go. This is a shock, because for three years, these men followed Jesus every day in a lockstep.

And now he's leaving them, and they cannot follow. A dreadful shadow of the cross hangs over Jesus, even now.

He knows about his execution, and so do the disciples, and the news devastates them. It is a dark night for them.

Simon Peter protests. He says, I am going to die for you. I will die in your place. And Jesus responds by predicting Peter's triple denial.

[ 8 : 21 ] The disciples are crushed by these waves of bad news after bad news that Jesus informs them of. The mood in the upper room is heavy.

It flatlines that. Disciples are despondent. What does Jesus say to his disciples in this vexing moment?

Jesus does tell them the bad news. The bad news of what is to come, but he also tells them the good news.

He consoles his distressed disciples. That's much of what chapter 14 is about. That headings, if you look in our Bibles, the headings the translators put in is Jesus comforts his disciples.

He comforts them by telling them the truth of the bad news. And he comforts them by telling them the truth of the good news. On good days, disciples could be a confused bunch, a clueless bunch, and we find that sometimes entertaining in the stories of the gospel.

[ 9 : 44 ] But on this day, on this day, it was not a good day. They are completely unmoored, disoriented. Anticipatory grief takes over.

Jesus will soon face the anguish in Gethsemane. But here, here Jesus is not focused on his anguish.

Here, he is outfitting his disciples for what is to come. He is giving them what they need. He is telling them the truth that they need to know so they can face the dark hours.

so they can face what they will encounter, so they can get past the moment of the cross. They will soon scatter in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The events will plunge them into darkness before the night is over. Jesus will have six trials. Their rabbi will be executed and their world will be turned upside down.

[ 10 : 49 ] Jesus is on the brink of the most agonizing night of his life. and what is on his mind? What is on his mind? His disciples.

He is thinking about them. He encourages them. He comforts them. He consoles them. He tenderly calls them in this chapter my little children.

The only time he ever does that. Jesus is the most the most affectionate the most tender with his dearest disciples.

Jesus provides consolation after consolation comfort after comfort. He assures them of eternal life. He makes it clear that he has equal deity with God the Father.

He assures them of his unending presence with them and with every future believer. Jesus foretells the coming and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promises them of his imminent return.

[11:57] He tells them that he will triumph over the darkness. Jesus is arming them with truth after truth after truth after truth because truth is what they will need to know to face the darkness.

Jesus is giving them what we would call doctrine. Truth from God truth about God. That is what will anchor them in the dark night ahead.

Jesus does not prevent the trouble. Jesus gives them an anchor of truth to hold them in the trouble. Jesus speaks to their fear. Jesus speaks to them proactively. Verse 1 Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God.

Trust also in me. You are going to face adversity. Just as you trust in God, trust in me. Put your faith in me.

[13:03] Not only does Jesus make the claim of full divinity, he tells the disciples that the eleven who are here want to do with troubled hearts.

Peace for troubled hearts comes from trusting in Jesus. Trusting in his claims. Trusting in his power. Trusting in his person.

And then Jesus assures them that there are many rooms in his father's house. I'm going to prepare a place for you. Be encouraged preparing a place for someone preparing a room echoes the Jewish custom of a groom, a betrothed man, adding an addition, a wing to his father's house.

This would be the wing where once he is married, he will bring his bride. That is where they will be together after the betrothal period. That is where they will consummate.

That is where their family will be going forward. It is a reassurance. I will come back and I will take you to be with me so that you will be there where I am.

[14:22] And then Jesus says, you know the place where I am going. You know the way. I will bring you there. And so often the disciples, they think they know something and then they say what they think they know and it turns out that they don't actually know what they think they know.

But in this case, they say they don't know something and then it turns out that they actually do know. this is where Thomas courageously pipes in and says, Lord, we don't know where you're going so how can we know the way?

I love people who are not embarrassed to ask questions because if you've ever been in a classroom, the person who asks questions asks what you want to ask and then we all get to learn and benefit from a good question.

Thomas is saying, Jesus, we understand the path that you must travel. We understand that we cannot follow you there. You're going to the Father. You're coming back for us.

That is your way, but what is our way? How do we chart our course that you will be gone? What more do we need to know to live our life without you?

[15:47] Can you give us some directions, maybe a turn by eternal is how do we go forward? And Jesus speaks to Thomas to the worry that Thomas has about what to do or where to go.

Jesus' answer to God comes in verse 6, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except for me.

Thomas, you don't think you know the way, but you actually know the way. Thomas, you know the way because you know me, I am the way.

I am the I am the one who will take you to the Father. trust in me, I will be your way. When troubles rise, when the world rages, Jesus says, don't be troubled, I will come for you.

I will be your way, I will provide for you. The way to God does not center on technique, but on a person.

[17:09] the way we come to the Father is not by doing, but by trusting, trusting in a person.

And that is good news, that is the gospel here in the upper room. Good news to Thomas. Thomas, you don't need anything more than knowing me, than trusting in me.

don't worry about the way, Thomas. I am the way. This is good news. Jesus is preaching the good news to his disciples.

I am. I am. I am. I am. When Jesus speaks here, he uses this very interesting construction.

Scholars have observed these I am statements. They're very odd in Greek, and they allude to a way of constructing grammatically in Hebrew.

[18:16] through. There are eight of these ways that Jesus expresses these I am statements in the gospel of St. John, and a few times in the other gospels.

When Jesus says that I am, he says it twice. He identifies himself with the God of Israel in this unique way.

It is the I am who I am. this is how the Lord identifies himself to Moses back in Exodus 3.

When he speaks to Moses out of the burning bush, God, Moses says when the Israelites ask which, what God is this that's sending me?

What do I tell them? You tell them, Moses, I am who I am. It is the I am who sends you to emancipate them from slavery.

[19:17] The great I am. I am is the name of the God of Israel. It's God's special name. That's the way God revealed himself to a people he would call his own.

He reveals himself this way to Moses in his time of hesitation. salvation. The God who is the I am is the God who is the redeemer, the same redeemer who led out the Israelites out of Egypt.

And Jesus' disciples, they were all Jewish, they knew the illusion Jesus was making here, the claim that he was making. Jesus is the one who liberates the captive.

He is the one who brings God's sons and daughters to the Father's house. Jesus restores our fellowship of God.

Jesus doesn't say I am a way. He is the only way for you and me to know God.

[20:32] that's where the negating claim at the end of the verse makes it crystal clear. No one comes to the Father except the me.

This is an exclusive claim. The only way to the Father is through me, says Jesus. And if you really knew me, you would know my Father as well.

From now on, you do know him and you have seen him. Thomas, you know me, you know the Father.

If you have seen me, you have seen the Father. And this is where Philip chimes in. Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.

Lord, we want to know what it's like to be in God's presence. That will satisfy us. Oh, dear Philip, oh, dear Philip, I've been so long with you and you still don't know.

[21:49] This is what I've been showing you for the last three years. You know what the Father is like. You know what the Father is like.

And although Philip, Thomas, both knew Jesus, they knew Jesus better than many of us will know Jesus.

They've seen him face to face. And yet they both wanted something more than Jesus. they wanted additional revelation.

They wanted more direction. They thought they had not seen enough. Anxious hearts, anxious hearts look for something in addition to Jesus.

Thomas and Philip watched Jesus every day for three years. But when trouble comes, their confidence vanishes.

[23:04] In the very beginning in the call stories of each of the disciples, Jesus comes to them and says, come, follow me. And these men have followed Jesus.

He called each of them to himself in the way that the Lord calls each one of you to himself. Come, follow me.

And that is what Jesus is doing again here. Jesus is calling his disciples to come, follow him again.

Come, follow me again. Don't take your eyes off of me. I am still your way. I am your only way.

I'm still all that you need. I am your destination and I am your way. I don't know what it is like for you, but I can speak for myself.

[24:15] I have these seasons, call them my Thomas and Philip seasons, where I am disoriented just like these two.

When I wondered, is Jesus breathing enough? Seasons when my faith is tested, when the wheels kind of fall off, when troubles come your way, anxiety rises up in your heart, what happens to your trust in Jesus?

Have you been in a Thomas season, within earshot of Jesus for years? years. You've known Jesus, you've followed Jesus, you know the way, but you've lost the plot along the way, lost sight that

Jesus is the way.

Following Jesus, trusting in Jesus, seems sometimes like it's not enough, like it might not be enough.

Jesus says to us, and preaches to us the good news, I am all that you need. I am all that you need.

[ 25 : 57 ] And you need to hear this, I need to hear this before we encounter a dark night of despair. Do not let your hearts be troubled.

believe in me. Do you believe in Jesus when push comes to shove? When you're given a grim medical diagnosis, when there's a job loss, a divorce, a death of a loved one, or past abuse is triggered, hurt that continues to haunt you comes back stronger.

When we come against these seasons of struggle, deep pain, and heartbreak, where do we go?

What happens to our trust? We live in a sinful state, this size of glory, and so struggles are part of the Christian life.

struggle. But what happens to our faith in these struggles? Struggles of anxiety that threaten to eclipse the truth that we know about Jesus.

Jesus knows this about his disciples. He knows that this will happen. That's why he arms them with truth. Do we reach for truth about Jesus in these times?

[ 27 : 26 ] that's the real question of how we apply this. We might come to a place where we wonder, is Jesus enough?

Is there something more than Jesus? When the stock market dips, who do you look to?

What do you look to? when the HR slips you the pink slip, or when grant funding ends? Do you trust your savings?

Do you trust your insurance, your reputation, your connection, family, as good as that is?

When there is a loss, just like the disciples, it's easy for us to turn our sights of that which is above.

[ 28 : 26 ] As the ground beneath us shifts, we panic and look for something to hold us steady, something to lean on.

Jesus knows, Jesus knows that his followers will have these times of disorientation. Maybe you're in this season today.

You're asking yourself, maybe there's something more than coming to be with God's people on the Lord's day. Maybe there's something more than gathering, than praying, than singing, than hearing sermons, than remembering our baptism, or coming to the Lord's table.

Is there something more than these ordinary things, these ordinary means of grace? Isn't there something extra? Do you ever feel that way?

Maybe there's some advanced version of discipleship that you missed somewhere along the way, something that you need, and that missing piece will unlock it for you.

[ 29 : 43 ] a secret way to a better life, a better way to see the Father, something that will level up this life if we just change something about our spiritual life.

Deep down, when we think this way, what's happening is our faith, our simple trust in Jesus is beginning to falter. and we become anxious to know more, to do more, to be more, to see more.

When our trust flips, we want something more. We ask, isn't there more? And Jesus' answer is simple.

no, no, no, no, I keep nothing from you. I give you my self.

I am all that you need. In me, you have it all. You have everything. I am the way.

[ 30 : 58 ] I am the truth. I am the life. Jesus knows us, and he is the answer to our anxious hearts. That's where our anxious hearts should go, to Jesus.

God has provided for us a costly way. And if we come to the Father, it means that we relinquish our way.

It means we relinquish the illusion that there are other ways. It means coming to God on God's terms.

It means that we come to God through Jesus. As we read in the Belgian Confession, we seek no other interest Jesus alone.

The way Jesus deals with the problem of human sin is a way that no one else could deal with it, and in a way that no one else could imagine.

[ 32 : 16 ] Jesus does not give the disciples or us a recipe, a set of instructions. He doesn't say do this or do that. He doesn't say improve yourself, do better, stand on your tippy toes and you'll see God.

you do the best you can and I'll do the rest. Jesus doesn't say that. Jesus says, trust in me. Trust in me and I am going to be your way. I will take you. I will come free. I will do everything that you need for your homecoming for you to be in the Father's house.

And our homecoming is possible only through the humiliation of Jesus on the cross. This way, this only way is available to all.

This is an exclusive claim, but this is the most inclusive exclusive claim that there is. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is a narrow way but anyone can come through the narrow way.

[ 33 : 33 ] Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, his atoning sacrifice is for anyone who will call upon his name, anyone who will trust in him.

Their sin is removed. They are resurrected. They are given new life. Through Jesus, anyone can come to the Father, everyone who trusts in his name, people of all tribes, of all languages, of all times, all are welcome to come to the Father through Jesus, the Son.

Through Jesus, the Son, who dies on the cross. Jesus shows us a self-giving and sacrificial God, the God who loves his own, a God who suffers in our place, the God who condescends to our understanding, a God who enters our pain, the God who comes to rescue creatures that could never rescue themselves.

Only through Jesus can we know this God, a triune God who whose love overflows an act of grace, the God who comes, who rescues, who redeems the God who conquers death, who embraces the prodigals, who forgives sins, who clothes his forgiven children in his own righteousness.

Jesus is the only way to know this God, a God who gives everything that we need to us.

[ 35 : 25 ] This is how God has chosen to reveal himself. Jesus is the truth. Jesus is the way. Jesus is the way. In Jesus we see this God now.

And on the last day we will see him face to face. If you are someone who does not trust in Jesus, you are missing life.

You are missing the real life. Now I urge you, put your faith in Jesus. And if you do trust Jesus, brothers and sisters, rejoice, for you have everything that you need.

You have the richest blessings. You have the greatest inheritance. You trust the one who is the way, the truth, and the life abundant.

we can confidently affirm our hope in him with the words that we find in answer 58 of our catechism.

[ 36 : 43 ] Even as we already now experience in our hearts the beginning of eternal joy. So after this life we will have perfect blessedness such as no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, no human heart has ever imagined a blessedness in which to praise God forever and ever.

We will praise God because Jesus is our way. The life everlasting is ours, brothers and sisters, because we have Jesus who is the way.

and the truth and the life. Let us pray. Try you God. In these days when our hearts are troubled, we pray that you would grant us the gift of faith.

Help us to believe in the words of Jesus, to know that you are enough, that you are the way, that we should not seek our deliverance from another, that we should not seek for another mediator.

Lord Jesus, we thank you that you not only know our fears, you speak to our fears, you speak to our insecurities, and you reveal truth that we need.

[ 38 : 26 ] Holy Spirit, we pray that you would help us remember these truths, especially when dark days come. Help us to recall who Jesus is and to remain rooted in the truth.

Almighty Father, help us to rejoice, knowing that in your Son, Jesus, we have your revelation, the full revelation of your grace and mercy.

Help us to celebrate this. It is in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. If you are able to