

AM John 14:1-11

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[0 : 00] Our reading this morning is taken from John, John chapter 14, verses 1 to 11.

John chapter 14, verses 1 to 11. So this is just set after the Last Supper.

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 am going.

Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way? 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.

[1 : 30] Philip said to him, Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us. Jesus said to him, have I been with you so long and you still do not know me, Philip?

Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you, I do not speak on my own authority.

But the Father who dwells in me does his work. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or else believe an account of the works themselves.

Thanks be to God for the reading of his holy word. And his name be the praise and the glory forever. Amen. Let's sing again to God's praise.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word. And may the words of my mouth and the thoughts of our hearts be acceptable in your sights.

[2 : 41] Through Jesus our Lord and Redeemer. Amen. Our text this morning will focus particularly on verse 6 of the passage we read from chapter 14.

Jesus said to him, I am the way and the truth and the life. And no one comes to the Father except through me. And on a personal basis it's perhaps an apt text to be using or expounding this morning as I complete my studies, ETS and my graduation from Glasgow Uni.

The university has a motto, Via Veritas Vita. If that's how you pronounce it because I'm no Latin scholar. I know probably even less Latin than I do Greek.

But it means the way, the truth and the life. So let's look at the context of which Jesus uses this triple description of himself.

And its importance for our lives and for those who heard it first hand. But first think of a question. Which way is your life heading?

[4 : 04] Which way is your life heading? Where is it going? Does it feel secure in the knowledge that it is in the correct way? Is it a path to a fulfilled life?

Or is it to one where you deceive yourself in the pursuit of happiness? That you kid yourself on that everything's fine and all will be well.

Our passage this morning begins with Jesus stating that we are not to let our hearts be troubled. Now this perhaps to the disciples and to ourselves seems a little strange.

We've just had the Last Supper where Jesus has announced that one of his beloved apostles will betray him.

One of his inner circle is going to turn against him. And that Simon Peter, the rock, the man of passion and action will actually deny Christ three times before the morning cock crows.

[5 : 15] These revelations hardly give cause for the apostles' hearts not to be troubled. Today we seem to have continued news of gloom either on our television screens, radios or social media feeds.

Russia continues with a relentless artillery bombardment of the Ukraine with innocents killed. We hear the news of hunger across Africa and we hear of food being used as a weapon of war.

At home we fear the continued rise in prices of everyday goods. Simple food necessities continue to go up in price. Fuel is becoming a luxury and our health service seems to be increasingly struggling.

We may feel that we have much to trouble our own hearts today. Yet Jesus' message is the same to us today.

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Don't let our focus from praising God and sharing his message be distracted by our fears of the troubles of this world.

[6 : 35] But why? Because Jesus states that we are to believe in God and to believe in him. To believe in Jesus himself.

Jesus is going to prepare a place for us. And if he is going to prepare a place for us, it means that he will also return to lead us home. What an assurance.

What joy, what reassurance that Jesus has gone before us to prepare for us and he will return and take us home with him. In verse 4, Jesus states to his disciples that they know where he is going and they know where and how to get there.

Well, that should have been the case if they have been listening to his teachings over approximately the last three years. Just as we should have a knowledge of Christ from reading of scriptures and their teachings.

Jesus, we should know who Jesus was and the role he came to fulfill. But are we like that? Or are we like the disciples and being too busy trying to fit Jesus into our view of what should happen?

[7 : 58] To fit Jesus' teachings into our goals. So in the last night before his betrayal and death, Jesus was preparing his disciples for the days ahead.

As we said, for over three years, these men had been following Jesus and learning from his teachings and his life example. They had placed their hopes in him as the Messiah, the promised deliverer.

Yet still, they didn't understand what he was going to do or how he was going to do it. After the last supper, Jesus began speaking about his departure, which led to questions from his disciples.

This is most clearly shown in verse 5 as Thomas, the one we know so well from the parents and later of Jesus in the upper room after his resurrection.

Thomas who would not believe until he had seen the events with his own eyes and touched Christ's wounds for himself. Thomas is the student or colleague we are ever thankful for.

[9 : 12] When the teacher or trainer asks us if we have any questions. And that no question is too small or too silly to ask.

We think of the question that would answer our uncertainty. But it's a question that to us is too simple to ask. So rather than ask, we go in ignorance.

Then suddenly someone asks that simplest of questions. Everyone is relieved and listens attentively to the answer.

We can think of the situations where we've been there and we just... Thank goodness somebody asked that question. Here we have that very situation.

The disciples through direct teachings and their private conversations with Jesus knew far more about him than any of the ordinary Jews. Yet they still did not fully understand his intention.

[10 : 16] They still shared some of the Jewish views of the Messiah. As not just a divine person. But someone who would bring the re-establishment of Israel.

Who would re-establish the nation to be once more a powerful force on earth. Yet he's talking about leaving them. How can he recreate or resurrect Israel if he is going away?

Jews believed God's glory would be shown in the re-establishment of his people as a physical force on earth. Their understanding would be deepened after the crucifixion.

And Jesus' resurrection when Jesus would reappear to his disciples. And he would give them further explanation. All would be clear to them after the day of Pentecost.

When the Holy Spirit would come to dwell within them and give them full enlightenment. But how often are we at the disciples and Thomas? Neglecting what we hear because it does not fit with our plan of God's actions.

[11 : 30] Jesus is directing his response to Thomas. He does not rebuke Thomas as a mouthpiece of the disciples. Rather gives a sharp and to the point reply that points to three important roles fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

And that there can be no other means to the Father. In verse 6 Jesus says to him. I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Jesus refers back to all of his teachings since the start of his ministry. As he claims to be the way, the truth and the life. Often people seem to think that Jesus would have something new to say. Always giving out new gems of wisdom and learning. But no, he is the greatest of teachers. And so repeated his teachings to ensure that people understood his message.

Here Jesus brings together his teachings and gives a final clear statement. Of how we come into a proper and eternal relationship with God our Heavenly Father.

[12:40] I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. So let's look at these individually. First, I am the way.

The first thing we notice is Jesus used the definite article to distinguish himself as the only way. A way is a path or a route.

And disciples... Sorry. So... A way is a path or a route.

And disciples had expressed their confusion about where he was going. And how they could follow.

And he had told them from the beginning that Jesus was again telling them, And does, follow me.

There is no other path to heaven. No other way to the Father. Peter reiterated the same truth years later to the rulers in Jerusalem.

[13:43] Saying about Jesus in Acts 4, verse 12. Salvation is found in no one else. For there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

The exclusive nature of the only path of salvation is expressed in the words, I am the way. Now here we also see a unique teaching of Christianity.

Many religions, many teachers of the Enlightenment will promise to show us the way to union with the power of nature. Of the way to linking with the supreme being or the essence of creation.

But all are simple fellow human beings who claim to offer a route to inner peace. Without any authority or any power.

Here we have Jesus. Here we have Jesus. Yes, a fellow human. But also God incarnate. God had taken on human form.

[14:46] In him, God has taken on human form. Undergone all the experiences of human development. Been tempted by Satan. And suffered the hardships of life.

But he remained sinless. In that he was different from any other man. He remained sinless. He held true to God's plan for him.

Even to death on the cross of Calvary. For you and for me. He followed God's will. Never rebelling or rejecting God like the rest of humanity.

Jesus does not simply offer us another teaching of how to gain peace. Or to gain union with the supreme spirit. He offers the way to God.

And to a proper relationship with God as our heavenly father. That way is not by some simple act of worship. It is not about some simple act of gaining knowledge.

[15:49] But it is through him alone. No one comes to the father. But by faith in Christ alone. God is not some remote being or spirit.

Our God and our route to salvation. Is not by some principle. Or by some supreme force. Our God and our route to him.

God is a person. Our God is a personal God. Who cares for each one of us. He cares for you. And he cares for me. He knows each one of us.

Our strengths. Our weaknesses. Our needs. And all we met in a true and right relationship with God. Jesus highlights that personal relationship.

And his continued use of the pronoun. I. As refers to how we come to God. And the role that he plays in this. I am the way.

[16:51] Secondly. I am the truth. Again. I am the truth. Again. Jesus used the definitive article. To emphasize himself. As the only truth. Psalm 119 verse 140.

He says. Your law is the truth. And in the sermon on the mount. Jesus reminds his listeners. Of several points of the law. Then said.

But I say to you. For example. In Matthew 5. 27. And 28. You have heard that it was said. You shall not commit adultery. But I say to you.

That everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent. Has already committed adultery. With her. With her. In his heart. So here we see.

Jesus equating himself. With the law of God. As the authoritative standard of righteousness. In fact. Jesus said. That he came. To fulfill the law.

[17 : 49] And the prophets. Earlier in. Matthew 5 verse 17. He said. Do not think that I have come to abolish the law. Or the prophets.

I have come not to abolish them. But to fulfill them. Jesus is incarnate word of God. Is the source of all truth. He was with God.

In the beginning is the word. And the word was God. And we can see that. In the first verse of John 1. And as God. He is truth. And truth eternal.

Third. Jesus says. I am the life. Jesus had just been telling his disciples. About his impending death. And now he was claiming.

To be the source of all life. This was not the first occasion. That Jesus had raised this subject. With his disciples. In John 10. 17 and 18.

[18 : 47] Jesus declared. That he was going to lay down his life. For his sheep. And then. He would take it back up again. He spoke of his authority.

Over life and death. As being granted to him. By his heavenly father. And previously. We have looked. At Jesus statement. That I am the resurrection.

And the life. In John 11. 25. Jesus declares. That he is a life. And that he is a life. Everlasting. He is not offering.

A continued. Earthly existence. He offers life eternal. Forever with him. And with God. Our heavenly father. In John 11. 26.

He states. And everyone who lives. And believes in me. Shall never die. Yes. Our mortal bodies. Will pass away. Paul writes.

[19 : 42] To encourage us. In 2 Corinthians 4. 16. So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self. Is wasting away. Our inner self.

Is being renewed. Day by day. Our body ages. And dies. But our soul. Our inner self. Is renewed daily. It will never die.

The Holy Spirit. Resides within each believer. Renewing them. And transforming them. New each day. God accepts us. As we are. But will transform us.

By his spirit. Into a never. A never increasing. Lightness. Of Christ. No one. Is beyond. God's grace. No one. Is beyond. Redemption.

Looking at. Saving. Look at. The saving grace. Experienced. By John Newton. The slave trader. A man. Who in his own words. Was far from God. And did everything.

[20 : 37] To actually. Bring down God. In the eyes of others. And yet. A man. Who was transformed. And went on.

To serve. God. And preach his word. For decades. God. In his grace. Reaches out. To us. Through the gift.

Of his son. God. That whoever. Believes in him. As their saviour. Shall have new life. And have it. In abundance. In John 14. 19.

He gave the promise. That because. I live. You. Also will live. The deliverance. He was about to provide. Was not a political. Or social deliverance.

Which most of the Jews. Were seeking. In which. His apostles. Were partly expecting. But a true deliverance. From a life of bondage.

[21 : 31] To sin. And death. To life of freedom. And eternity. In these words. Jesus was declaring himself. As a great.

I am. The only path. To heaven. The only true measure. Of righteousness. And the source. Of both physical. And spiritual life. He was taking.

His claim. As the very God. Of creation. The Lord. Who blessed Abraham. And the Holy One. Who inhabits eternity. He did this.

So the disciples. Would be able. To face. The dark days ahead. And carry on. The mission. Of declaring. His gospel. To the world. Of course.

We know. From scripture. That they still. Did not fully understand. And they took. Several visits. From their risen Lord. To shake them out. Of their disbelief. Once they understood.

[22 : 28] The truth of his words. They became. Changed people. And the world. Has never been. The same since. The same offer. From Jesus. Is still available. To each of us.

Today. He enables us. To face. The trials of life. And he equips us. To take. His gospel message. To the people. We meet.

Jesus finishes. With the clear statement. No one comes. To the father. Except through me. So we can forget. Our notions. Of self-importance.

And of achieving. Our salvation. By our own merits. How many of us. Have said. I'll get to heaven. I'm a good person. I've led a good life.

God has no reason. To reject me. But I'm afraid. Your efforts. Just aren't good enough. And they will never. Be good enough.

[23 : 23] Jesus message. Is clear. No one. Comes to the father. Except through me. So how. Do we follow him. Today. The same way.

As the disciples. Did. Those. Decades. Or those. Centuries ago. They heard the words. Of Jesus. And believed in him. They took his words.

And they obeyed them. They confessed their sins. To Jesus. As their Lord. And God. They believed. That he died. To take. The punishment.

Of their sins. And rose from the dead. To give them a new life. They followed his example. And command. To tell others. The truth. About sin.

Righteousness. And judgment. When we follow. In the way. We can be assured. Of following him. All the way to heaven. When we take those same steps.

[24 : 19] Of listening to his word. Believing his word. Accepting him as our saviour. We. Will follow. With the disciples. We will follow.

After Christ. To heaven. In John 3. 16 to 19. We see the grace of God. God. That he gave his only son. To give humanity.

The gift of eternal life. Those who reject that gift. Condemn themselves to death. And a life of bondage to sin. Without Christ. There can be no redemptive truth.

No everlasting life. And so. No way to the father. What will be your choice. Freedom in a new relationship. With your heavenly father.

Through faith in Christ. Or to continue. In the life of bondage. To sin. And to the consequences of death. Without a proper relationship. With God.

[25 : 16] Scripture states. In John 3. 16 to 19. For God so loved the world. That he gave his only son. That whoever believes in him.

Should not perish. But have eternal life. For God did not send his son. Into the world. To condemn the world. But in order that the world. Might be saved through him.

Whoever believes in him. Is not condemned. But whoever does not believe. Is condemned already. Because he has not believed. The name. Of the only son of God.

And this is the judgment. The light has come into the world. And people love the darkness. Rather than the light. Because their works were evil. God offers us the gift of his son.

As a way to eternal salvation. The choice is ours. So let us pray. Father.

[26 : 17] Father we thank you. For the gift of your son. The son who suffered. And died for us. Who took on our sins. That we could be cleansed.

That we could be clothed. In his righteousness. And once more. Come before you. Father. Father. Father. For those who have not yet.

Made a decision for you. Who have not accepted Christ. As their saviour. We ask you. Pour out your grace. That you pour out your mercies. Upon them. That your Holy Spirit.

Will move their hearts. That they may be open. To the acceptance. Of Christ. As their saviour. And come into an eternal relationship.

With you. Christ waits for us. But we have to. Open our hearts. These things we ask through Christ. [27 : 15] Our Lord and saviour. Your son. Amen.