

# AM John 14:1-14 "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life"

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[ 0 : 00 ] This morning, page in the Pew Bible, it's page 1086, 1086. John chapter 14, verses 1 to 14.

So page 1086. Often in churches these days, people don't bring their Bibles.

How sad if the only scripture you see in a week is what's projected on a screen, on the wall. John chapter 14, starting at verse 1.

Let not your hearts be troubled, said Jesus. Believe in God, believe also in me. In 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 also will be. And you know the way to where I'm going.

[ 1 : 23 ] Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you're 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. Philip said to him, Lord, show us the Father and this 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 works.

[ 2 : 33 ] Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or else believe on account of the works themselves. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do.

And greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do.

That the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

May God add a blessing to this reading of his word. I look forward to being with you again this evening. And today we're looking at two of the I am statements of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Tonight we'll be thinking about Jesus saying, I am the resurrection and the life. So this evening that's our focus and the title of this evening's message is, No If Onlys.

[ 3 : 49 ] Why? No If Onlys. Because personally I feel that they're the saddest words that I've heard in my lifetime.

So many people have so many if onlys. So No If Onlys is the title for this evening. Our text today, of course, is I am the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. In Exodus chapter 3 verses 7 following, Moses is sent by God to go to Pharaoh in order to bring the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt.

Moses makes a lot of excuses as to why he shouldn't be going. He says to God, If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, The God of our fathers has sent me to you, And they ask me, What is his name?

What shall I say to them? God said to Moses, I am who I am. Say this to the people of Israel.

[ 5 : 06 ] The I am has sent me to you. Similarly, the incarnate Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, Also made statements in which he claimed to be the I am.

This happened on seven occasions in John's Gospel. Perhaps you remember them. I am the bread of life, Jesus said. I am the light of the world.

I am the door or the gate. I am the good shepherd. I am the resurrection and the life. I am the vine. And this morning, I am the way and the truth and the life. I think it's good to remind ourselves what John's aim is in writing his Gospel, which is expressed very clearly in chapter 20, verse 31.

John writes, But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

[ 6 : 22 ] So let's think about the context of these words of the Lord Jesus Christ. This morning's Bible passage is part of what is called the Farewell Discourse, made by the Lord Jesus in the upper room, in which, along with many other things, he instituted the Lord's Supper, we know as communion.

Jesus knew that he'd be betrayed by Judas and be falsely accused by the Jewish authorities, be handed over to the ruling Roman governor, and ultimately would be crucified.

So when Jesus states in John 13, 36, Where I'm going you cannot follow now, but you will follow afterwards, this is what he's referring to.

Peter, together with the other disciples, is aware that some great trial is imminent, and claims that he will follow Jesus even unto death.

Jesus responds to Peter by saying, Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.

[ 7 : 44 ] It's therefore understandable that these disciples, who've left everything to follow Jesus, are disturbed at these sayings. And it's also understandable that this morning's Bible passage opens with Jesus comforting his followers, and encouraging them not to be afraid.

Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me. Jesus calls his disciples to put their faith and trust in God the Father, and in himself the Christ, God's anointed Son.

But what do faith and trust look like? Possibly not many folks here will be aware that in a former life, I was a police officer, serving in Cumbria Constabulary.

And whilst doing my initial training at the police college in Warrington in 1974, I became friendly with a guy from Accrington in Lancashire, which is no mean feat for a Yorkshire bloke to become friendly with a bloke from Lancashire.

But we became very good friends. His name is Ray, and I discovered that he was a seasoned potholer. Right beneath our feet, even now today, there are probably caves and caverns.

[ 9 : 13 ] There certainly are streams that run under Dumfries, which is right it's very difficult when it floods, because the water is just feeding in, and therefore it comes up, and we have these problems with water.

But this guy was a seasoned potholer, and he invited me to go with him to explore a cave system near the town of Ingleton in Yorkshire. I was really fit in those days, and up for the challenge.

So we walked up this hillside behind the town of Ingleton, and I'm looking for a cave. I'm looking for an entrance to this cave system, and we came to a hole in the ground covered by a dustbin lid.

And Ray lifted the lid, and the hole was full of dirty-looking water. And he said, this is how we access the cave system. Now he was all decked out in the right gear.

He had a torch. He had a wetsuit. He was clad for the job, because it was his hobby, but I didn't. I had an old jumper, an old pair of trousers, and some old trainers.

[ 10 : 20 ] And I still can't believe that I got into that hole, and pushed myself into the hillside, and came up into a narrow passage, half filled with water.

Ray did the same, but he had the torch on, which was helpful. All I had was a carbide lamp. I don't know if you've heard of carbide, but it's crystals that give off a gas, and when you light it, it really does illuminate areas.

But when it gets wet, it goes out. So we made our way through these narrow passages, half filled with water. Sometimes I mean to go like this, to keep your nose above the water, pushing our way along.

And as I'm doing so, I could hear the sound of falling water, and eventually we came to a drop. And sure enough, there was a waterfall going off the drop.

And Ray took out a light alloy ladder from his bag, and someone had put a couple of pittons in the wall, and he hooked this light alloy ladder to these pittons, and threw it over the waterfall, and said, I think you should go first, he said.

[ 11 : 32 ] So I had, my lamp was lit by then, so I started to climb down this ladder. It was only about that wide, so you can only get one foot on a rung. Climbing down this ladder, got into the waterfall itself, the light went out, and I don't know if anybody's ever been.

Have you ever been in a mine, a coal mine, but you've never experienced dark until you've been in a pothole, or a coal mine, or something like that. Totally pitch black.

And I'm climbing down through this waterfall, and I came to the end of the ladder, and I wasn't at the bottom. So I shouted up to Ray, to say, and I realised that the sound of the water was deafening, so he couldn't hear what I was saying.

I had the strength to climb back up through the waterfall, even though I was fairly fit, and so I reasoned that because Ray had done this pot before, the ladder would be long enough.

I didn't know that. And so I started to lower myself off the ladder, and in a foot and a half or so, I was standing in a pool of water at the bottom of the waterfall. I often think about that, and I often think that's a very good example of faith, and trust.

[ 12 : 48 ] Ray came down, and he joined me, and he lit my lamp, and suddenly, I can't explain, it was just amazing, it was just this huge cavern full of stalagmites and stalactites that had taken thousands and thousands of years to develop, and it was, in a very real sense, awesome.

Now I know that awesome is a much overused word in these days, but what Jesus describes next concerning his father's house, that is heaven, is awesome, and will be awesome indeed.

On two occasions, other occasions, Jesus used the expression, my father's house, when referring to the temple in Jerusalem, Luke 2 and John 2. For the nation of Israel, the temple was the place where heaven and earth meet.

It was believed to be the dwelling place of God. In verses 2 to 4 of this morning's reading, Jesus hints at a new heaven, a new house, a new earth, a new Jerusalem.

Jesus is the bridge between heaven and earth, and the two will meet again when God renews the whole world.

[ 14 : 07 ] At that time, there'll be room for everyone in the father's house, everyone who puts their faith and trust in Jesus for the salvation of their souls.

So in this morning's Bible passage, the disciples are naturally anxious at realizing that Jesus is going away. So he speaks of his father's house, that he's going there to prepare a place for them. He assures the disciple that his going away will be to their benefit, and that one day he'll come again to take them to be with him. Then he says, And you know the way to where I'm going.

I love Thomas. Don't you love Thomas? I love the disciples because they're so like we are. It's not polished up or anything. You know, often we call Thomas doubting Thomas.

Thomas said, Lord, we don't know where you're going, so how can we know the way? So this then is the context for this morning's text, in which Jesus makes two extraordinary claims.

[ 15 : 19 ] He states, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me.

These two statements of Jesus are remarkable, and Jesus knew that these words were significant. These were the last few hours of his earthly life that he would spend with his disciples, and I'm sure they didn't realize the full significance of what he was saying until they looked back, probably after the Holy Spirit descended on them at Pentecost.

So how are we to understand these words of Jesus? It might not be immediately obvious that the incarnation, i.e. the birth of the Lord Jesus into this world is at the heart of this Bible passage.

It is through the incarnate Son of God, God in human flesh, the Lord Jesus Christ, that we as Christians have access to God, our Heavenly Father.

Jesus is the tangible presence of God in this world. It is only when we encounter Jesus, the Son of God, that we're able to have a new experience of God as our personal Heavenly Father.

[ 16 : 41 ] Sadly, these words of Jesus are often used in discussions about the relative merits of other world religions. But I think it's important to know that John's Gospel is not concerned with the fate of people from other religions, nor is it concerned with the relative merits of Judaism or Christianity as we experience them in today's world.

Rather, these verses, these words, are a confessional celebration of a particular faith community convinced of the way and the truth and the life as it's been revealed in Jesus, the incarnate Son of God.

You probably already know, but early Christians were known as people of the way long before they were known as Christians. Jesus is the way. John's chief aim here was to clarify and celebrate what it means to be a believer in Jesus.

So let's take a few minutes in examining exactly what Jesus said. Jesus said, I am the way. He didn't say, I am a way to the Father, but I am the way to the Father.

Proverbs 14 verse 12 says, there's a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death. [18:15] The way in relation to Jesus speaks of a connection between two destinations or people. Jesus is the link between God and sinners. He's also, as we've already noted, the link between earth and heaven.

He's the only one who redeems us from our sins. And at what cost? What cost? The perfect sinless Son of God hanging there on the cross of Calvary bearing my sin and your sin in His perfect body so that we might be redeemed.

Jesus claims very clearly to be the only way to the Father. I know that these words of Jesus, I am the way, might sound politically incorrect because it sounds intolerant in our pluralistic world.

We're not used to dealing with absolutes. Everything we're told is relative. Nonetheless, these are the words of Jesus. They're not my words. So how is Jesus the way to the Father?

The Lord Jesus opened the way to God by giving His body and shedding His blood on the cross of Calvary. What's Jesus doing today, right now, as we gather here?

[19:44] He's interceding for us before God's throne of grace in glory. 1 Timothy 2.5 There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man, Christ Jesus.

Jesus is the one who ever lives and intercedes for us. I think that's a wonderful thing. Hebrews 7.25 Therefore, He is able to save to the uttermost, save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him since He always lives to make intercession for them.

So Jesus is the way by virtue of His incarnation. He's coming into this world as a person, as a human being, His life on earth, His death on the cross, His resurrection and His ascension into heaven and His current service in heaven.

Jesus is truly the only way to God. Jesus is not only the way to God, it is also the truth.

What is truth? I think we're all understandably very sceptical about anyone claiming that they have the truth. How often do we hear the term the truth is?

[21:08] Dot, dot, dot, dot, dot. Because we've been lied to by politicians and bankers and others in authority. The former Labour Prime Minister Michael Foot is quoted as having said, in politics, if all else fails, we might have to fall back on the truth.

Wow. The media distorts or conceals the truth because it's not sensational enough. How often have we watched the news and thought, this is a no story.

A lot of the stuff we watch on the television is speculation. It's not news. It's not reporting what has happened. It's reporting what the BBC and others think will or might happen, which is not the truth. People have been tried and found guilty through media speculation, even when they've been found not guilty in a judicial court. So you won't be surprised to find that this phenomena is not something new.

Because when Jesus appeared before Pontius Pilate and said in answer to Pilate's statement, so you're a king then, Jesus said, you say that I'm a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I've come into the world to bear witness to the truth.

[22:29] Everyone who is of the truth listens to me. Pilate said to him, what is truth? See, truth in today's text, when Jesus speaks about truth, truth is the gospel of grace of God's unmerited favor towards us.

It's all about Jesus. It's about the complete reliability of Jesus in all that he does and all that he says and all that he is.

When Jesus speaks the truth, it describes that which corresponds to reality. It's factual, it's absolute, it's not relative. There are no gray areas and no duplicity.

Thank God that we have the written word of God. Jesus is truth because he claims that truth is real and truth is knowable.

Listen to this in John 8 verses 31, 32, Jesus said, if you abide in me, sorry, if you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.

[23:40] Jesus claims that the truth can set a person free from the bondage of sin. Jesus said, truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave of sin.

The slave does not remain in the house forever, the son remains forever. So if the son sets you free, you will be free indeed. Free from what?

Free from the burden of sin. By remaining in Jesus and by being open to his teachings, we can know the truth and by obeying his teachings, we can know the freedom that he offers.

So Jesus is both the way, the truth and the life. As I said to the children, Jesus is the source of life. Jesus offers not just life but abundant life. My life turned around when I came to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Didn't become easy because there were still a lot of issues that needed to be sorted out and worked through.

[ 24 : 52 ] But it was completely turned around and my family said, oh, he's got religion. Dave's got religion. And I was at pains to try and explain to them that I've not got a religion.

I've got a relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. And here half a lifetime on, still full of joy because of the Saviour.

Jesus offers abundant life. Life is not the sum of what we own or what we have achieved. That's the road I was going down. I thought if you had plenty of money and all these possessions then you'd be happy.

all I found out was that you have more responsibilities. Life at its very deepest level is living without fear of failure, fear of sickness, and fear of death.

And if you come to a saving knowledge in the Lord Jesus Christ, whilst you still may be concerned about these things, you need not fear them. This abundant life is not based on material possessions.

[ 26 : 03 ] It's not chasing after the things of this world that are temporal and fading. We can be forever chasing this lie of the devil and never find fulfillment.

The only life worth living is the life Jesus brings. Jesus is life itself. Remember a few weeks ago when I was last with you, we stated that Jesus is the word of life.

In 1 John 10, 10, Jesus promised, I came that they may have life and have it. Abundantly. In this life Jesus offers peace and he gives us his love.

He provides joy that's inexpressible. So when we're recipients of this peace, this love and this joy, we have abundant life, not only for today, but for all eternity.

In order to obtain this abundant life, Jesus said that we must be born again. Not born of flesh and blood, but born of the spirit. We must experience a spiritual rebirth, a rebirth into a new life.

[ 27 : 15 ] The old life, the life of being bound in sync and change. We can know forgiveness. The Holy Spirit can work in our hearts and in our lives, convicting us of our sin and bringing us to the point when we confess our need of Jesus, our need of a saviour.

We need to repent of our sin, that is turn away from our sin and accept forgiveness, which comes through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

So let's bring these thoughts to a close. Jesus is truly the way and the truth and the life. He's the way of truly experiencing God as our heavenly father.

He's the embodiment of truth. He provides freedom from the guilt and bondage of our sins. And he's the source of life that is blessed now and will last forever more.

Jesus said, no one comes to the father except through me. So I wonder this morning, have you experienced Jesus as your way to God?

[ 28 : 30 ] Is Jesus your truth and your life? Do you have a close and personal relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ?

Have you been delivered from your sin? Have you been washed clean through the shed blood of Christ? And are you enjoying the abundant life that Jesus gives by virtue of a spiritual rebirth? life? And are you enjoying the blessings that follow? Jesus is the way and the truth and the life. May we know this personally.

May we appropriate these truths for ourselves. Are you beginning to realize perhaps who Jesus is? Do you have questions you'd like to discuss?

please don't leave this meeting this morning without taking the opportunity to speak to either myself or one of the elders.

[ 29 : 31 ] If God the Holy Spirit has been speaking to you today don't fail to respond because today is the day of salvation. None of us knows that we have a tomorrow but we do know if we have faith in Jesus we have an eternity.

Which is a very special thing. so may God bless you. Jesus is the way and the truth and the life.

Amen.