

I Am The Way

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- [0 : 0 0] If you can turn back with me then to John's Gospel, chapter 14, and our main text for this evening is found in verse 6.
- Jesus answered or replied, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
- Now, this verse is quite special for me because just over 51 years ago, God used that verse to bring me to faith in Jesus Christ.
- I was struck with a comment that Colin made, not this morning, well I was struck with quite a number of comments he made this morning, but on a previous message.
- And he said, when God does a work in you, it could be likened to a switch going on in your mind, just like that.
- [1 : 1 6] I don't think I clicked as good as Colin, but anyway. Yeah, so, look, I was brought up in a non-Christian home.
- There was never a Bible in our house. We never prayed. Neither my mother or father were anti-God in the sense that I heard a narrative, hate God, don't bother about him.
- It just didn't figure at all. My mother, before she married, was a dancer, a tap dancer, and I can only repeat what she said, a Hawaiian skirt dancer as well.
- My, her brother played with big bands, the RAF Squadronaires, the BBC Come Dancing Band, the Denny Boyce Band, and the Tommy Dorsey Band, all big, huge bands.
- I'm one of five, second eldest. Fast forward to my teens. Fast forward to my teens.
- [3 : 0 6] And it's true that I did spar with a world champion. I never felt I needed anything in life. I wasn't looking for anything.
- Until, on my way up to hear a live band in Clydebank, where I was born and brought up, two Christians approached me in the street.
- And they started telling me that Jesus was living, alive, and that he had changed their life.
- And this, for me, I couldn't really understand what they were talking about. If I knew anything, I knew that Jesus had, at that time, I would have said, come a cropper on a cross.
- However, God planted a seed that night as I was walking up Colbury Road that I could not shake off.
- [4 : 1 3] Around Christmas, I think, of 1971, my sister seemed to hear that I was becoming a wee bit religious or at least interested in it.
- And she bought me a Bible as a Christmas present. It had pictures in it. So I was flicking through it.
- And I came to John's Gospel, chapter 14. By this time, I had been asking myself questions.
- Can this message that I've heard be true? And what is the way that you become a Christian? And what is the Christian life about anyway?

And how meaningful is it? And I was flicking through John's Gospel in this Bible that my sister Linda had got me. It's her fault.

[5 : 21] And I came to John 14, verse 6. And then, maybe, I don't know how long after that, maybe a month or so or whatever.

And I was meeting someone in the center of Glasgow. I think there was a Boots the Chemist at the junction of, it was either Renfield Street or Union Street and Argyle Street.

And that person, something happened that they weren't able to come. So I made my way back. I was still living in Clydebank.

I made my way back towards Queen Street, walking down Argyle Street and turning into Queen Street. And as I neared the station and glanced at George's Square, there was someone shouting out, Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

And that's when it was like, it was more than just someone speaking.

[6 : 33] It was God that was speaking to me. Colin used a hymn this morning.

I think it was the first praise item. Come thou fount of every blessing. And in one of those verses, the verse begins, Jesus sought me when a stranger.

And I was thinking of that, Colin, when you used that. And that is certainly what happened with me. I was a stranger to his grace.

Jesus. Why should anyone believe Christianity?

Perhaps one answer might be, a good case can be set out for Christianity. And that's true. But equally, a good case can be made against Christianity.

[7 : 43] And that's also true. And I'll just say to you that I sometimes get a wee bit distressed because I feel there isn't a forum for exploring hard questions in a robust and honest way.

And that bothers me because I think it's important. Ultimately, however, people believe in Christianity because they accept the claims of the historical person called Jesus Christ.

Some of these claims are recorded in John's Gospel and take the form of I am sayings. As I've said to you before, there are seven of those I am sayings.

And tonight we're looking at number six. In considering the I am sayings, we're tapping into, I believe, the self-consciousness of Jesus Christ the man.

We're tapping into how Jesus views himself, how he understands his identity. Listen to what C.S. Lewis says about anybody that would be tempted to regard Jesus merely as a good moral teacher.

[9 : 21] The idea of a great moral teacher saying what Christ said is out of the question. In my opinion, the only person who can say the sort of things that Jesus said must either be God or a complete lunatic suffering from that form of delusion which undermines the entire mind of man.

We may note, says Lewis in passing, that Jesus was never regarded as a mere moral teacher by the people that met him.

He did not produce that effect on any of the people who met him. He produced mainly three effects. Hatred, terror, and adoration.

I want to explore this great saying, I am the way, the truth, and the life, under two headings. And the second heading will definitely be the more important one.

Context and the claim itself. First of all, John tells us in chapter 13, just right at the very beginning of that chapter, verse 1, Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father.

[10 : 58] The bit I want you to fasten on to is go to the Father. Leave this world and go to the Father.

That's what I want you to concentrate on. You see, he's now alone with his disciples in the upper room.

His public ministry is over. And notice that these last two I am sayings are only addressed to his disciples. The other five to the public at large, if you like.

That doesn't exclude his disciples, but the public at large. Moreover, Jesus reveals in the upper room that one of the inner circle of his disciples will betray him.

Again, chapter 13, verse 21. After he said this, and I want you to notice this, Jesus was troubled. And that word is used again in chapter, it's used in chapter 12, and it's used again in the Gethsemane.

[12 : 15] And that's a very powerful, emotive word. He was in a consternation. Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified.

This is while he's with his disciples in that upper room. Very truly, I tell you, one of you is going to betray me. Now, all the disciples would have heard that.

And then, in verse 38 of chapter 13, Jesus said to Peter, Before the cock crows, you will disown me.

Now, from chapter 13 to verse 33, right through to chapter 17, is known as Jesus' farewell discourse to his disciples.

And I think it is absolutely mind-blowing that Jesus could offer such a discourse at the time of such consternation.

[13 : 37] And bequeath to you and I the most incredible, profound truths and statements that we read in these chapters. So, even at this time, Jesus thinks only of the needs of his disciples.

He knows that they'll be troubled having heard that one of them is going to betray him. He knows that they'll be troubled hearing that Peter will disown him three times.

And he knows that they'll be troubled when he heard Jesus say, My hour has come. And the irony there, I wonder if he picked it up as you're reading it.

Peter says, Why can't I follow you now, Lord? I'll lay down my life for you. With great gusto. Don't be too hard on Peter.

He's got the right spirit in many ways. But with great gusto. The irony here is, it's no Peter that's going to lay down his life right now.

[14 : 51] It's Jesus Christ. And I think that it's wonderful that Jesus uses this time of impending horror to comfort his disciples.

I heard yesterday, I think it was, that the Turkish and Syrian Christian Church, in the face of the loss of some of their own people, due to that horrible earthquake, are nonetheless reaching out to support others.

And here is Jesus, in this hour of horror, reaching out to his disciples.

So, I'm trying to imagine this, that we're with Jesus in the room in this context. And now he tells his disciples, at verse 33, My children, I'll be with you only a little longer.

And you'll look for me. And just as I told the Jews, so I tell you where I'm at, you cannot come. Simon Peter, where are you going? Jesus, where I'm going, you cannot come now.

[16 : 14] And then Jesus says at the beginning of 14, chapter 14, Don't let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. That's an astonishing statement. Very easy to read that and just go on to the next statement.

But I would like you to definitely pause. Hold on a wee minute. Here is Jesus aligning himself with the eternal God.

And saying, just as you believe in God, believe in me. This man that's standing before you. This man that is troubled.

This man who is telling you that one of his disciples is going to betray him. This man that's telling you that Peter will disown me.

This man that's on the curse of being strung up on a cross. This man that's saying, do not let your hearts be troubled.

[17 : 16] Believe in God. Believe also in me. That's an astonishing statement. And he says, this is important.

My father's house has many rooms. And he says, I am going there. In other words, he's already told them where he's going.

As we read in the previous chapter. He knew his hour was coming. Had come to leave the world and go to the father.

Now he's, he knew that. Jesus, now he's telling his disciples. The reason they don't need to be, their hearts don't need to be troubled. Is because he's going to his father.

Father. Father. Father. And this, this is of central importance in this conversation.

[18 : 23] Because what's of central importance is this. How do you and I get to the father? What's the route?

What's the map? What's the road? And this leads me to my second point then.

The claim. He responds to Thomas' comment, as you know. And he says to him.

Thomas says, we don't know where you're going. How can we know the way? So this is the context. I've given you the broader context. And this is the immediate context.

Thomas' point. Or Thomas' comment. Or Thomas' question. And Jesus said to him. I am the way. What Jesus is not saying here.

[19 : 35] Is that he is simply. A way. Among others. He is saying. He is the way.

And the only way. To the father. To God. And neither is Jesus. Pointing towards Jerusalem.

Or somewhere else for that matter. And saying. Over there is the way. He is pointing to himself. And declaring that he.

And he alone. Is the way. To the father. The road. To God. Is through me. Now.

This isn't politically correct. I realize that. This great exclusive claim. Of Jesus. And it goes against. Against the great assumptions. Of our western culture.

[20 : 35] And yet. This is the central focus. Of this claim. I mean. This claim. I am the way. The truth. And the truth. And the life. And we don't have here.

I want to. Share this with you. Suggest this to you. Three separate claims. Unrelated. Or totally distinct.

What we have here. Is. A basic claim. And two phrases. If you like. That. Are explanatory.

In other words. Jesus is saying. I am the way. Because. I am the truth. And because. I am the life. The truth.

Pointing to his role. Jesus' role. As revealer. Revealer. In revelation. And the life. Pointing to his role. In redemption. So.

[21 : 33] I am going to unpack. This. This claim. And use. As I move. Towards. If you like. The finishing. Lap of this sermon.

I am going to. Unpack. A. This claim. I am the way. The truth. And the life. If. In three ways. Is the way.

To God. Because of his. Relation. To God. Is the way. To God. Because of his. Role. As. Revealer.

Of God. And God's will. And God's. God's salvation. And is the way. To. Is the only way. Because he's the one. That is the life.

Of this salvation. That is able to give. People that salvation. Firstly. The relation.

[22 : 27] Or. Real identity. Of Jesus. You could say. John. Begins. This gospel. By. Exploring. This relation.

Of Jesus. To God. The father. We. We. We. Saw that. When. I was doing. The prologue. In. In.

In. John's gospel. John. Begins. With. What theologians. Would call. A Christology. From above. A Christology.

Is. Simply. What. People. Believe. About. The person. And. Work. Of. Jesus. Christ. Christ. And.

Everything. That. Is. In. In. In. In. In. In. In. In. In. Some. Some. Some. Theologians. Adopt. A. Christology. That. Is. From. Above. And. There's.

[23 : 21] A sense. In. Which. John. Is. Doing. This. In. In. In. Chapter. One. Verse. One. He says. In. The. Beginning. Was. The. Word. And. The. Word. Was. With.

God. And. The. Word. Was. God. He. Was. With. God. In. The. Beginning. So. In. Other. Words. John. Begins. His. Christology. With. The. Divinity.

And. The. Deity. Of. Jesus. Christ. But. John. Is. Not. Like. Some. People. Who. Are. If. You. Like. Who.

Want. To. Adopt. A. Christology. From. Above. And. Only. That. Christology. From. Above. John. Also. Adopts. The. Christology. From. Below. Because.

In. Verse. 14. He. Says. The. Word. Became. Flesh. And. Dwelt. Among. Us. And.

[24 : 15] You. See. The. Thing. Is. This. That. Jesus. Showed. Awareness. Of. His. Unique. Relation. And. Identity. With. God. His. Father. Throughout.

This. Entire. Gospel. This. Is. A. Gospel. That. Is. One. Might. Say. A. Must. Read. Because. If. You. Read.

This. Gospel. Carefully. You. Cannot. But. See. How. Jesus. All. The. Time.

Is. Talking. About. The. Relation. That. He. Has. With. The. Father. I. Don't. Say. This. My. Father.

Is. Saying. It. This. This. Is. Not. My. Work. It. It. My. Father's. I. Have. Come. To. Do. My. Father's. Will. And.

[25 : 08] Therefore. I. And. The. Father. Are. One. As. The. Father. Is. Life. In. Himself. So. Have. I. Life. In. Myself. Why.

Are. You. Christians. So. Arrogant. Is. To. Suggest. That. Jesus. Christ. Can. Be. The. Only. Way. The. Truth. And. The. Life. Because.

Of. His. Utterly. Unique. Relation. To. God. The. Father. Look.

What. Jesus. Said. In. Verses. 10. 11. Remember. We. Read. That. Don't. You. Believe. Says. Jesus. To. Philip. Who.

Said. Look. It. Be enough. If. He. Could. Show. Us. The. Father. The. Iron. Is. Of. Course. He's. Been. Showing. Them. For. All. Those. Years. That. He's. Been. With. Philip. Don't.

[26 : 07] You. Believe. That. I. Am. In. The. Father. And. That. The. Father. Is. In. Me. After.

All. This. Philip. Do you. Not. Believe. That. So. There. Is. The. First. And. Foremost. Point. Here. That.

The. Reason. That. Jesus. Can. Make. Such. An. Audacious. Claim. Is. Because. Of. His. Relationship. Or. His. Relation. To. God. The. Father. And.

You. Know. This. Is. Mega. Important. Because. If. People. Don't. Get. That. First. Thing. How. Are. They. Going. To. Preach. The. Gospel. Of. Jesus. Christ. But.

The. Second. Reason. That. Jesus. Can. Make. Such. An. Audacious. Claim. Is. His. Role. As. Revealer. Father. Look. What. He. Said. To.

[27 : 07] Philip. When. Philip. Says. Show. Us. The. Father. And. That. Would. Be. Enough. For. Us. Jesus. Says. Don't. You. Know. Me. Philip.

Even. Even. After. I. Have. Been. Among. You. Such. A. Long. Time. Then. He. Makes. This. Astounding. Statement. You. Can. See. Why. People. Were. Getting. Angry. About. Jesus.

You. Can. See. Why. They. Want. To. Stone. Him. Because. An. A. Lot. Of. Jesus. His. Language. Sounded. Like. Absolute. Blasphemy. To. Them. Jesus.

Says. Anyone. Who. Has. Seen. Me. Has. Seen. The. Father. Now. That. Is. One. Of. The. Most. Precious. Comments.

That. Jesus. Has. Ever. Made. Bonhoeffer.

[28 : 05] Who. Was. Mentioned. Today. Called. Christ. The. Christ. For. Others. The. Christ. Who. Is. Pro.

Me. Every. Sting.

Is. That. Group. Sting. Every. Breath. You. Take. Every. Move. You. Make. Every. Breath. Jesus. Took. Every. Move. That. He. Made. Every.

Word. That. He. Spoke. Every. Act. That. He. Ever. Perform. Was. For. You. And. Me. For. Our. Salvation. God.

He. Drawing. The. Curtain. Open. For. You. And. I. To. See. The. Face. Of. God. He.

[29 : 05] Was. Virtually. Saying. This. Is. God. God. God. God. God. God. God. God. God. God. God. God. God. God. God. God. God. God.

Alerted. Us. To. This. You. Know. Once. Again. In. The. Prologue. Remember. What. He. Said. Verse. Eighteen. Let me.

Read. It. To. You. Again. Chapter. One. Verse. Eighteen. No. One. Has. Ever. Seen. God. But. The. One. The.

One. And. Only. Son. Who. Is. Himself. God and is in, listen to it, the closest relationship with the Father, or as I think another translation has it, in the bosom of the Father.

Has made him known. As somebody said, and it's so true, there is no un-Christ likeness in God.

[30 : 14] Can I ask, this is all about this conversation, coming home to the Father.

Can I ask if you come home, is God your Father? Can you say with tremendous meaning, our Father?

You know, Jesus is calling you home to everlasting comfort and fellowship with himself and with the Father.

have you heard God the Father pleading with you to come home? Because this is not just a, what would you say, a theological statement or one of the great I am sayings, which it is.

it's an invitation. I am the way. That word way, by the way, is hodos in Greek, which is easily translated road.

[31 : 48] If you're looking for the road, it's one way and it's called Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus.

Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. But. I close with this last point.

Jesus. Is precisely the way. Because he's the truth. That is to say the truth of God and the truth of our need.

The revelation that he brought. And I said these three are not separate, distinct concepts or ideas.

they're interconnected and interrelated. But it's also precisely the way because he is the life.

[32 : 47] What does Jesus mean when he says I am the life? He goes and the life. What does he mean? Well, the word that Jesus uses for life or that's used of Jesus for life in John's gospel and it's used 38 times is zoe.

That's an easy word, isn't it? But that's the Greek word but it's also the name of plenty of people that we know. But here's the point. When Jesus is talking for instance in chapter 12 when he says anyone who loves their life will lose it he doesn't use zoe when he's talking about loving their life.

He uses the word sukos for soul because this zoe that is bound up with Jesus is the life of God and his eternal life.

This is a life that far transcends anything that this world will ever be able to offer you. Okay.

Jesus said I have come that they may have life more abundantly and that word abundantly means spilling over and lavish generosity.

[34 : 34] generosity. generosity. generosity. generosity. generosity. this is a life this zoe that Jesus offers every man, woman, boy and girl that's not threatened by death.

Jesus could say because I live you will live. because my life surges in you, this spiritual life, this eternal life, this zoe, you shall live.

This zoe that John speaks of is the goal, is the end game. salvation is not only to do with being forgiven or justified but salvation is goal, is zoe.

Have you got it? well I can tell you this, I don't know if you've got it but there's only one place you can get it, Jesus Christ.

Christ. But before we close, what did Jesus Christ need to do to give us this life and to make this incredible offer?

[36 : 35] well, in John chapter 6 verse 51, verse 51, verse 51, verse 51, verse 51, Jesus said these words, whoever eats this bread will live forever.

And notice how many of these I am sayings are related to life. His very first one, I am the bread of life. life. I am the light of the world.

And notice at the beginning of John's gospel how light and life are inseparably connected. I am the door by me if anybody enters in they'll be saved.

I am the good shepherd that gives us life for the sheep. I am the resurrection and the life. I am the way, the truth and the life.

I am the living bread says Jesus that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever. And here it is. How's it going to come about Jesus?

[38 : 07] This bread is my flesh. life. We certainly need a Christology from below because we need an incarnation and we need his flesh to be offered on a cross for you and I.

Which I will give there is that wonderful word again for the life of the world. the way is not simply an intellectual or theological grasp of the truth but an invitation to come to Christ for a life that shall never end and that will be grounded on the truth and the life of Jesus Christ.

Christ. The way is further explained I want to argue in chapter 12 in certain comments of Jesus which I'll just read to you.

Jesus replied the hour has come for the son of man to be glorified and then he goes on to say this in verse 25 anyone who loves their life not zoe life will lose it.

While anyone who hates their life not zoe life in this world will keep it but here's the zoe life for eternal life. And please don't think that the weight or burden on that phrase eternal life is its quantity its longevity if you like that's not where the burden is or the weight of it's on its quality.

[40 : 07] Whoever serves me must notice the word must follow me and where I am my servant will be and there he is again now my soul is troubled.

the way and you cannot avoid it is the cross and it's a cross for you as well because we need to lose that life that we're so desperate to cling on to if we want to get that zoe that eternal life of God.

what then will you do with Christ's great claim?

I am the way the truth and the life. Your entire destiny depends on how you respond.

Jesus offers you real and lasting life today. Will you take it from him? Is he your way, your truth and your life?

[41 : 36] As I close listen to the graphic words and I'm deliberately using that word graphic. Listen to the graphic words of Jesus once again on chapter 6, this time at verse 53, as he emphasizes how critical it is to have him as your savior.

Jesus said to them, very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

May the Lord bless these thoughts to each one of us for his glory and for our eternal good.