

I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life

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[0 : 0 0] Oh, hello. Hello.

I'm reading from John chapter 14, verse 1 to 14. Let not your hearts be troubled.

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 may be also. And you know the way to where I'm 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, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

[1 : 0 1] 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 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 the Father and the Father is in me?

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. 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. Well, good morning, everyone.

[2 : 1 3] Well, will you please pray with me as we come to God's Word. Father, this is always the case, but there are just amazing truths in your Word for us this morning.

And my prayer is that each of us would hear them as coming from your mouth and not from mine. So I pray that you would fill us with your Spirit and your Word.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Well, I was listening to a Jordan Peterson podcast. If you don't know who he is, that's fine. I found this interaction on this podcast really fascinating.

So he had a guest on named Alex. Now, Alex isn't a believer, but he was pressing Jordan to explain his beliefs, because this guy, he's giving lectures on the Bible.

He quotes the Bible left, right and centre. And then Alex is saying, If I went back in time with a Panasonic video camera, I'm sure there's other brands out there just for legal sake, Panasonic video camera and put that camera in front of the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, would the little LCD screen show a man walk out of that tomb?

[3 : 4 5] And Jordan replies, I would suspect yes. Alex says, So that, to me, seems like a belief in the historical event of the resurrection, or at least of Jesus leaving the tomb, which means that when somebody says, Do you believe that Jesus rose from the dead?

It doesn't seem clear to me why you're not able to say, It would seem to me yes. And Jordan replies, Because I have no idea what that means. And neither did the people who saw him.

Wow. We've been going through the I Am declarations of Jesus for five weeks now. And today, we have a passage that answers Jordan's question about, What does it all mean?

Jordan's claim that the people who first saw him had no idea. Maybe that is initially true, but John tells us why he wrote this down.

He says in chapter 20, Now Jesus did many other signs, miracles, in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book, 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.

[5 : 19] That's what it means. Now, for all of you, my brothers and sisters, who know what all this means, can we just take a moment to remind ourselves of what John 14, the original situation that the disciples were facing.

John 14 is, you've probably heard it at many funerals, and it's a great passage for funerals. But the first purpose of this are to disciples whose faith, it is on the brink of failure.

They are battered. Their expectations of success, seriously unmet. One of their own would betray.

Their leader, Peter, is going to publicly deny the faith. If he can't make it through the night, what about the others?

They feel abandoned to their own resources. They're battled in their faith. So the original setting is these words to us. This is what Jesus says, his purpose for his words.

[6 : 34] I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take heart, I have overcome the world.

So this passage shows us what it all means. And if we know what it means, that just clicked, that the rooster crowing is...

That's really fitting for Peter's denial, isn't it? I did not set that up. Thank you, whoever did that. This is an audio-visual experience.

I was wondering why you were all laughing. I wasn't getting the joke. Whatever is battering your faith...

I think our faith is constantly battered. I don't think it's just certain seasons in life. I think it's a miracle that any of us make it to the end. All of us are battered by different things.

[7 : 48] Either being seduced away, Jesus just becomes smaller than he actually is, or a direct challenge, or is it for me? They're great truths.

We're constantly battered. We see three things in this passage that give us such peace in him. There's a place for you in the Father's house.

You know the way. From now on, you know the Father. And in that peace, he's calling us to great works in sharing that peace until we get to see him.

So let's just go through this passage. We saw last week in the resurrection of Lazarus a sneak preview of the end of the age when everyone who are buried are going to hear the voice of the Son of God and come out of their graves.

Some to everlasting life. Some to everlasting judgment. Now the goal of Jesus' mission, what it all means, is to prepare a place in our Father's house.

[9 : 12] It's a picture of that heaven. There's many rooms. I don't think we're meant to be picturing the rooms. However you want to decorate them.

The nature of the rooms isn't what's talked about. There's so much space, is his point. There's heaps of space. There's plenty of room. And there is a place.

I'm looking around this auditorium and we love place. I can almost know who's here this morning by looking at certain parts of seats. We love place.

We are embodied creatures. We want to worship God embodied in a place. And that is what Jesus came to give us.

This eternal, permanent place. It is an embodied home. It's a place for you personally.

[10 : 12] He's expecting you. People won't turn their eyes away from you when you get in. It's just like, I don't know how he made it. They're just going to tolerate that.

They're going to see you. The Father's expecting you to see you at the core of your being and delight in you. You're expected. Your name's there.

It's a place for you. He's going to prepare. There's a sense in which Jesus refuses to start the bliss of heaven until all his people are with him.

I'm pretty sure I've quoted C.S. Lewis recently. I can't remember. I'm going to quote it again because it's a great quote. Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists.

A baby feels hunger? Well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim. Well, there is such a thing as water. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.

[11 : 24] If none of my earthly pleasures satisfy it, that does not prove that the universe is a fraud. Probably earthly pleasures were never meant to satisfy it.

But only to arouse it. To suggest the real thing. I think this morning you can know you have a place there if your desires move from the concept of place to person.

verse 3, I will come again and I will take you to myself. That where I am you may be also.

If that, I know that grows over time as a Christian, but if your concept of heaven moves from place to person, I think that's one indicator that you know him.

You have a place. So we have peace, have peace in me because there's a place for you in my father's house and second, because you know the way. You know it. Now, Thomas doesn't seem to know, but they do know because they know him.

[12 : 49] Now, this is where we've got to take, pay close attention to the article. He's not saying, I am a, a way among many to God.

I am the way, the truth, the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Jesus is the only way to the Father precisely because of who he is. He is the truth of God and the life of God is in himself.

Because of who he is, it makes him the only way. Now, I think we're all, the idea of absolute, the truth, it might, it might feel yucky to you, I'm not sure, but I think we're all intolerant when truth is staring us in the face, when there's just reality there, you just, you've got to deal with it.

An example of this, I think it was this week, the guys who are laying the floor tiles, these squares, they were telling me that they get to the end and then there's this five millimetre gap.

[14 : 12] That reality of a gap, it shouldn't be there and it's just staring them in the face, it means one of the tiles somewhere that look identical is mismanufactured.

Now, that reality, they could have gone, well, they looked, they looked right, they look square, but no, the gap was, it's reality that, they spent ages finding that one square that was out of alignment.

They were intolerant to their credit and they didn't just put up with it. When reality's there, even if you don't like it, I'll give you another illustration in case that didn't work for you. If you go to the doctor and you describe your symptoms and the doctor knows what you've got, they've seen it hundreds of times, all the research papers say the same thing, no one disagrees and the prognosis is not good.

If that doctor told you a lie because they didn't want to upset you, how would you feel about that?

Would you tolerate that? I'd be pretty furious. Even when reality, we don't like it. It's not helpful or kind to be flexible with truth.

[15 : 33] How much more with ultimate truth, ultimate reality? I think we're all searching for ultimate reality. I want to go back to that podcast I mentioned.

Alex, remember, he's an unbeliever. He raises a really critical challenge to our society's belief system based on the truth of evolution.

Here's what Alex says. he's describing someone else's argument but here's what he says. What does natural selection select for? Survivability.

So if you're a materialist, there's no such thing as God, that means that the very rational faculty that you're using right now evolves not to be sensitive to truth but to survivability.

And if that's the case, why do you believe in the truth of evolution? This unbeliever is putting it forward as going, he doesn't answer the question.

[16 : 51] We're all searching for truth. We want to base our lives on truth, don't we? And Jesus declares himself to be the truth.

He's not just saying I'm telling the truth. He's not just saying I stand for the truth. He's not even saying that he's one important aspect among all the true things out there in the cosmos.

He's saying he's ultimate reality in human form. He's saying that everything else that's true relies upon him.

That the divine revelation of God became flesh, meat, as we saw in week one. It's not doctrinal propositions at the heart of the universe.

it's a beating heart. Ultimate reality is a beating heart. He's saying I'm it.

[18 : 02] I'm the truth of God. And he's saying he is the life. Not only that he gives life, but that's a radical claim.

he's saying in him was life, says John. That he himself is vigorously, fully alive.

He is eternal life. He doesn't just give eternal life. He is life. If you're struggling to wrap your head around this, join the club.

all of us want life to the full and he's saying he is it. We heard last week that amazing promise in raising Lazarus, everyone who lives in me and believes in me shall never die.

If you're living in him, when I close my eyes for that final time, maybe in a hospital bed, there won't be even a millisecond of death because I've already entered that eternal life.

[19 : 27] I just get more of it. life. He describes eternal life this way in John 17 when he's praying, this is eternal life that they know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

He is the way because of who he is. He's the beating heart at the centre of the universe and in him is life. If you want life, it's found in him.

Isn't Philip an encouraging disciple?

Whenever you meet him, he always seems out of his depth. When the crowd of 5,000 are around and they're hungry, here's Philip's contribution.

If we spend almost a year's wages, 200 genari, all on bread, Jesus, actually, we still wouldn't have enough to give everyone just a taste.

[20 : 41] That's his solution to the problem. When some non-Jews want to come see Jesus, Philip's like, can you bring them? Can you turn them away?

He's not sure. Andrew, what do we do? And here, he is out of his depth. Lord, show us the Father.

That's enough for us. Now, to his credit, this is a bold request. No one has ever seen God. Even Moses only saw the back of God. Show us the Father.

And he's saying, that's enough. We're troubled, but if I just saw God himself, I could keep going. We could keep going. It's a bold request.

But notice Jesus' reply. It seems to be tinged with sadness. Have I been with you so long? And you still do not know me, Philip.

[21 : 48] Here I am. Is that enough for you, Philip? Philip, Philip, Philip, Philip, Philip, Philip, Philip, Philip, ?

No one has ever seen God, the only God, who is at the Father's side. He has made him known. He is the only way to God because of who he is.

He is the only door for the sheep because of who he is. Now Now, a human being that declares these things, like, surely Jesus is a fruitcake.

Surely he's deranged. He's a liar. He's possessed by a demon, his contemporaries conclude. Why would you listen to a single word, someone saying, I am ultimate reality, I am life?

You've got to treat him as a fruitcake or you've got to worship him. For those of us who believe, we have peace.

[23 : 14] How much peace is there? We know him. We know the way. There's a place for us in the Father's house and you know the way because you know him.

And we have peace because all this is ours because of what he's done. Now, this is where I want to hone in on what does Jesus being the way mean?

Again, I'm going to use that podcast. It was such a fascinating podcast of what people believe out in the world.

Jordan, again, is pressed for a definition of a Christian. And Jordan, he's a quick thinker and he pauses, I don't know, 10 seconds.

It's the longest pause I've ever heard him have. And then, I won't tell you the whole quote. Okay, so I'm oversimplifying this if you want to go listen to yourself. But he basically says, this is one of his things he says, I think the essence of the Christian faith is the imitation of Christ.

[24 : 33] Jesus is saying so much more than that. He's saying so much more than that.

I'm the supreme example to imitate. If you use Jesus as your example to imitate, obviously we should, but as the basis of Christian faith, if you do that, I don't know about you, but that's going to crush me.

I'm going to fail. I'm going to fail. Consider the timing of these words. Remember when these words were said. This is the night before he dies.

In just a few hours, not one of his disciples are going to follow him. Not one are going to follow this way. They're going to abandon him.

And he's saying, I am the way. In a few hours, the lies of the enemies are going to get victory over this truth.

[25 : 39] His corpse is going to hang limp. He's going to be pale and pierced. And he's saying, I am the life. To the world, this just sounds ridiculous.

But it's not in spite of this, but it's because of this, that we see the Father most clearly when Jesus is on that cross. He says in verse 7, from now on, because he's going to that cross, from now on, you do know the Father.

When he says he's going to prepare a place, he's not busy with carpentry. He means he's going to the cross. It's prepared.

That our good shepherd would lay down his life for his sheep. Hebrews 10, 20 says, The way isn't Peter going, I'm ready to die for you, Jesus.

That's not the way. The way is, believe me. Have peace in me. I prepare the way. From now on, we know God as our Father.

[27 : 32] Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me. A place for you in my Father's house. You're expected. You know the way.

Because of who I am. And he's done it all. At the cross, we know the Father. That's what all this means.

There's so much peace in him. But in this peace, he's also preparing his disciples for great purpose.

I wonder if you believe verses 12 to 14. If you've got your Bibles there. Let me read just a bit of it.

Truly, truly, 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'm going to the Father.

[28 : 39] That's hard to believe, isn't it? Is this? Is this? Like, even the apostles going to do greater works than Jesus raising Lazarus?

Is this just about the apostles doing miracles in the Acts of the Year? I don't know. Possibly.

I suppose it's possible. But verse 12, it seems wider than that. Verse 12. Whoever believes. Whoever believes in me.

So I agree with Bishop J.C. Ryle. What greater work is there than the conversion of the human soul?

When at Pentecost, the church was just like 120 about now, and then 3,000 come. The truth and the life invading every nation, every heart, so many hearts.

[29 : 49] And he's using Philip, people like Philip. Ordinary, out of his depth, Philip. Ordinary, out of his depth, David. Ordinary, out of our depth, Grace Evangelical.

He's using our witness. I don't even know why he's crediting his disciples. Surely it's him doing this conversion.

And yet, it's him working through us. He's using us as the means to bear witness to the truth and life we've found in him. To convert people, to bring people into the Father's house.

What greater work. He gives us peace. Peace. And in that peace, he just, he pushes us into such great purpose. We've had an encouraging mission month, but are we going to fan that passion into flame?

Not just go, yes, we've done that in August. Is our witness going to grow individually and as a church? The world does not count this as important, but greater works.

[31 : 08] To share the peace that we've found. What a privilege. I would even go as far as to say, whatever's battering your faith at the moment, he's not just offering us peace.

I think those times when we're battered, which is all the time, whatever's battering you is an opportunity to bear witness. That problem at work.

Are you going to fight like the world does? Or are you going to show that, no, I've got peace. I've got peace in Jesus. I want to bear witness to him. Whatever's battering your faith.

I think it's an opportunity to show we've found truth and life, the way, in him. Will you pray with me?

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Lord, forgive us for not dwelling on that permanent home that we'll have with you nearly as much as we should.

[32 : 24] I think I can pray for all of us. Let me pray for myself. Lord, I set my goals on such smaller things when we step back at these ultimate truths and your grace in promising a place for us.

Lord, forgive us and help us to dwell on all that you've given us and the peace that we have in him. Lord, stir us up to share that peace with others.

In Jesus' name, amen. Let's pray.