

The way to Eternal Life

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[0:00] All right, we're in John 14. John chapter 14, verses 1 to 11. It's going to come up on the screen. And it tells us the way to eternal life. I want you to think about that statement for a moment, the way to eternal life.

That's a very exciting claim. And it's one we need to take seriously. Imagine that on a headline on a newspaper. Somebody discovered the way to eternal life.

Well, they have. It's just that people ignore the instruction. Chapter 14. Do not let your heart 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 and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me, that you also may be where I am.

You know the way to the place where I am going. Thomas said to him, Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way? Jesus answered, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

[1:15] If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him. 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 that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just 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. Amen, and the Lord will bless to us the reading of his word. When Billy Graham was 92 years of age, he's been mentioned already today. I didn't know that. It was meant to be. When he was 92 years of age, he was struggling with his Parkinson's disease, and in January of his, a month before his 93rd birthday, the leaders of Charlotte in North Carolina invited their favorite son to a dinner in honor of his work.

[2:37] He initially hesitated to accept the invitation because of his struggles with Parkinson's disease. But the Charlotte leader said to him, We don't expect a major address. Just come and let us honor you.

So he agreed. After wonderful things were said about him, he was invited up to the podium to speak to the crowd. And this is what he said.

I'm reminded today of Albert Einstein, the great physicist, who this month has been honored by Time magazine as man of the century. Einstein was once traveling from Princeton on a train when the conductor came down the aisle, punching the tickets of every passenger.

When he came to Einstein, Einstein reached in his vest pocket. He couldn't find his ticket. So he reached in his trouser pocket. It wasn't there.

He looked in his briefcase but couldn't find it. Then he looked in the seat beside him. He still couldn't find it. The conductor said, Einstein nodded appreciatively.

[3:53] The conductor continued down the aisle, punching tickets. As he was ready to move to the next car, he turned around and saw the great physicist down on his hands and knees, looking under his seat for the ticket.

The conductor rushed back and said, Dr. Einstein, Dr. Einstein, don't worry. I know who you are. No problem. You don't need a ticket. I'm sure you brought one. Einstein looked at him and said, Young man, I too know who I am.

What I don't know is where I am going. And then Billy Graham continued, See the suit I'm wearing.

It's a brand new suit. My children and my grandchildren are telling me I've gotten a little slovenly in my old age. I used to be a bit more fastidious.

So I went out and brought a new suit for this luncheon and one more occasion. You know what that occasion is? This is the suit in which I'll be buried.

[4:59] But when you hear I'm dead, I don't want you to immediately remember the suit I'm wearing. I want you to remember this. I not only know who I am, I know where I am going.

Jesus said, Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. Oh, I'm going to get emotional. 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 and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me.

That you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going. I've preached on that many times at funerals.

And it's such a comfort. When you bury somebody who knows who they are, and knows who Jesus is, and knows where they're going.

[6:04] And that, you see, is our great hope. The way to eternal life is to be found in a person, Jesus Christ, who says, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

And he says, don't let your hearts be troubled. Next slide. For he commands us to trust over trouble. To trust in God.

To trust also in him. He doesn't deny the reality of trouble. In this world, the scripture says, you will have troubles. Troubles of many kinds, in various guises.

But he promises us an antidote to that trouble. Yes, trouble is a reality. And Jesus himself is going to have trouble.

He said, now my heart is troubled. In the last chapter, as he approached the cross. Now my heart is troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour.

[7:03] No, for this hour I came. I can't avoid the trouble. But I can have your presence, Lord, with me. In the trouble. And when he went to the cross and suffered at the cross, and he cried out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

He discovered God to be with him in his darkness. Trouble is a reality. Man is born for trouble, the scripture says, as the sparks fly upwards.

It's inevitable at some point in our life. And if today you're thinking, I haven't got much troubles, well, thank God for that. But if today you're loaded down with them, let me just remind you that Paul says, he talks about our light and momentary troubles, our giving way to an exceeding weight. Notice the language, weight. Something that is much heavier than your light and momentary troubles. The exceeding weight of glory.

Heaven is the answer, the compensation for all the troubles of life. But it's not heaven, per se, as a physical place or a spiritual reality.

[8:25] It is Jesus himself. He is the one in whom we are to trust. He is the one who provides us with the compensation that we need. You believe in God if your heart is troubled.

You believe in God, believe also in me. Bring your troubles to me and I will carry them for you. If you're burdened down with them, I will walk with you and help you to carry them.

You can yoke yourself to me for my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Trust in me. Just like you trust in God. Now the disciples, they trusted in God implicitly.

It was fed to them with their mother's milk. They learned to announce from their earliest childhood that the Lord our God, the Lord is one and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength.

That was part of their DNA as Jewish people. They believed in God but Jesus says, just as you believe in God, believe in me. That's an amazing claim. And that's why later he can say, if you've seen me, you've seen the Father.

[9:36] It isn't to choose the lesser. To believe in Jesus and to trust in Jesus is to believe absolutely in Almighty God for Jesus is God manifest in the flesh.

We see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, said John. Jesus brings God to us and gives us someone physical and tangible that we can relate to.

For he cared for the things that we cared for. He did the things that we do and yet unlike us is without sin. And so he's worth trusting in. And especially because he's soon going to do something that they simply cannot understand or fathom.

He's going to go to the cross and allow himself to be crucified by sinful men and then he's going to rise again from the dead. Now they have to trust him. They're going to go through a really dark time where their faith is going to be tried and tested.

And he says, trust in me just as you trust in God. It'll be alright. It'll be alright. It'll be dark for a time but it'll be alright. And how like death that will be as we enter into the valley of the shadow of death and we naturally fear death because that's in the hearts of everybody.

[10 : 58] And yet the journey that leads through the valley of the shadow of the darkness will give way to light. And when we close our eyes with our last breath here on earth we will open our eyes forever in the presence of God.

In the presence of Jesus. For I will go and then I will come and I will come back to you and take you to be with me where I am.

In my father's house are many rooms. You might have mansions there but that's a bit of grandeur there that was put in there by Tyndale. It's not really justified.

Just a simple house perhaps. Just an apartment. But I don't think you'd be that concerned. You won't need air conditioning or anything like that. And it'll be centrally heated.

Summers will be summer. I don't know if there'll be winter but never mind. There are many rooms. John only uses that word for rooms twice here in this verse and then later on in the same chapter he uses the word again.

[12 : 07] The word for rooms in verse 23. And the point about the rooms is that the rooms exist in the father's house and it's about God coming into relationship with us.

Notice verse 23. If anyone loathes me he will obey my teaching. My father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him. Our room with him.

That's the actual same word that's used in verse 2. When we come to Jesus when we trust in God he makes a room with us.

We come into fellowship with him. We live with him. He lives with us. He becomes the dwelling place of his people. Heaven you see starts before you ever get in there.

Heaven begins with eternal life. As Jesus says in John chapter 17 in verse 3 for this is eternal life that you may know God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.

[13 : 12] That's what eternal life is. Eternal life is not so much about the place that we're going to. It's the person in whom we believe. And Jesus said didn't he? He said behold I stand at the door and knock.

If any man open the door and hear my voice and open the door I will come in to him and he will be with me. We are in a room as it were in the very presence of Jesus.

So yes this is about a future hope when we die but it starts now. It starts as soon as a person is born again and believes in Jesus. We have eternal life.

It is our inheritance. We're seated. We're already seated with him Paul says in the beloved. And it's important that we grasp that.

You see part of living this life is preparing for the next one. But really it's just a continuation of this one without sin and the frailties and the fragility of this life.

[14 : 22] I'm an evangelical Protestant Bible believing Protestant and I'm very sure about that's where as far as I understand scripture that's where I should be.

It doesn't mean to say I don't get benefit from others and if you are a reader and you would be interested a Roman Catholic priest by the name of Ronald Rohaizer has written three excellent books a trilogy I've read two of them I'm going to read the other one when it's cheaper it's hard back at the moment it's too expensive so I'll wait for the paper back.

The point is yes I am a bit tight but I'm from Newcastle but I'm living in Yorkshire so you've got now to laugh at. The first of his book is called The Holy Longing it's a great book Search for Christian Spirituality and it covers the early part of our lives what he says from puberty of course he knows we lived before that but it's when we struggle with life from puberty to middle adulthood until we have children and he says that's the that's the time in life when a person is kind of out there trying to establish who they are trying to establish their identity and make something of their life with all the challenges and all the frustrations and let's be frank all of the desires the very strong desires that can so easily lead us astray.

The second book is called Sacred Fire A Vision for a Deeper Humanity and Christian Maturity I've read that it's a terrific book as well that's about what he calls the middle or generative years when

you have children when you get married you have children and you develop your home but then you discover something really important about life you discover that you are not the most important person in your life your children are and your spouses and to some extent your employer and your church people and everybody else everybody wants a bit of you and life becomes a bit more troublesome then partly because your body begins to kind of deteriorate a little bit we might have noticed that but also because people make demands and it always seems that no matter how much you want for yourself other people want more from you and you can get a bit exhausted with all that maybe even a bit resentful and say what about me?

but that's what that life is for that stage but then the one I haven't read is called Insane for the Light a spirituality for our wisdom years I like that wisdom years when you get to about 65, 70 you get to retirement age and then you think to yourself well my kids don't want me anymore not really unless I've got a bit of money to leave them my wife's gotten used to me now and I'm a bit of an irritation so what do I do now?

[17 : 28] you know the average age for people used to be about what 60 before they died in their mid 60s in industrial Britain now a lot of us might live to where late 70s early 80s even beyond what are you going to do with those years?

you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to prepare to die I'm going to prepare to die but I'm going to also live I'm going to live because getting old doesn't mean you have to be without use or purpose it's not for sitting with your feet up and spending all your time this is just what I do falling asleep in the afternoon in the cabin it's kind of more than that it's about serving Jesus with all of my being and all of my strength for as long as I can and then being ready when it's my time to go to be with Jesus which is far better and I do that not just for myself I do that for others I need to die a good death I need to be a faithful man of God and I need to do that without fear I need to give myself away so that when

I leave my wife and children they don't think wow glad he's gone but there will be something that will help them to remember with a smile that he lived with Jesus that he had peace that he was content for whenever God would come or call don't let your heart be troubled yes we're getting older and yes in that maturest stage 3 period of life it can be tricky but it doesn't have to be without joy and it ends with hope I've been at many a deathbed of a Christian and when I've been with them I've said to them and I always say this I always say this and those of you who've been with me at deathbeds you know I say this Jesus is going to come for you and when he comes take his hand go home go home don't be troubled yes it's a reality but it doesn't have to be devastating with joy shall I draw waters from the wells of salvation my father's house there are many rooms now how do we know that well we know that because

Jesus is the exclusive way to the father next slide he is the exclusive way to the father Thomas said to him Lord we don't know where you are going so how can we know the way Jesus answered I am the way 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 Jesus is the way next slide that speaks to us of reconciliation Jesus says you want to know the way to God it isn't by ritual it isn't by doing good works it is by believing and trusting in me sounds so simple but if he is the way it is simple he's not unclear about it he's not saying well there are a lot of different ways and you have to pick the best he is absolutely exclusive about this now of course you're free to deny it and reject it that's absolutely your freedom and God will respect your freedom but he will also because he respects your choice will say you have to accept your consequence

I am the way if you want to know God you want to be reconciled to God you must come through me I am the truth you want truth you want light then I am the one who illuminates you I am the one that brings light into your darkness I am the one who gives you an understanding of the truth I am the way that will teach you the truth that will lead you to the Father and I am the life and that speaks of regeneration of being born again of beginning anew of having this eternal life that means you will never perish and no one Jesus says will ever pluck you from my hands Thomas you want to know the way to the Father just look at me if you've seen me you've seen the Father and it's enough there's nothing more needed than that nothing more needed than that nothing in where is it nothing in my hands

[22 : 34] I bring simply to thy cross I cling yes that's exactly what I think too to trust in Jesus is to follow him continuously as the way and the truth and the life it's not just about as it were getting heaven and then carrying on with your life until you die it's about a relationship it's about walking

with Jesus in the way in the truth and in the life every day that is why we're passionate about that that is why we're a little bit obsessive about this Jesus that is why when you heard people give their testimonies on Monday they all spoke about Jesus and how Jesus had transformed them and weren't they wonderful testimonies from depression and addiction from pain from lostness from fear from all kinds of things none of them were exaggerated none of them were just kind of you know given a little tar brush from me

I read them all before they went out there but I didn't change anything really at all suggested one or two little changes but that was all but they were authentically their story of how having come into relationship with Jesus they are now walking with him in the way in the truth and in the life and that's why you know some people they can say oh I believe in Jesus I have even been baptized and I go to church every so often but if they're not walking!

with Jesus every we do not just accept and adopt some beliefs we accept a way of life in relationship with Jesus it's like a marriage and you know you can't just turn up for the marriage on your honeymoon and your anniversary I've got one of them coming up anniversary you can't just do that yeah if you only turned up for your wife on your anniversary and then you had nothing more to do with her for the rest of the time or vice versa that wouldn't be a good marriage a good marriage is everyday a good marriage is the rough and tumble as well of everyday it's not always romantic but it's committed and it's passionate and it's real just like our relationship with

Jesus when Paul speaks about knowing Jesus he says I in his resurrection power it's like a race for me he says I don't want to be second I want to be first and I keep running to gain the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus was he passionate you bet your bottom dollar he was or bottom pound if you prefer you bet he was passionate thank God that all of these years on from meeting Jesus when I was 18 years of age I'm still passionate even more passionate than I've been Jesus is everything and ultimately Jesus is the only thing and the only one I need when I'm on my death bed Jesus is all in all we used to sing a hymn and I love the hymn Jesus these eyes have never seen that radiant form of thine can't remember the next line but he says this oh yes the veil of death hangs dark between thy blessed face and mine and he says

I see hear thee not I see thee not but thou art off with me and earth have ne'er so sweet a spot as where I met with thee it's lovely he is everything I am the way the truth and the life is a statement of sufficiency Thomas oh Philip it's all you need it's all you need I'm all you need it's enough it's enough is that your cry is that your heart is Jesus all you need is he everything to you not just a ticket to heaven but the lover of your soul and the one in whom you trust implicitly and then lastly he gives proof of divine unity in verses 8 to 11 Philip said Lord show us the father Thomas before Philip this time show us the father and that will be enough for us

[27 : 30] Don't you know me Philip! Even after I've been among you for such 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 that the father is in me the words I say to you are not just 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 come on you've seen me you've seen what I've done I raised a man from the dead I fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish I opened the eyes of the blind I healed an invalid who had been there 38 years I turned water into wine what more do you need believe on the evidence!

of God I'm enough you see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ the way to eternal life I have told you the way to eternal life imagine that imagine you wanted to go to St.

James Park why not cathedral on the hill and you wanted to know the way but there were no sat naves the internet was down and there were no maps who would you ask Richard he can go for two Josh maybe yeah yeah one or two others but I'm your man I know the way to St.

James Park I can tell you I'm fairly confident about this I could tell you every road you need to get to get over that glorious time bridge to get parked I can tell you where the McDonald's are and the Burger Kings are on the way for a bit of stop and lunch I can tell you the back streets to walk up to I can tell you what turnstile to go to if you have a choice of two I can tell you what to avoid when you come out I know the way like Billy Graham I haven't got my suit ready yet but I know the way and I know the end I know where I'm going and I know who I am I am a Christian man I'm in love with Jesus Christ and I follow him I have eternal life and when I die I shall go to be with him and to be with him is far better

I have told you the way to eternal life Jesus offers you eternal life I'm the way the truth and the life
you can come to the Father through me let us pray