

THE ONE WAY

John 14:1-12

Jesus said, **“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me,”** John 14:6. Is there anything unclear or ambiguous about these words? No. In this single verse composed of two simple sentences, Jesus Christ unconditionally declared Himself to be the one and only way to God the Father, and the one and only way for lost humanity to be saved.

“I am the way,” He said, with the emphasis on the personal pronoun “I”. In fact, a more literal rendering of the Greek phrase is “I Myself am the way.” And to further emphasize His being the one and only Savior, Jesus added, **“No one comes to the Father except through Me.”** No one. No exceptions. No exemptions. At no time. Like salvation itself, this great Bible verse, John 14:6, begins and ends with Jesus Christ. It begins with Christ saying, **“I am the way.”** It ends with Christ saying, **“except through Me.”**

In this grand verse notice the use of the definite article THE. Jesus did not present Himself as one way and one truth and one life among many ways, truths, and lives. Jesus declared Himself to be the way, the truth, the life. Consequently, outside of Jesus Christ there is no other way, no other truth, and no other life.

And even this is not the extent of Christ’s words. For in John 14:6 Jesus did not merely claim to have the way and the truth and the life. Jesus professed Himself to be the way and the truth and the life—the very embodiment of the way, the truth, and the life. Said differently, Jesus declared Himself to be God’s living, breathing, walking, talking, suffering, dying, and rising way, truth, and life.

And therefore, dear friends, to know and believe in this Jesus Christ is to possess the way to God, the truth of God, and the life from God. As Jesus also said in John 5:24, **“I tell you the truth, whoever hears My words and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”** Do you believe in Jesus? Then you have eternal life. You’ve crossed over from death to life. Yes, eternal life to be experienced in the hereafter, but also eternal life owned in the here-and-now.

John 14:6 is a remarkable verse; clear, unambiguous, straightforward, and unapologetic in its teaching. And it is precisely because the words of Jesus in this verse *are* so clear and so unambiguous that they draw the wrath and scorn of the Unbelieving World. “Call Jesus your Savior, if you must. But don’t call Him my Savior. Don’t call Him the only Savior or the only way to God or the only way to be saved. That’s

arrogant. That's intolerant. That's unloving. That's un-American. And that's politically incorrect." Oh, dear.

Answering such accusations must be done, as Peter wrote, **"with gentleness and respect,"** 1 Peter 3:15. But he also stated in the same verse, **"In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord."** Reverencing Christ as Lord certainly includes bowing before the authority of Christ's word. Finally, He is the one who said, **"I am the way and the truth and the life."** These are His words, not ours. I have no intention of apologizing for them or apologizing for Him. Do you?

Sadly, the comprehensiveness of these words of Jesus has made even some Christian churches reluctant to use them; or at least those churches more concerned with membership than ministry and truth. "Oh, no, Pastor. We can't say that Jesus is the only Savior; that Jesus is the only way to God; that Jesus is the only way to be saved. Why, that would upset people. They might stop attending our church. They might stop contributing to our new worship facility, new radio program, and new worldwide TV ministry. And to preach Jesus as the only Savior, why, that would conflict with the teachings of other religions—Muslims, Mormons, Christian Scientists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Buddhists, and more. They are at least willing to call Jesus a good man, a great prophet, a way to salvation. Isn't that enough?" No. Not according to Jesus. Not according to Scripture.

Joel Osteen, the popular pastor of the Lakewood Church in Texas, which is one of the largest churches in the United States, said the following: "Billy Graham, his gift was to go out and win people to Christ. It's different being a pastor. I'm trying to reach people—how do you live the abundant life? That's my gift. Some people are good at taking Scripture line by line and talking about how it was written, but that's not my gift. I believe you've got to repent of your sins; you've got to have a relationship with Christ. So I believe all these fundamental things. I just don't focus on that."

With all due respect, Pastor Osteen, what then should a Christian congregation focus on? What is more fundamental to the Bible and Christianity than the fundamental truth that we cannot save ourselves, and that the one and only way to be saved is through faith in Jesus Christ?"

And John 14:6 is by no means the only Bible verse to present Jesus Christ as the one and only Savior. As rich and overflowing as Scripture is with the good news of salvation through Christ, I have always been amazed at the way in which the Spirit of God encapsulates the entire Gospel into single Bible verses. Notably, John 3:16, **"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."**

Or John 17:3, **“And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”** Or John 20:31, **“These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.”** Or Acts 4:12, where the apostle Peter said of Jesus, **“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”** And there are many more such passages about salvation through Christ alone; though none more clear or succinct than John 14:6, **“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”**

“I am the way,” said Jesus. Yet, let’s not forget the setting in which Jesus spoke these words. He was not speaking to a pastoral conference, but to frightened disciples who had heard Him talk of betrayal, denial, persecution, suffering, crucifixion, death, resurrection, and departing to be with the Father in heaven.

Of this departure Jesus said, **“You know the way to the place I am going,”** John 14:4. This led Thomas to ask, **“Lord, we don’t know where You are going, so how can we know the way?”** John 14:5. To which Jesus replied, **“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me,”** John 14:6.

In titling today’s message “The One Way” I’m not neglecting what Jesus also said about being **“the truth”** and **“the life”**. A beaten, bleeding Jesus would tell Pontius Pilate, **“The reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to Me,”** John 18:37.

And Scripture is overflowing with references to life through Christ, both as the Creator and as the Redeemer. John 1:3-4, **“Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men.”** Or these words of Jesus in John 10:10, **“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”**

At the same time, these three realities, the way and the truth and the life, are closely related. They are three aspects of the same Christian journey. For when we believe in Jesus, we are following God’s one way, which is the true way; and that true way always leads us to true life. Jesus Christ is the one way. Consider the comfort this reality brings to you as a child of God.

First, “How can I be saved?” How did Jesus answer this question? He said, **“I am the way and the truth and the life.”** If Jesus is the one way to be saved, then there is no other way for us to save ourselves. This is why Paul wrote in Romans 3:23-24, **“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”** This is why Paul wrote

in Ephesians 2:8-9, **“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”** How important is it for people to know this truth? Nothing is more important. If they choose their own way to salvation, they will be eternally lost. If they follow God’s one way, Jesus Christ, they will be eternally saved.

Yes, the world condemns Christ’s **“I am the way”** as intolerant, unloving, and narrow-minded. However, the exact opposite is true. In the Bible God repeatedly tells people that there is only one way to be saved, namely, Jesus Christ; because there is only one way to be saved, Jesus Christ.

God proclaims this one way, Jesus Christ, to the world, not because He wants to exclude individuals from salvation, but because, as Paul wrote to Timothy, God **“wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth,”** 1 Timothy 2:4. The way and the truth and the life are Jesus. And if the right directions matter when traveling from one town to another, you can be certain that the right directions matter when traveling from this life to the next.

These are the types of fundamental truths which seasoned parishioners may roll their eyes at; the type of fundamental truths—“I’m sinful; I can’t save myself; only Jesus can save me”—that seasoned pastors may present with a ho-hum attitude or feeling “I wish I had something different to say.” But thank God that Sunday after Sunday I don’t have to say anything different. Thank God that Sunday after Sunday you don’t have anything different to hear than Jesus Christ is **“the way and the truth and the life.”** Because when you have Him you have the certainty of salvation. And for sinful people, there can be no greater comfort than “Jesus is the way;” no greater comfort than the comfort of Romans 8:1, **“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.”**

Yes, we may know Jesus very well. We may have walked with Jesus by faith for many years. We may have learned about Jesus through decades of Bible Classes and family devotions. Yet, even Philip was told by Jesus, **“Don’t you know Me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time?”** Could the Savior not say the same of us in our moments of doubt, despair, and worry? **“Don’t you know Me?”** Because it is precisely then, amid our doubts, despairs, and worries, that we need to be reminded: Jesus is the way. Jesus is the one way. Jesus is the only way.

But the certainty of eternal life is not the only application of John 14:1-12. Jesus intended these precious words for our daily life and daily problems too. How many of you here today are going through a particular hardship—sickness, financial difficulties,

job loss, family trouble, wondering how you will endure? What's the answer. You know as I know. Jesus said, **"I am the way and the truth and the life."**

So, tell me, did the Savior place any conditions or qualifications on His statement? Did He say, **"I am the way,"** between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM; no weekends, no holidays? Did He say, **"I am the way,"** except for serious illnesses or unreasonable bosses or impossible situations? No, He said, **"I am the way,"** regardless of what the problem or the destination. And this is why the author of Hebrews wrote: **"Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith,"** Hebrews 12:1-2.

Second, "How can I repair a troubled marriage?" What did Jesus say? **"I am the way and the truth and the life."** Date-nights and communication and counseling are all beneficial to a troubled marriage. But dear friends, nothing can replace Jesus Christ in a marriage. I know personally how difficult and lonely a struggling marriage can be. Yet, I ask you this: Can two *Christian* spouses stand before the cross of Jesus Christ, the Savior who reconciled the sinful world to a holy God, and still claim that they have irreconcilable differences?

When the apostle Paul counseled married couples in Ephesus, he taught them that "Jesus Christ is the one way" to make a marriage work. Christ was the way for the respective, crucial roles in a marriage. And so Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:22, **"Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as to the Lord."** And in Ephesians 5:25, **"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her."**

Third, "How can I find the will and strength to forgive?" The answer? Jesus said, **"I am the way and the truth and the life."** Nowhere does Scripture say that forgiving another person is easy. All of us can remember people who've hurt us over the years. I can still recall the name of a teenage bully who punched me in the small of a back, in the year 1967, at Robinswood Junior High School, Orlando, Florida. Add to that the injuries and pain caused by divorce—not being able to see my two sons daily; leaving a nice home for a dingy, one-bedroom apartment on the third floor of an apartment complex; the financial stress and loneliness and humiliation. Yes, there were times when I struggled to forgive, when I didn't want to forgive.

Yet, the refusal to forgive is not only wrong, it is harmful. For good reason one of the Greek words for forgiveness in the New Testament means "to loose" or "let go". When we can't let go of a past injury, it won't let go of us. We're emotionally tied to it

and it to us. If you are struggling to forgive someone today, the way and the will to do so is in Jesus Christ. This is why the Bible states: **“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as in Christ God forgave you.”**

“Finally, “How can I prepare my children for the temptations and trials of life?” As parents, all of us worry about our children, even when they are grown. We worry about their health. We worry about their faith. We worry about their salvation. In the rearview mirror of my life, I can say I’ve made many mistakes in raising my children. I still worry about them too.

But despite my failings, I’ve always told my children, and still tell them: “If you remember nothing else, remember that Jesus Christ loves you and proved that love by dying for your sins.” No matter how overused this repetition may seem to me or sound to them, I know that if they believe—just believe—that Jesus is the one way, the one truth, and the one life, they will be saved.

“I am the way and the truth and the life,” said Jesus. Know this. Believe this. Remember this. If you do, you will never have to let your heart be troubled. You will never have to be afraid. In the words of the hymnist:

“Jesus, Jesus, only Jesus,
Can my heartfelt longing still.
Lo, I pledge myself to Jesus
What He wills alone to will.
For my heart which He hath filled,
Ever cries, Lord, as Thou wilt.” LH 348:1