

Jesus, The Way, Truth, Life

John 14:4-6

Pastor John Miller

I'll read John 14:1-6. Follow along with me. Jesus is speaking. He said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house," that's a reference to heaven, "are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again," I believe that is a reference to the rapture of the church, "and receive you," catch you up, "unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." We pick it up in verse 4, "And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. 5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? 6 Jesus saith unto him," that is, Thomas, "I am," He used that Greek statement, *ego eimi*, the same statement made by God from the burning bush to Moses, "the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

As we come to the sixth of the "I Am" statements in John's gospel, it is the most exclusive, and to many, unnecessarily offensive, of all Christ's saying. Indeed, it is probably the most exclusive statement ever made by anyone. Now, the context, or the upper room—Jesus with His disciples—Jesus had announced that, "I'm going to heaven. I'm going to leave you." He announced that Peter would deny Him, Judas would betray Him, all this was going to happen, and their hearts were filled with sorrow. As He opens John 14, and there's no break in the original, by the way, so you need to keep that in mind. Many times when you're reading your Bible, to understand the context, you have to go back into the chapter that's ahead of your text.

They were troubled, upset, and Peter was going to deny Him before the rooster crowed three times, but Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." Then He began to speak about the Father's house, that He was going there, where many mansions or literally abiding places, "if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you...I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Jesus gave them comfort by saying, "Believe in Me, believe in My promise that I will come again and receive you to Myself, and believe in a place—it's called the Father's house—that I'm going to take you." When we looked at that in depth last Wednesday night, but (verse 5), "Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?"

I'm glad that Thomas asked this question. There are two questions there in the fifth verse, "We don't know where you're going," and "How can we know the way?" He speaks about the Father's house, coming again to take us to the Father's house, yet Thomas says, "We're not really sure what You're talking about. We're still a little cloudy. We're a little confused. It's not really clear what's going on here." Thomas is sometimes known as doubting Thomas. It could be that's kind of a bad rap for poor Thomas, and he's going to probably have a talk with some preachers when they get to heaven, "Why'd you call me doubting Thomas?" because he seems to always be asking questions on the negative side.

When Jesus was going to go to Bethany to raise Lazarus from the dead and they said, "They'll kill You. They're trying to kill You there," and Thomas said, "Well, let's go with Him so we can all die together," you know, it's kind of like an Eeyore type thing, "Let's all go die together," you know. Thanks a lot, Thomas. When they told Thomas, "We've seen Jesus. He's risen from the dead!" Thomas wasn't there. Thomas says, "I'm not going to believe," some say he was from Missouri, the "Show-Me State," "unless I can see with my own eyes, and I can touch Him with my own hands," and immediately Jesus was in the room and called Thomas over and said, "Be not unbelieving, but believing." That's when Thomas fell to the ground and said, "My Lord, and my God." He made that amazing statement.

Thomas is sometimes known as the doubting disciple or apostle. He asks this question, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" I love that concept of, "How do we know the way," at the end of verse 5. Then, Jesus makes this amazing statement, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." We're going to break that down, but note that it's not a way, it's the way. This is exclusive. There's only one way, there's only one truth, there's only one life, and it's found in One Person. When you take time to look at the uniqueness of Christ, it's easy to understand why He is the way to God, He's the way to having our sins forgiven. He's the second Person of the Godhead. He's the only One ever born of a virgin. He's the only One that lived a sinless life. He's the only One that was able to die a substitutionary death. This Sunday morning in Revelation 5 we get that episode of "...Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" and "...behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah...hath prevailed," Jesus alone. Heaven and earth was searched and only Jesus is worthy to take the scroll and open the seals thereof to redeem earth back to God. Jesus is so unique that He's exclusively the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father, but by Him.

When Jesus adds that last statement, "...no man cometh unto the Father, but by me," I believe that is a repeat of what He's already said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." He's saying the same thing in a different way. He's kind of summarizing what He says and wants to make it very clear that there's no other way to get to God. If these words are true, and we as Christians believe they are, they may be exclusive but should not be offensive. Why are we offended by the truth? Because we have our own concept and idea that it may not fit into and so we reject that. How convenient for men today that have rejected absolute truth. A lot of times we don't think about this, but we actually for generations have been permeated in our culture with this concept that there is no absolute truth. When you're dealing basically with man today, they don't believe that there is any absolute truth. This exclusive statement of Jesus is anathema to them, "You Christians are so narrow minded that you think your religion is the only right religion," or "Jesus is the only way," and they just freak out.

Perhaps you've seen the little video clip of years ago. Oprah Winfrey was interviewing people early in her show and one Christian stood up and said, "Jesus is the only way," and Oprah just lit into her, "Can't be the only way!" Why? Because you don't think that He's the only way because of your philosophy or your ideas? And she claims to be a Christian, which I don't think that anything could be further from the truth. She has no concept of who Jesus is or what the

Bible teaches, and she actually said, "Jesus can't be the only way. What about all these other religions?"

Well, Jesus is either true in His statement or false. Either what He said is true, or it's not true. Now, people try to twist it, even so-called Evangelical pastors try to soften it, twist it, and take the edges off because they don't want to cause people to be upset. They don't want to offend anybody. Any preacher that's afraid to speak the truth of God's Word because he might offend somebody should not be in the pulpit of our churches. I certainly don't preach because I like to offend people and I want to get them mad, but I try my best—with God's help, by His grace—to be faithful to Him and to His Word. I believe what the Bible teaches that I'm a steward, that I just take what He gave me in His Word to give to you. I'm not to add to it, take away from it, change it, dilute it, or substitute it—which is quite popular today—but just give you the unadulterated Word of God—nothing more, nothing less. If you have a problem with that, then the problem is not with me, the problem is with the Scriptures. I don't really worry about offending anyone, I worry about being faithful to the Lord and hearing Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

Why are they offensive? Because human beings are sinful, and that's why Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Before sin entered into the world, Adam and Eve enjoyed three things or three privileges. If you're taking notes, you might want to write them down. They had communion with God, walked in the garden with God. Before sin entered the world, they knew God. They had the life of God in their souls. They were made to know God, to commune with God, and have eternal life with God.

Secondly, they knew the truth about God. How could they not? They saw God every day. They talked with God, walked with God, communed with God. They had communion with God, had the knowledge of God, the truth about God; and, thirdly, they possessed the spiritual life of God. They were made in the image of God, and I believe Adam and Eve, if they had not sinned, would have lived forever, that the wages of sin is death. Remember God said to Adam and Eve, "The day you eat that fruit that's forbidden, you shall surely die," not "Maybe, you better be careful, it might kill you," but "You shall surely die." They died two ways. They immediately died spiritually, they lost their communion with God, they lost their knowledge of God, and they lost the life of God. Those three things they lost the moment they sinned. Eventually, they died physically. The etymology of the word "death" literally means separation. They were separated from God, spiritually dead, then physically their bodies were separated from their soul and spirit in physical death. If you die in your sin, you will then, thirdly, be eternally dead, separated from God.

I love what James Montgomery Boice said about this. He said, "When they disobeyed God and fell into sin, they lost their privileges. Instead of enjoying communion with God, they experienced alienation from God; instead of knowing the truth of God, they fell into the falsehood and error about God; instead of possessing life, they began to know death." How true that is. He went on to say, "This is our human condition: We are alienated from God, we're ignorant of the truth of God, and we are condemned to spiritually and eventually physical

death. Instead of alienation, though, Jesus is the way back to God; instead of ignorance and error, He's the truth about God; and instead of death, He is the very life of God." I love what Boice says, and this kind of came to my knowledge many years ago, that man's greatest need is found in this "I Am" statement. His greatest need is for the way, the truth, and the life; and, as I said, we're going to break these down.

This is, as I said, the sixth of the "I Am" statements in the gospel of John. The first was "I am the bread of life." The second one was "I am the light of the world." The third one is, "I am the door." The fourth is, "I am the Good Shepherd." The fifth one is, "I am the resurrection and the life." The sixth one is, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Number seven will be, "I am the vine and you are the branches." We'll see that in John 15. The glory of this verse is that Jesus is the answer to man's great need on each of these levels.

If you're taking notes, write each one down. First, we are alienated from God, so we need reconciliation—that's the theological term. We are alienated from God. Every human being is born in sin, separated from God, and we need to be reconciled or brought back to God. Jesus is the way of reconciliation. In theology, when you're studying this doctrine of reconciliation, a couple of very important points: It is man reconciled to God, not God reconciled to man. God reconciles us is the second point. We can't reconcile ourselves. To be reconciled means to be brought back together. If a married couple separates and are not getting along, maybe they're talking about divorce but then decide to reconcile, then they come back together. We are estranged from God, and we need reconciliation. The idea is that God takes the initiative and brings us because He changes our state before Him and reconciles and brings us back to God. It's all a work of God, and it's all for His own glory done by His grace. In this case, it is the way back to God. Man's total ruin in sin makes it necessary for someone to provide a way or a means for us to get back to God.

A "way" presupposes two points and some way to connect those two points. Jesus is the "way" out of sin and guilt. You might write these down. He's the way to God, the way to heaven, the way to peace, the way to joy, the way to freedom from sin, the way to the Father, and the way home to the Father's house. We were born in sin, and Jesus provided on the cross His sacrifice of His life to reconcile us. That's one of the works of the cross. The cross is God's work of reconciliation—bringing us back to God. What it does is that it removes our sin. In Psalm 103:12, it says that He has removed our sins, "As far as the east is from west." The cool thing about that is that if you go east, you keep going east—you never go any other direction. If you go west, you keep going west—you never go any other direction. He separates our sin as far as the east is from the west and casts them into the depth of the sea, Micah 7:19. How glorious is that? Then, He forgives our sins, Colossians 2:13. We can be forgiven, and that's what brings reconciliation.

In Hebrews 10:17, He forgets our sin. Do you know what it means when God forgets our sins? It means He treats us and views us as though it never happened. That's another term for what happens when we get saved. It's called justification—the act of God, again, where He declares the believing sinner to be righteous based on that finished work of Jesus Christ upon the cross.

He removes them, casts them into the depths of the sea, forgives us, which means to carry them away, and then forgets them by treating us as though they never happened. In Romans 5, Paul breaks this down theologically and says, "By one man, Adam, sin came into the world and went upon the whole human race." That's why everyone dies. Then, "By One man, Jesus, who is the last Adam, righteousness came into the world, and He brought life and forgiveness and reconciliation into the world."

Jesus did not say (verse 6) that He came to show the way. He did not come to show the way, but He Himself was the actual means for bringing men to God. I don't often do this. I've already mentioned Oprah tonight, so I'll mention Oprah again. Oprah was interviewing Carl Lentz, the pastor of Hillsong, New York City. You would think if anyone would stand on the exclusivity of Jesus, the way, the truth, the life, that this pastor would do that. You can look it up on YouTube. I was shocked when I saw it myself. She asked him, "Is Jesus the only way to God?" He said, "Well, Jesus is like a sign that points the way to God." I don't even think I'm smart enough to figure out a way to twist this verse. What does that mean? No, Jesus didn't say, "I'm a sign. Buddha's a sign, Confucius is a sign, Krishna is a sign. These other religions have their sign. You can follow whatever sign, I'm just One of many." No, Jesus said, "I'm actually the way."

I've used the illustration before, so forgive me if you've heard it, but I like the illustration of an escalator. How many of you praise God for escalators? My wife's always taking the stairs, "Come on, let's take the stairs." I say, "No. I'll see you later. I'll take the escalator." I know we're supposed to do that, blah, blah, blah, blah, you know, why not thank God for the inventions that people have made. I like to trip out on escalators, too. I like to stand on the little crack when it starts and ZHWOOP! it turns into a step. When you come down the escalator, stand hanging over the tip and then VWOOP! it goes flat and you jump on. You can do all kinds of fun, cool things on escalators.

Years and years ago I was in Moscow. Anybody ever been to Moscow here? They have what's called The Underground, these trains that run under the ground all through the city of Moscow. It was kind of like their Cold War development. They have these escalators that go down, down, down, down. You have to stair step on them. They go way down underground, and you take these trains all around Moscow. I have never in my life seen escalators like this. For no other reason, go to Moscow just to trip out on these escalators! They literally almost go for blocks just down, down, down, down, down, down, down underground. We were on our way down one and some lady flipped and fell at the bottom. The pileup were literally hundreds of bodies piled up at the bottom of this escalator. I just followed the Russian guys that knew what they were doing. They were all jumping ship and going off the side. It was just quite an experience. Anyway, that has nothing to do with my illustration, I just thought I'd share it.

What does an escalator do? You don't have to have leg strength. You don't have to have ability. You can be very weak and frail. You just stand on it, and it takes you there. Jesus isn't a stairway to heaven, okay? He's an escalator to heaven. Jesus isn't a crutch, He's an ambulance. He actually takes you there. That's what the concept is of the "way." You trust

Jesus, and He carries you to heaven. You don't get there by your own goodness, righteousness, or strength. It's so important to understand that. If you'd like to escape your sin and your guilt that goes with it, Jesus is the way to the Father and to heaven. There is no other way. I like the old statement: If you want to get to heaven, you can't go around the cross. God provided the cross, and that's the way that we get to heaven.

The second thing that we need because we are ignorant of God is illumination. We need regeneration; and, because we're ignorant of God, we need illumination. Jesus is (verse 6) "the truth," the truth about what? The truth about the Father, the truth about salvation, the truth about eternal life, the truth about heaven, the truth about hell. Jesus spoke more about hell than anyone else in the Bible. If you want to know what happens after you die, listen to Jesus. Now, He did not say, "I've come to tell you the truth." He didn't come to show us the way, He is the way. He didn't come to tell us the way. You know, you don't get to heaven by just following the teachings of Christ, you get to heaven by trusting the Person of Christ. He takes you there. When He says, "I am...the truth," He is the truth about God, and everything He says is true.

Jesus came to reveal the Father. I want you to peek at it. We'll get into it in a couple of weeks, but He says in verse 7, just kind of a little preview of what's coming, "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. 8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us," we will be satisfied. "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" Jesus is not the Father, but He reveals the Father, so revelation and illumination go together. You cannot know God apart from revelation, so He comes to reveal God because He is God. Who better to reveal God than God the Son. He's divine Himself, so He is the way and the truth about God.

What truth do we find about Jesus before we move to the third aspect of this "I Am" statement? First, Jesus reveals the truth about the Father that He is a personal God. He's not an impersonal force but wants to communicate with us. This is the opposite of what is called deism. Deism is the idea that there is a God out there but He's unknowable, He doesn't interact with us, He brought all things into existence, He created everything, but then went on a long vacation. He just let everything go. He just wound up the clock, threw it out there, and it all went, but you can't know God—you can't understand God or have a relationship with God. They are called deists. Then, it flies in the face of what's called Pantheism. Pan meaning all. It means that everything is God. This is the Oprah Winfrey vibe. This is the New Age vibe. This is the cool, kind of Hollywood, vibe that the tree is god, the animals are god, the wind is god, the fire is god, the sea is god, the sun is god. God's an energy and in all things. That's not what Jesus reveals to us. He reveals a Father, a personal God the Father, who wants to know you and have an intimate relationship with you. He wants to communicate with you.

We also see that Jesus reveals a God the Father that is holy. You can't learn about this by looking at any other direction than Jesus. In Psalm 19 it says, "The heavens declare the glory of God," but Jesus came to show us the holiness of God. In John 8, we got it many, many

months ago, when Jesus encountered the woman who was caught in the very act of adultery. He said, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." He's loving, He's merciful, He's kind, but He's also a forgiving God the Father. As we look at Jesus, we learn that God is holy and is without sin. Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, and He was the sinless Son of God.

We also see that God is love. Who, but Jesus, revealed a Father who loves us—something even in the Old Testament that wasn't clear or understood. How about the parable of the prodigal son in which God the Father is depicted as this Father who looked longingly for his rebellious son to come home. When he saw him coming back home, He ran to meet him, threw His arms around him, smothered him with kisses, and welcomed him home. God loves you, and anyone who turns to God, He will embrace you with His love, His grace, and His mercy. How marvelous and wonderful is the love of God.

There's a third thing that Jesus said in this "I Am" statement. He also said, "I am...the life." We need to be regenerated. We are dead in sins, and we need to be regenerated. We need to be reconciled, we're estranged; we need to have illumination, understanding of who God is, what God is like; and we need to have life that comes from God alone. Remember, as I said, God told Adam and Eve, "The day you eat this fruit, you shall surely die." Well, they didn't die physically, they died spiritually. They were separated from God. The Bible says the natural man or woman, mankind, is actually separated or dead in trespasses and sins. Read Ephesians 2. Again, to be dead in sin means that you're separated from God. You can't know God. You have no ability to communicate with God. You're estranged from God, you're ignorant of God, and you don't have the life of God. Until we understand that, we don't understand our need of Christ and that we are sinners separated from God.

This is why Jesus told Nicodemus, again, in John 3, "Nicodemus, you must be born again," literally born from above. That's the term that theologically we use for regeneration. When we say, "Have you been regenerated?" The word "regenerate," you can look it up on your own, literally means to be given life. A Christian is someone who has the life of God in their soul. They have the very life of God...sometimes you can look at somebody and say, "You're a Christian, aren't you?" "How did you know?" "I can just see it in you. You have God's life in you." Until we are born again, we are separated from God. How do we get born again? John 3:16, "...whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," the life of God. Jesus is the way, the truth, the life. The life of God is Christ in your heart. In John 10:10, Jesus said, "The thief," on the other side, "cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Before I wrap this up, this statement, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," is an impetus to missions. If there's only one way to get to heaven, if there's only one way that we can understand God, if there's only one way that we can be born again, be forgiven, and go to heaven, don't you think that we should tell somebody else about it, that we shouldn't keep it secret, that all paths do not lead to God? Now, I know that some preachers for effect try to say,

"Well, all paths lead to God, but once you find God, then you go to heaven or hell," but the expression, "all paths lead to God," basically means all paths lead to salvation, and that's not true. There's only one way. There's only One Person. Jesus actually is the only One who can save your soul from sin because He's the only One who came from heaven, born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died on a cross, rose from the dead—that was a pretty good move—and then physically ascended back into heaven. I don't think any other religious leader comes close, and He was God in the flesh, so there's no other One. The Bible says, "...for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," then the name of Jesus.

When the Philippian jailer said to Paul, "What must I do to be saved?" He said, "Ah, just get religion. Just follow whatever path you feel like following." He said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved." Anything less can damn men for eternity. This statement is an impetus to missions. My wife was influenced by a sign years ago in Encinitas, California on Coast Hwy there of a picture of a guy riding a wave and Jesus looking over the wave, with a Scripture on the sign, "I am the way, the truth, the life: no one comes to the Father, but by Me." It struck her heart, and God used it to speak to her. She left the Transcendental Meditation stuff that she was involved in and started pursuing Jesus and came to know Him at His Word. I'm thankful Jesus said that. How many people have come to Christ because they've heard these words, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." So many religious leaders like to just put Jesus on a par with everyone else, "Oh, He's just one of the ways to God." The book of Colossians says that Christ is to have preeminence—not prominence, but preeminence—and that's what this statement is saying to us.

You might say, "Well, I don't believe it," and you're welcome to do that, but let me point out some things. First, the Bible says you're a fool. I'm not trying to offend you, but you are a fool because then you're rejecting your only hope of eternal life. If you were out in the ocean and were flailing, the Coast Guard has helicopters and can fly out in a helicopter and dropped a rope with a life preserver—it was your only hope—would you say, "No, I'd like a blue one, please?" "Well, we don't have any blue ones. The red one is the only one we have." You rejected that rope of salvation, you're lost. We can't create how we go to heaven, God's the One that designs it. It's a foolish thing. Secondly, in your pride you are headed to disaster. You're headed for hell. People reject God's way for their way of human morality or wisdom, and it damns their soul. The Bible says, "...broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat...and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." If you're a Christian, you're miracle. By the grace of God, He saved your soul.

Thirdly, I would say, if you reject this statement of Jesus, then you are insulting God. If God said, "He's the way, the truth, and the life," and you say, "I don't believe it," then you are insulting God. Jesus even added verse 6, "...no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." To reject Jesus is not only foolish and will damn your soul to hell, it is an insult to God. Now, I know that people say, "Well, you know, if I do this and accept Christ, then my friends will laugh at me. They'll think I'm crazy." Heaven or hell is in the balance? Truth or error? "No man comes to the Father, but by Me," Jesus says. There's no other way that we can be saved. We need to admit

that we're sinners. We need to repent of our sin, turn to Christ, and receive Him by faith. He's the way, the truth, and the life. No one gets to heaven except through Him. Amen? Let's pray.