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“I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6)

Leaders are facing many challenging problems during this regular session. How do we balance the budget? How do we deal with the drug problem? How do deal with the decline of the coal industry and grow and develop our economy? There is much discussion, debate, and argument as to the best way to fix these and other problems. There are certainly different ways to approach these issues. There may actually be different ways to solve them. As challenging as these problems are, we all face an infinitely more difficult problem of much greater importance. How can we as sinful people be made right with a Holy God? The Bible makes this clear. There is only one answer. This is what Jesus is talking about when He gives us perhaps His most powerful “I Am” in the Gospel of John: “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”

THE BACKGROUND

We read this claim of Jesus in one of the most encouraging portions found anywhere in Scripture. These words are part of what is commonly known as the “Upper Room Discourse” (John 13-17). This is Jesus’ last message to His disciples as He shares the Passover meal with them just hours before He is to go on trial and go to the cross. He is preparing them for what is about to take place

Jesus begins the chapter with the encouraging words, **“Let not your heart be troubled”**. The disciples had a great deal about which to be troubled. Jesus had just told them He was leaving (13:33, 36; 14:2-3). He proclaimed one of their number would betray Him (13:21). He informed Peter he would deny Him three times before sunrise (13:38). In response to Jesus’ startling revelation that He was leaving them, Thomas asks the all important question, **“Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?”** Thomas and the others did not understand that Christ was speaking of returning to heaven. It is to this question Jesus answers **“I am the way, the truth, and the life...”** He is speaking of the way to heaven, the way to eternal life, the way to a right relationship with God. Let us look more closely at this tremendous statement of our Lord.

THE MESSAGE

Before sin entered into the world, Adam and Eve enjoyed three aspects of a perfect relationship with God. They enjoyed close fellowship with God. They knew Him and His Word. And they possessed eternal spiritual and physical life. When they sinned, all three

of these facets of their relationship with God were destroyed. They were alienated from God. They could no longer perceive or understand the truth. And, indeed they died spiritually and also began the process of physical death. It is in this condition we find ourselves today as well. Each of us needs our relationship with God restored (reconciliation); our hearts and understanding opened to the truths of God’s Word (illumination); and new life in Christ (regeneration). All three of these needs are met perfectly in Jesus Christ.

I Am the Way

When God created Adam and Eve they were in close fellowship with Him. When they sinned, that fellowship was broken and they were separated from Him by their sin and became alienated from Him by their unrighteousness. Since that time man has continually tried to find his own way to God. Christ claimed to be the only way that this relationship could be reestablished.

This is a truth that is also clearly taught elsewhere in scripture. Speaking of Christ, Acts 4:12 states “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Paul writes in 1 Timothy 2:6, “There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all...” and again in 1 Corinthians 3:11, “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” So, in Jesus’ own words and in the words of other New Testament writers we see the Bible clearly claims that Jesus is the only way to a right relationship with God!

There may be some who have trusted Christ as the way of salvation but now live as though the Christian life depends upon our own efforts and the keeping of rules or standards. We must remember that just as Christ is the only way of salvation, so too He is the only way of continuing in the Christian life.

I Am the Truth

When man was created he knew God and knew His demands upon them. Since Adam and Eve bought in to Satan's deception in the Garden of Eden, man has been unable to perceive spiritual truth. We continue to face this same problem. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians that **"The natural man (one who does not know Christ) does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him..."** (1 Cor. 2:14). Paul also in 2 Corinthians speaks of those without Christ as **"those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them."** He continues to share that **"God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."** (2 Corinthians 4:4,6)

Jesus is called **"the word"** in John chapter one. In Hebrews the writer presents Christ as the source of truth: **"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son..."** (Hebrews 1:1-2)

In this day and age there are many who do not even believe there is such a thing as absolute truth. There are many who claim to be followers of Christ who claim that doctrine and truth are not important. Consequently, this is a tremendously important claim by Christ. The source of truth of how we can be right with God is only found in Jesus Christ and in the gospel message of what He has done for us!

I Am the Life

God told Adam and Eve when He gave them the admonition not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or that **"the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die"** (Gen. 2:17). Indeed, when they disobeyed they died spiritually and began the process of physical death as well. Paul states in Ephesians 2 that those who place their faith in Christ are **"are made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins"**. He goes further, informing us that **"God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ"**. Indeed, Jesus is the only source of spiritual and physical life.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US?

In today's culture it can be quite controversial to make the claim that faith in Christ is the only way of salvation. There are many who would say that those who claim to believe that Jesus is the only way of salvation express the height of arrogance and conceit. To the contrary, to believe in the gospel as it is presented in scripture is merely to believe in the tremendous love, mercy, and grace of God! That God so loved the world that He would send His Son to provide the way to eternal life points only to His great love! We must go to God's Word and to the words of Christ Himself if we want to know what God has to say about salvation and eternal life!

Charles Spurgeon wraps up one of his sermons on this passage this way:

"Oh! if we could but learn this truth and stand to it, that our acceptance with God depends upon nothing that we do or can do, nothing that we can think, or feel, or be, but depends wholly and entirely and solely upon what Jesus is, and what he has done, and what he has suffered, let us once get that thought—and it is in the text—we shall then be able, by the divine assistance of the Holy Spirit, to come to God at all times with boldness, knowing that we were so coming through Christ, and therefore we might always come boldly to the throne of grace." "He is the way to God' He is the truth to guide us; He is the life to enable to run in the road. Without Christ there is no way..."

- **Have you placed your faith in Christ and in His work on the cross as the only way of salvation?**
- **Do you trust in Jesus and His Word as the only source of truth in this relativistic, postmodern age?**
- **Are you experiencing the new life that Christ provides for those who have placed their faith in Him?"**
- **We need to be ready to proclaim Christ as the way, the truth and the life in a culture that is not open to such a claim!**

BIBLE STUDIES

Thursdays,

8:00 AM Governor's Conference Room (Sec. of State's Ofc)

12:00 Noon Treasurer's Conference Room (EB54,

Basement of East Wing)