

Jesus: the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14.4-7)

I. REVIEW: LET NOT YOUR HEARTS BE TROUBLED

- A. On the night prior to his crucifixion, Jesus gave a dynamic and profound teaching to his disciples outlining truths that are intended to guard and stabilize their hearts in the midst of the coming crisis.
- B. Jesus exhorted his followers to not let their hearts be troubled (John 14.1) and promised them that he would give them peace as they walked through trials and testing (John 14.27).

¹Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me... ²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled. (John 14.1, 27)

- C. The *means* that Jesus gave to them for engaging their trouble hearts in the midst of crisis and hardship was to *believe in God* and *believe in him*.
- D. Jesus then outlined three essential truths in John 14.2-3 that they were to embrace in believing him:

²In 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? ³And 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. (John 14.2-3)

1. ***The Father's House*** — Jesus begins by declaring that his Father's house has “plenty of room” for his disciples. In doing this, he roots the stability of their hearts (and their experience of God's peace) in an eternal perspective. He does not counsel them by talking about their circumstances, but by giving perspective of eternity and the dwelling place of God.
2. ***Jesus would go to prepare a place for his disciples*** — Jesus demonstrates that he isn't leaving them to forsake them, but his departure is in full accordance with the purpose of God. He *must* go in order to prepare a way for them to gain access to the Father and his eternal dwelling. Jesus prepares the place for his disciples by going to the cross and sufficiently paying the price to remove all obstacles to the presence of God. In his death, Jesus becomes the “new and living way” (Heb 10.20).
3. ***Jesus would return for his disciples and be with them forever*** — Jesus promises that he would not depart from them forever. Although he must go, he will one day come again and receive his followers to himself in order to be with them forever. This is a glorious promise of the eternal experience of the presence of God that is secured through the work of Christ.

II. THOMAS' QUESTION

- A. Jesus declared that his disciples in fact should already know of the destination he was going as well as the way he was going.

⁴And you know the way to where I am going (John 14.4)

- B. On several occasions Jesus had told his disciples of his coming death at the hands of the religious leadership and the Romans. However, the disciples still possessed strong and prevailing presuppositions that kept them from understanding and embracing this truth. It was ordained in the counsels of God that Jesus would die in order to save his people, but they could not yet see that.

²¹From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. (Matt 16.21; cf. Matt 17-22-23; 20.17-19)

³³Jesus then said, "I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. ³⁴You will seek me and you will not find me. Where I am you cannot come." ³⁵Then the Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him... ³⁶What does he mean..." (John 7.33-36)

- C. To this statement, Thomas asks for clarification as to the destination and the means to arrive at the destination. This is a sincere question, albeit misguided and asked in blindness. The disciples continued to be confused as to the nature of Jesus' departure and mission. Yet, they remained with him in sincerity.
- D. If the way to experience stability and peace in this life is through relationship with the Father, we rightly must ask *how* are we to get there?

⁵Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" (John 14.6)

- E. Jesus responds to Thomas' questions with further clarity and a spirit of grace. He clarifies again that he is going to the Father, and that the way for them to go to the Father was through him.

⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14.6)

III. I AM THE WAY

- A. Jesus begins his statement by declaring that *he is the way*. This is the sixth "I am" statement in John's Gospel. These statements give profound insight into Jesus' self-understanding and the nature of his person.
- B. Jesus declares that he is the sole and exclusive way to approach the Father. He is the unique access point through which the power of salvation and grace might be experienced. This comes through faith in him alone.
- C. It is through the cross of Jesus that he prepares a way. He removes every obstacle that stood in the way of relating to the Father. By becoming sin, Jesus became a sufficient sacrifice for sin in order that all who believe in him might experience God's saving power and life.
- D. Throughout Scripture, the idea of "a way" had to do with the means of relating to God. In the Old Testament, the Law (or God's word) had provided the way that God's people were to walk before him.

³³You shall walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may go well with you (Deut 5.33)

¹May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, ²selah ³that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. (Ps 67.1-2)

⁴Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths (Ps 25.4)

¹Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth (Ps 86.11)

- E. Jesus, the eternal Word of God made flesh, reoriented the way to God through himself.

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1.1, 14)

³⁹You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me; ⁴⁰yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. (John 5.39-40)

¹Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief... ⁷So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep" (John 10.1, 7)

F. Jesus did not declare that he showed a way, or that he would teach us a way, but rather that *he alone is the way*. This speaks of the exclusive nature of Christ's claim. The only way to come to the Father is *through the person of Christ because of his work*. It is because of faith in him that we are joined to him and are *only then* invited to follow him.

G. In the book of Acts, Peter declares the truth that Jesus is the exclusive way to experience salvation. It is through the name of Jesus alone that God dispenses his power to be saved.

¹¹This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. ¹²And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4.11-12)

H. The testimony of the New Testament is that Christ alone is the way to experience salvation before God. Faith in him alone is the entrance point into life with God.

¹Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand (Rom 5.1-2)

⁵For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all (1 Tim 2.5-6)

IV. I AM THE TRUTH

A. Jesus' second statement serves as a further explanation of why he is the only way. Not only is Jesus Christ the sole and exclusive way to the presence of the Father because of his perfect work, he is the only way to God because he himself is the truth.

B. As the incarnate Son of God, Jesus is the full embodiment of ultimate truth, which belongs to God alone.

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ⁹The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. (John 1.1, 9-10)

¹²Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8.12)

C. Jesus is the truth because he himself is God. The Christian understanding of God's triune person illuminates the truth of the Scripture that Jesus Christ is the second person of the Godhead incarnate. Because of this, Jesus fully reveals the true essence of God — his person, his character, his thoughts, and his purposes.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt with us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth... ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known. (John 1.14, 17-18)

²⁶I [Jesus] made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them. (John 17.26)

D. Jesus is the perfect image of God, expressing God's nature in his perfect and full humanity.

¹⁵He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation... ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell (Col 1.15, 19)

¹Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed to be the heir of all things, through whom he also created the world. ³He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. (Heb 1.1-3)

- E. It is not simply that Jesus *says* true things or teaches us the truth (those are both true), but he himself *is* truth. He is the standard of what is true because he himself is God.
- F. Every aspect of the incarnation demonstrates and puts on display what God is like. He does this in a manner that we can see and understand and experience. In the incarnation, the nature of God (his truth) is displayed at every moment.

“Anyone contemplating the life of Jesus needs to be newly and more deeply aware every day that something impossible, something scandalous has occurred: that God, in his absolute Being, has resolved to manifest himself in a human life (and is in a position to make this resolve effective!). He must be scandalized by this, he must feel his mind reeling, the very ground giving way beneath his feet; he must at least experience that “ecstasy” of non-comprehension which transported Jesus’ contemporaries (Mk. 2.12; 5.42; 6.51).” (von Balthasar)

“This Word was made flesh, not by any change of his own nature or essence, not by a transubstantiation of the divine nature into the human, not by ceasing to be what he was, but by becoming what he was not, in taking our nature to his own, to be his own, whereby he dwelt among us.” (John Owen)

- G. Jesus declares this truth later in the passage when he declares that to see him is to see the Father. What Jesus means is that he and the Father share one essence (character, divine nature, etc.), and that he is the perfect embodiment of God’s nature in his life. To see Jesus is to see God in the flesh. To watch Jesus heal, to hear him speak, to experience his heart is to see God.

⁷If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him...

⁹Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. (John 14.7, 9)

V. I AM THE LIFE

- A. The third statement of Jesus is that he himself is the life. Jesus declares that he is also the only and exclusive way to God (through his person and work) because in him alone is life. There is no other way to experience true life outside of Jesus Christ.
- B. Throughout John’s gospel the concept of “eternal life” (or just “life”) is specifically related to relationship with God. It is not simply having physical (biological) life. It is also not simply speaking of chronological existence that does not end (i.e., that you will exist forever). Rather, it is the concept of being truly alive in the manner of existence and life that we were created for — namely, in communion with God himself who is life.

³And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent (John 17.3)

⁴In him [the Word] was life, and the life was the light of men (John 1.4)

- C. In Jesus is found the full measure of all God’s purposes, his blessings, his favor, and the experience of his life for all eternity. Jesus will one day bring every area of the creation under the experience of the life of God. He is the only one who can do this.

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Eph 1.3)

- D. To experience the life of Christ is to be brought into union with him by the Spirit and made alive to his purposes. It now means that we are able to receive from him and be transformed by his power into greater experiences of his life in us (thoughts, will, emotions).

¹³present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life (Rom 6.13)

⁴But God... ⁵made us alive together with Christ (Eph 2.4-5)