

Midweek: I Am Series
John 14:6 – I Am the Way, Truth, and the Life
12/11/19

Introduction:

- Begin with Analogy
 - The Mountain of religion
 - Muslim, Buddhism, Agnosticism, Spiritualism, Hinduism, etc.
 - All are there own path, and they reach the top in their own way
 - But the top is reached by all who continue on their path
 - Or maybe you've heard the elephant one:
 - Tail (rope), side (wall), tusk (spear), etc.
 - But all were only parts of the whole
 - This is how many approach religion in today's world!
- But, as Christians, is this true?
 - Or is there something exclusive about Christianity?

John 14:6

Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

- I remember as a kid – We had a clubhouse in the back yard
 - Boys only
 - Secret Hand shake
- Is this what Jesus is talking about? Only those who have the handshake:
 - Christmas Story – the decoder ring!
 - "Be Sure to Drink your Ovaltine!"
- Surely we are smarter than this!
 - Surely we Christians aren't some version of an exclusive club with a cool handshake or an advertisement for a crummy commercial

Outline:

- What does Jesus mean that he is the only way, the only truth, and the only life?
- What does that mean for us?
- Specifically:
 - Jesus is the Only Way to God
 - Exclusivity drives us to Repent & Believe in the Way, the Truth and the Life
 - Exclusivity drives us to Share & Proclaim the Way, the Truth and the Life

Jesus is the Only Way to God

- Context:
 - Jesus washed his disciples feet
 - Judas has eaten the bread and walked out of the meeting
 - Jesus gives the new commandment – to love one another

- And Jesus predicts Peter's denial
 - But the overarching sentiment: JESUS IS LEAVING
 - And the disciples are scratching their heads and trying to wrap their minds around what that might mean
- So really:
 - Jesus is consoling them as they wrestle with the idea of abandonment
 - AND what does he say?

John 14:1-4

“Don't let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms; if not, I would have told you. I am going away to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also. ⁴ You know the way to where I am going.”

- Jesus' message to them:
 - When you feel abandoned and lonely, like there is no hope:
 - Trust in God – the constant, steady, unchanging One who has promised to go and prepare and place for His children
- The promise of the Gospel is that God has not only not abandoned you – he is, through Christ – preparing a place for all of his children!
 - Remember the old song?
 - Big Big House, with lots and lots of room...
- In some ways this is true – but I want to be clear:
 - The room (not mansion!) God has set aside for his children has nothing to do with economic prosperity
 - WE AREN'T GETTING A MANSION JUST OVER THE HILLTOP
 - Instead – It has everything to do with being a part of the family of God

Romans 8:14-17

¹⁴ For all those led by God's Spirit are God's sons. ¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, “*Abba, Father!*” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children, ¹⁷ and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and coheirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

- This is the promise of the Gospel! That we – who were estranged from God, like the orphan wandering aimlessly without a place to call home – the promise is that we are a part of the family of God!
 - Jesus is making it clear that all of God's children will be under the care and watch of God himself, brought into his house – and there are a ton of rooms available!
 - The act of preparing is Jesus going to the cross and defeating sin and death in the resurrection.
- So naturally our questions should be:
 - HOW DO WE GET INTO THAT HOUSE?

John 14:5

⁵ “Lord,” Thomas said, “we don't know where you're going. How can we know the way?”

- Jesus says – you know the way
 - But ol’ doubting Thomas – How can we know the way?
- This is the point where Jesus could say:
 - The way is only available to those who are ethnic Jews
 - Those who follow the law
 - Those who make the right sacrifices
 - Everyone!
 - But what does he say:

John 14:6-7

⁶ Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you know me, you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

- So wait – God knows you feel abandoned, like an orphan without hope
 - So he has prepared a place in his family for all his children
 - And what is the way to his family?
 - JESUS & JESUS ALONE

In previous chapters *egō eimi* has been used to indicate that Jesus is the Messiah (4:28),

- the bread or sustenance of the community (6:35, 48, 51),
- the light of the world (8:12; 9:5), the one who is from above and not from the world (8:23),
- the gate or entrance way to the sheepfold (10:7, 9),
- the good shepherd (10:11, 14),
- and the resurrection and life (11:25).
 - Here John joins three powerful ideas of “way,” “truth,” and “life” to produce a classic statement concerning the significance of Jesus in providing salvation.¹
- What does Jesus say:

I am the Way

- What does this mean?
 - He is the only path to reach God
 - In Acts – Followers of “the Way”
 - Paul persecuted the way (Acts 9)
 - Then he gets questioned by Felix (Acts 24) and he confesses that He is now a follower of the Way

I am the Truth

- What does this mean?
 - He is the Truth of God – the full revelation of all that God is

¹ Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12–21*, vol. 25B, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 108.

I am the Life

- What does this mean?
 - The final hope of eternal life manifested in Christ!
- To summarize:
 - I am the way back to God, I am the truth that will sustain you and the eternal life that you long for.

In other words: *I go to prepare a place for you. And as I go I become the way that you get there. I am the truth that you hold onto to get there. And I am the life — the eternal life that you will enjoy when you get there. When I say, “I go to prepare a place for you,” I mean: I open the way. And I am the way. I confirm the truth. And I am the truth. I purchase the life. And I am that life.*²

- That Jesus is the way, truth, and life is the hope of our justification, sanctification and glorification
 - Saves us, sustains us, and sets us on the trajectory of our final hope!
 - Then what does the text say:
- THEREFORE: No one comes to the Father – EXCEPT THROUGH ME.
 - Now
 - This sounds incredibly EXCLUSIVE
 - That’s because it is!
 - Humanity is not able to approach God EXCEPT through what we see in John 1
 - That he has been revealed as the Word
 - Made his dwelling with us and among us
 - And this is so that many will come to know the Lord!
 - In light of this:
 - The Salvation brought by Jesus is both open and available to all, but will only be given to those who call upon his name to be saved.

At this point we need to define a few terms:

- Universalism
 - All will go to heaven
 - Though often posed as the opposite: not popular
 - Why?
 - People don’t like the idea of Hitler sitting next to Billy Graham at God’s dinner table
- Pluralism
 - Argues there are many ways to God – and you should pursue your religious truth wholeheartedly
 - And you end in your religions end point
 - Like the mountain story but everyone is on their own mountain
 - A number of problems:
 - Who indicates which religions fit the bill and which don’t?

² <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/i-am-the-way-the-truth-and-the-life>

- What if my religion says to kill everyone and I am devoted to it
 - What now?
 - Further, what if my religion says its exclusive and yours says its exclusive – how can we both be right?
- Inclusivism
 - Similar to the mountain story at the beginning – but all roads lead to Jesus
- Exclusivism
 - Jesus is the Savior and belief in him is the only way to eternal life with God
- To distinguish between Pluralism and Inclusivism
 - Two questions:
 - Is Jesus the only Savior?
 - Pluralism = No
 - Inclusivism = Yes
 - Exclusivism = Yes
 - Must people believe in him to be saved?
 - Pluralism = No
 - Inclusivism = No
 - Exclusivism = Yes
- All of these theories have been put forth for a variety of reasons:
 - One author listed three reasons for the push back against exclusivity and an embracing of other options:
- Why is the exclusivity of the gospel losing popularity?
 - First, globalization has brought the nations near to us.
 - Exposed to more beliefs
 - Second, postmodern thought
 - Skeptical of overarching truths
 - Ultimately = they believe that there can't be one truth the forward march of postmodernity continues to undermine absolute truth claims, especially one so audacious as the exclusivity of the gospel—that of the 7,000,000,000 inhabitants of Earth, only those that hear and believe the message of Christ can be saved.
 - Third, political correctness limits our willingness to offend,
 - Political correctness finds the notion of a literal hell as insufferably backwards, and has re-envisioned it as a mythological—or nearly unoccupied— place.³
- Whatever their reasoning, a simple reading of Scripture will illuminate:
 - the exclusive nature of the Gospel,
 - the reality of hell and eternal judgment
 - and that salvation only comes through belief in Jesus (ONE EXAMPLE)

Acts 4:12

¹² There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.”

³ Jason K Allen, <https://jasonkallen.com/2017/04/recovering-the-exclusivity-of-the-gospel/>

- Jesus is making it clear to his followers:
 - I am not leaving you
 - My work on the cross and the resurrection are necessary preparations so that you can be in God's family
 - And once that is accomplished – those who believe that I am the way back to God will hold onto the truth of God that will sustain them and will inherit the eternal life with God that they long for

- So what then does this mean for us?
 - Because the Gospel is Exclusive – what should we do?

Exclusivity drives us to Repent & Believe in the Way, the Truth and the Life

- Jesus is the Only way back to God
 - You need to realize that the only proper response is to repent from your sin and believe in Jesus to be saved!
- The steps in the process should look something like this:
 - Step 1: I am a sinner
 - As the Psalmist said – in sin, I was conceived
 - All fall under Adam
 - Separated from God
 - No one deserves life
 - You can't understand salvation if you don't understand your sin
 - Step 2: I can't save myself by anything else
 - Because of this sin – I can't save myself
 - Not my works, it's not about being good enough
 - If I want to get back to God – I must have God do it
 - Step 3: Believe that Salvation has been made available to all who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus to be saved
 - Here's what's crazy: While the Gospel is exclusive
 - That the only way to God is through Jesus
 - The Gospel is also open for any and every person!
 - There's only way back to God that is available to anyone who confesses Jesus as Lord

Romans 10:9-10

This is the message of faith that we proclaim: ⁹ If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation.

- Step 4: Turn away from your sin and believe in the Way, the Truth and the Life
 - HE HAS MANY ROOMS
 - HE HAS PREPPED THE ROOMS
 - HE HAS MADE A WAY FOR YOU TO LIVE IN THOSE ROOMS
 - Come be a part of the family of God!
 - I get it: YOU MAY THINK – there's no way God would save me – yet, God is proclaiming through His Son – BUT I HAVE, COME TO ME

- Yes – Jesus is the only way, but it’s this glorious truth that has opened the door wide to anyone who believes!
 - Step 5: Live a life of worshipping the only Way back to God
 - Now we live a life that praises God for the great life He has given through Jesus!
 - The exclusivity of the Gospel rises up in as a point of praise:
 - For though Jesus is the only way – he has made it available to all
 - And he has seen fit to draw you:
 - To His Way
 - To Live in His Truth
 - And to Inherit Eternal Life
- This leads to the second realization:

Exclusivity drives us to Share & Proclaim the Way, the Truth and the Life

- If we believe that all have sinned and fall short of God’s glory
 - That all are condemned in their sin
 - That all are deserving of eternal separation from God in a place called Hell
 - Yet God has made many, many rooms available
 - To all of those who believe in the Way, cling to the Truth and hope for eternal Life in Jesus
 - We have an obligation and responsibility to proclaim and share the AVAILABLE AND EXCLUSIVE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL:
- In other words, if Jesus is the only way to God, then the only way our friends, neighbors, coworkers, those other American citizens, the nations around the globe may have salvation – then the greatest act of hatred we could have for those people is to conceal the Gospel as if it were proprietary and only yours
 - You think sharing the Gospel is offensive?
 - The far greater offense is saying that you hold the only way to God and refusing to share that with others.
- Here’s what we know – EVERYONE is condemned in their sin
 - This is what we see in Romans 1 – people are born in sin, and without Jesus, they will die and be condemned to Hell
 - Not because God is mean – BUT because God is just
 - And justice is only satisfied on His Son Jesus
 - EVERY PERSON NEEDS JESUS TO BE SAVED
- Which is what Paul goes on to say after 10:9-10 -

Romans 10:14-16

¹⁴How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.

- Without belief – no salvation
- They can't believe – if they haven't heard
- They can't hear – without a preacher
- They can't preach – unless they go
 - So HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING THE GOOD NEWS!!!
- The Exclusivity of the Gospel should push us into an outright sprint toward Gospel proclamation
 - Because without Jesus, people are stuck and judged in their sin
 - This means your friends, neighbors, coworkers, and all the way out to those who have never heard the name of Jesus or have never seen a Bible
 - THEY NEED JESUS
- Some have argued – well it's only those who have said outright: I Don't want to believe in Jesus – that those are the ones condemned to hell
 - But sweet Aunt Edna who lived a good life, but never knew Jesus will still be saved
 - And that is NOT TRUE
 - Without Jesus, NONE CAN BE SAVED
- Some have argued – well, what about those who have never heard the Gospel? Surely that's not on them!
 - But what does Scripture say?
 - Without belief – no salvation
 - They can't believe – if they haven't heard
 - They can't hear – without a preacher
 - They can't preach – unless they go
 - So HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING THE GOOD NEWS!!!
 - Further, if people CAN BE SAVED apart from a knowledge of Christ – then the greatest disservice I can do to them is tell them about Jesus!
 - I should just let them stay in their ignorance
 - BUT THAT'S NOT IT EITHER
 - Because of the sin we have inherited – WE ALL FALL SHORT
- This sounds harsh – but the beauty of this exclusivity is that it has been made available to all
 - And further – he made a way when there was no way!
 - Salvation through Jesus is NOT harsh
 - IT IS GLORIOUS!
 - The grace of God
 - The mercy of God
 - Lovingkindness of God
 - The glory of God
 - The justice of God
 - ALL on display in the Way, the Truth and the Life

Conclusion:

- Jesus is the Only Way to the Father
- This means that we have a call to repent and believe that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life
- And that we have a responsibility to share and proclaim the way the truth in the life

1 Cor 9:16

Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!

- Believe He is the Only Way and Preach Him – for He is the only way to the Father.