

## The Exclusive Gospel John 14:4-6

As we looked at the opening three verses in this chapter Jesus gives some very glorious and comforting truths about his departure. Yes, he is going away, and it is easy to have troubled hearts about this fact, but don't be trouble. Keep your faith in God and in him. He is going to prepare a place for you and for any and all who have trusted in him, that we might be with him eternally. This passage has been so comforting to so many throughout the ages, especially when they go through that valley of death. We realize our Saviour is with us all the way through our lives, but as we pass out of this life we have a fullness of Christ's presence to look forward to.

But although this passage is clear to us who look back knowing all of the events that would take place such as Jesus death, resurrection and ascension into heaven, it was not so clear to the disciples. And you can see that through four questions that are asked of Jesus, or four queries that are seeking to understand. The first is in 13:36 by Peter, "**Lord, where are you going?**" The second is in our text in verse 5 by Thomas, "**How can we know the way?**" The third is right after in verse 8, "**Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.'**" And the last is in verse 22, "**Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, 'Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?'**" The meaning of Jesus' teaching seemed to escape them, even though it was plain and rather easy to understand. There was a struggle with what they expect to happen and what Jesus informed them what would take place and even why it would take place.

And so right after Jesus brings this comforting truth about his departure and our eternal hope of being with Jesus, look at what he says in verse 4, "**And you know the way to where I am going.**" Where is Jesus going? He is going to heaven and into the presence of his Father. He has just stated those wonderful truths in the opening three verses. But here comes the question, and even a challenge from one of the disciples, "**Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?'**" Thomas, like the others has a difficult time grasping these truths. And the meaning here is not that they do not know where Jesus is going but they are having a hard time coming to terms with his departure. They still do not see the need of his departure. They still think the destination and kingdom is the here and now. But also how do they come where Jesus is? What is the route? What must someone do to enter that paradise and be with Jesus? If you want to get to a place, then you have to know not only the destination, but the route or access in order to get to that destination?

And what comes next in verse 6 is one of the most familiar verses in the Bible which indicates the exclusive nature of salvation in Christ alone. And for those who are in the world, this is the offence of the gospel is the exclusive nature of salvation in Jesus Christ alone. Many times believers will be accused of being moralists or arrogant or self-righteous or judgmental or know-it-alls or thinking they are better than all. But at the heart of those accusations is not that believers are living proud and arrogant lives, in fact they could be living lives which are non-offensive. But the real offence is in the claims of Jesus Christ - the exclusive nature of this gospel, and the exclusive and only

way to heaven. And if you speak and preach this message as the only way of salvation, there will be opposition. You can see that not only today but for the last two thousand years of church history.

And the amazing thing is we live in a society that prides itself in tolerance of various views, but our society is so intolerant of Christianity — what Jesus says here. In the name of toleration any view which says “you are wrong,” is looked at as hateful and must be abolished. You look at an evangelical preacher going to a secular university to speak and there is an outcry. Stop him from speaking his hateful rhetoric they will say hatefully.

And yet for us as believers that very exclusivity of what Jesus is and has done for us is our greatest joy and our greatest assurance of salvation. It creates such a loyal love for Christ that we realize the greatest need of humanity that we are willing to preach this message even the midst of growing opposition to Christ. And the more we see the one way of salvation, the more we long for Christ. So let us look and grow and love Christ more by seeing the exclusive nature of salvation in him.

#### 1. He is the way. V.6.

Our society in general is not interested in big questions because big questions make us uncomfortable. We want to live and function for right now and not think about tomorrow. And there is no more important question than, how does one enter the presence of God? If death is the common experience of all then where will I spend eternity? And in this day and age where we have lost the category of evil and sin, people are basically good and noble. Because of a defect in their genetic code or because of their upbringing they do terrible things but they are not responsible. So if you ask the average person where they will spend eternity it is in heaven. There is never a consideration that it might be different or they might be wrong.

And that is where the offence comes in, because look at the beginning of verse 6 again, “**I am the way.**” And remember this is in response to Thomas’ question that they do not know the way. Now there are a number of things we should note here. First is that Jesus begins this answer with an assurance that they can know the way because he is the “I AM.” And this is the sixth of seven famous “I AM” statements by Jesus through the gospel, which is the exclusive name of God. He is the self-existent one. He is the eternal one. And each of these statements are not only indicating Jesus is God but also indicating his character. For example when Jesus says in John 8:12, “**I am the light of the world.**” He is saying that he is the only light in this dark world who can lead you to God because he is very God. He is not one light among many but the very light of God.

And the second thing we have to see here is the exclusive nature of what Jesus says here. How do we get to that destination of heaven which Jesus just mentioned in the opening three verses? Is there some mighty act or some moral level that we have to live up to? Do we have to be martyred for the faith or give up all we have? And this is what Jesus says because listen to it once again, “**I am the way.**” He does not say, “I am a way, and there are many other paths,” but he says “I am” and then he uses this word “the.” It speaks that there is one way and one way alone. Again, one of the most popular teaching today is there are many roads leading to heaven, you just have to find the one that is right for you. Don’t be judgmental and say someone’s path or road is

wrong. We are not saying that. Jesus is saying that. There really is only two roads. One that is broad road and leads to destruction and the other which is narrow path that leads to life eternal.

But what is that narrow path, and it really is not a path but a person. Jesus doesn't map out a particular route of good works or devotion but points to himself. "I am the way." And that is the offence. My life is so unholy before a holy God that there is nothing I can do to make myself presentable before him. My only hope is in the holiness of another. My only hope is Jesus Christ and his righteousness - him taking the penalty that I deserve. He is the only one who can open up heaven for sinners. Why did Jesus come? Jesus says in Mark 10:45, **"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."**

And for us as believers we sing this truth, preach this truth, and are overwhelmed with the love of Christ for sinners like us. There would be no way and no access into God's heaven without Christ. There would be no comfort of the opening three verses without Jesus coming and dying and ransoming us. We complain so much in our lives. It is so easy to act as if God has been unfair or whatever. And forget who we are and what Jesus has done for people like us. This truth should cause us to sing for the depths of our souls. My God has made a way for me! Jesus is the Way!

And never lose sight of the connection of what Jesus is saying here, because of of this is connected to the great and comforting truths taught in the opening three verses. Jesus is going to prepare a place for you. There is a heaven, and Jesus is the main figure in heaven. So how we get there? Through the Way. And the reason why I emphasize that is because of two things. One is that there is a Christianity that says Jesus is "the way" to anything you want in the here and now. You just have to believe in him without wavering and you can have what you want in the here and now. And it should be obvious in the context that Jesus is talking about heaven and being with him. He is not talking about making earth our heaven or our destination. And many start listening to a message that twists the truth. When things go wrong in this life, what happened? Why is life a struggle, whether in marriage, with the children, or even at work? I trusted Jesus. I am trying to faithfully follow him. All those struggles are indicating a message to you. This is not heaven. This is not what we are living for. Jesus is the way into his glory, in his heaven, and into his presence.

And the second truth here is Thomas and the others do not want to be separated from Christ. And the reason why I bring that up is Jesus is not just an access point into heaven but he is glory in and of himself. There is no heaven and no joy without Christ. He is our reward. He is the one we meet and celebrate and delight in. And the reason I bring that up is that it has become very fashionable to think of all the other things of heaven such as the streets of gold, or the angels in heaven or even what my place or room will look like that Jesus prepared for me. But probably the biggest is seeing the ones we have loved in this life. Many picture heaven as one big family reunion or doing the thing you loved the most here. I heard a funeral sermon of a golfer who died. And he is up there because of his trust in Jesus playing golf for the rest of his eternal existence. Heaven is not heaven without "the way," with out Jesus. Jesus is both the route and the destination. He is our most precious reward. If you think about heaven without Jesus than I really fear that you have not understood the gospel. The gospel is not a philosophy but a person. He is the way. He is our reward.

## 2. Jesus is the truth. V.6.

Now it is incredible to look at this word “truth.” We all know what it means but it is incredible how the truth of God is many times invalidated or twisted. It is like in the Garden where Satan said to Eve, “Did God actually say.” And in our day and age where the truth confronts us with sin, individuals saying they represent God say this all the time, “Did God actually say,” homosexuality is wrong, or that truth cannot be found in other religions, or that he created the universe in six literal days or did God actually say you cannot break that covenant with your spouse? And individuals accept this as truth. Yes, I do not know the Bible but I know what this expert taught. There are others that make truth beyond any way of knowing and therefore scoff at truth. Pilate says in 18:38, “What is truth?” And once a person says that statement, they stick out their chest and discount anything said about Jesus. It is the mantra of the day that truth is always in flux, what is right for you is not right for me, and there is no truth, which is a truth statement. And then there is a rejection of Christianity and of Jesus altogether. There are many who will say the greatest evil in the world is Christianity. And we should not be surprised by that because they even accused Jesus of having a devil.

But here Jesus makes a truth claim. Not only is he “the way,” but he is “the truth.” And this is so important to see the link here. Because Jesus is answering the question of Thomas. How are we to know the way? Thomas, “**I am the way,**” but also, “**I am the truth.**” In order to know the way, in order to know Jesus Christ, you need revelation. You cannot get the truth about Jesus - crucified for sinners and risen from the grave by looking at the natural world around us. Or you cannot come up with that by just thinking. You need truth to be given. Man’s problem is stated so clearly in Ephesians 4:18, “**They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.**” Left to ourselves we have darkened minds that cannot come to the knowledge of the truth unless truth is given and God illumines our minds to that truth.

And again, Jesus is not “a” truth but “the” truth. Without his truth, there is no salvation, no eternal life, no way of know the path of coming into his presence. And this is not to say the way of salvation was not known in the Old Testament, but the Old Testament pointed to the coming of Christ. The fullness of God’s revelation of himself and who he is and how one can come into his presence finds its culmination in Jesus Christ. Listen to Hebrews 1:1-3, “**Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He 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. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.**” God has spoken completely and comprehensively and totally through his Son. Why? Because he is the radiance of the glory of God. He is the exact imprint. Everything that is true of the nature of the Father is true of the Son. He is Creator and sustainer of all. And he and he alone has made purification for sins. Salvation is found in the knowledge of Christ.

So you can see why individuals want to destroy the authority of the Bible. If you destroy the truth, then you at least in your own opinion, destroy the exclusive way of salvation. So an attack on the opening chapters of the Bible is an attack on truth, which is an attack on the exclusive way of salvation through Jesus Christ. An attack on miracles is an attack on the Scriptures and an attack on the person of Jesus and him being the way. And attack on the confusion of gender is an attack in how God made man and woman, and is an attack on the authority of the Bible, which is an attack on the truth of Christ and the exclusive way of salvation. Anytime we capitulate to the unbelieving world on truth in the name of wanting to be thought well of or just not offending anyone is an attack of the truth who is Jesus Christ. Christ is the truth.

And there is a great challenge here for us as believers. If we want to know Christ, and know him more personally and intimately then God has given us truth. People often are looking for other ways and other avenues to know Jesus. Mysticism has risen to gigantic levels in the church of Jesus. People are looking for urges. And the call is to follow your heart even if it does not make sense. In fact, for so many the mind has become an enemy of knowing Christ. If you want to really experience and be all that God wants you to be just let go of your rational thinking. But listen to what Colossians 3:16, **“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”** Remember the greatest commandment in Matthew 22:37, **“And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’** The heart and soul and mind are not three different aspects of our being, but they are all one. It is talking about the entirety of the inner person. And you cannot know God and love God without truth. You cannot have deep emotions for Christ with knowledge of Him and who he is. How do we know Jesus? We know Jesus by looking at the author and finisher of our faith through his Word. Aren't you overwhelmed with gratitude that Jesus has given us this revelation of Himself that we might know him who is the Way?

We defend the Bible as the truth of Jesus. We say rather joyously that this is all we need for life and godliness. The Scriptures are authoritative and sufficient that we might know Christ, know the way and know how to function for his glory. We say unapologetic and enthusiastically that here is truth and it is found in a Person, and all other truth claims must bow before the Truth.

But then here comes the question: how often do we sit at the feet of Jesus to learn of his great salvation he has given us? How often do we look into the blessed way that is found in him alone? If we are Jesus people' then we are people of truth and if we are people of truth we are people of the Bible. Jesus is the truth.

Wow, what an amazing verse, and we are not even through it. For many, this is exactly why they hate and despise Christianity. For we who are believers this is why we adore and learn and hope in Christ. And if you are listening tonight, know there is a way of salvation open to you. It is by realizing your need and trusting in Jesus as the way and the truth and as we will look at next time - he is the life giver. And if you are believer: how could we not want to know more about this Lord and his great promises? How can we not want to celebrate that God has opened our eyes and we see the way?

We see Christ. Keep your heart fix on our great hope that we shall be forevermore with our blessed Jesus.