

John 14:3-6

If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. "And you know the way where I am going." Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

Tonight we are going to focus on this statement of unbelievable exclusivity. The disciples are clearly still so confused about what Jesus is talking about and He does not really help the situation with His response. There are 3 "I Am" statements, 3 personal pronouns, 3 verbs, and 3 definitive articles that set Jesus apart from every other "religious" belief system that has ever existed. Notice, I did not say that sets "Christianity" apart, but Jesus! This is the distinctive of this passage! However, this distinction is not found in the 3 nouns (way, truth, and life), for there are other belief systems that claim to be the truth, claim to have the way, and claim to contain the source of life. And there have been plenty of people throughout the ages who have been willing to suffer and die for these beliefs. Wars have been fought and great atrocities have been unleashed upon humanity as a result of these competing "exclusive" claims to these nouns.

The distinction is found in the personal pronoun, the verb and the definitive article—"I Am the...." Jesus claims that "He" is the distinction. He is not saying that the religion of Christianity or any system of religious duty and behavior is the way, the truth and the life. In fact, He is not referring to any religious construct or system of belief; rather, He is referring to Himself—He is the way, the truth, and the life. As such, Jesus distinguishes Himself from every person that has ever lived

and every other religion on the face of the earth. Our answer, our hope, and our everything is found in a person.

I am the way. Jesus declares that there is no other avenue into the presence of the Father. He is the exclusive pathway. This statement is more than amazing; it turns religion upside down on its head and conceptually is very difficult to fit within most people's world view of God, heaven, and so on. Think of religion throughout the ages and in our current day and age. Not a lot has really changed. Every religious system around the world ultimately boils down to what you are to do to find favor and approval with God. If you can achieve a certain level of conformance to the right practices, rituals, behaviors, transcendence, etc., you just might get to go to heaven (but in most religions even that is not assured). No matter how it is masked, no matter how many layers you have to cut through, if you do your home work, you will find that every religious belief system is based on some required level of individual effort to obtain the benefits of that religion.

I want you to follow me closely with this thought process. All these religious systems are in essence substituting the individual for Christ. They elevate the individual to the level of God. Now I doubt we will find anyone saying this so blatantly, but if we were to deal consistently with their system for obtaining success within the religion, each person is essentially declaring: "I Am" my own way. Somewhere within me lies the power to be what God needs me to be. This is incredulous and borders on an arrogance that is only matched by the pride and arrogance of Satan himself who also once errantly thought that he could be like God.

This is why Jesus' statement of being "the" way (not "a" way but "the" way) cuts clean across all religious ideology. Jesus is declaring that we are not God and we can never be God. And, although we still foolishly believe the lie that Satan

first told us in the Garden (that we can be like God), and no matter how hard we might wish it to be true, we are not the way. The truth is that like every man, woman, and child you have been thoroughly infected with the curse of sin and it is both cancerous and fatal. As a result, there is nothing you could ever do to be what God needs you to be—absolutely nothing! You can go your own way, but you cannot be your own way.

Unlike us however Jesus did not have a sinful nature and He never sinned during His time on the earth. He was perfect, always has been and always will be; thus, He is able to stand between us and the Father and be “the” way. You have to know Him and be in an intimate relationship with Him in order to know the Father or even be where the Father is.

I am the truth. Again, in this statement the emphasis is not on the noun but on the personal pronoun, the verb, and the definitive article “I Am the...” He is not saying He knows the truth, that He has the truth, or even that He is teaching the truth, He is saying that He is the truth. This once again forms a fundamental distinction between Jesus and every religious system in the world. The first being that truth is not some essence, some school of thought, philosophy, or containment of religious or deep spiritual beliefs; but is a person. Therefore, the only way to know the truth is to be in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

The second being that if the truth is a person, then who are we to think that absent ***both*** a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ that we can even begin to comprehend or grasp the truth? It just can’t be done. I say ***both*** personal and intimate because if you have accepted Jesus as your Savior you have a personal relationship with Him and the truth therefore is in you and available to you. However, to really come to know that truth and to experience the truth (to

know Jesus and experience Jesus), you have to be willing to yield to Him and truly make Him Lord of your life—this is the intimacy I referred to.

If you do not 1) trust that He is absolutely sovereign over your life (which means that nothing can happen in your life that He has not permitted or directed) and 2) that whatever He allows or directs into your life flows directly from His Agape love for you and His desire for you to experience the peace that comes when you learn to trust yourself to Him, then you really do not *know* the truth. You may have the truth but you do not “*know*” the truth.

Keep in mind that I am not talking theory here. I am not talking about Biblical knowledge. I am talking about letting the Word of God have such authority over your life that you will no longer look to your own wisdom, your own knowledge, your own reason, or your own truth for which to guide your life. You lay it down and exchange your life for His, your mind for His mind, and your nature for His divine nature.

In the letter to the Corinthians, Paul said something that to the casual reader would come across as extremely outrageous and arrogant. He said that he had the mind of Christ (*1 Corinthians 2:16*). He said that He does not use words of human wisdom but that He speaks words given to Him by the Spirit of God and that he used the Spirit’s words to explain spiritual truths (*1 Corinthians 2:13*). The reason Paul could say this is because He had made the exchange. He had learned to surrender His life, His wisdom, his rational, His logic and His ways for the life of Christ. Paul said: “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (*Galatians 2:20*).

Do you understand the distinction? Paul substituted His life for the life of Christ; his truth for the truth. Thus, Christ through the Spirit could speak through Paul.

What a beautiful reality that can be yours and mine—Christ living fully in and through us—when we are willing to make the exchange and let Jesus be the Lord of our lives.

Before we move on, I want you to think about the fact that people have for centuries on end read and interpreted the Bible with the result being major factions and differences in not just points of theology but even in some of the very basic aspects of what is to be our Christian experience. If Jesus is the truth, I have a hard time believing that the Spirit of God is either confused or enjoys messing with our heads and watching us flail about. How can every separate “Christian” faction think they have the real truth? I have yet to talk to any group that says they are knowingly following a lie or are willfully distorting the truth; they all truly believe they have the truth.

I believe the problem is that people try to reason their way through the scriptures and they first and foremost approach the Bible as if it is some static text that sets forth a system of religious behaviors and thought to which everyone must conform. In so doing, they make their first mistake by approaching the scriptures in their flesh and in their humanity and not from faith. Then once they decide the methods and disciplines which best enable a person to conform to their religious system, they start the process of governing the behavior of others to make sure people follow their “way.”

So let’s think about what is happening. Like with the “way” when people start to make their own determinations of what the Bible really requires of people (what is or is not the truth), and their conclusions are centered on such things as behavior, duty, and obedience, they are once again arrogantly declaring that somewhere inside of themselves they have the innate ability to “*know*” the truth and they once again make the dire mistake of substituting the individual for Christ.

I know this might be difficult to absorb but I am going to say it anyway. The Bible is not about a religious belief system, it is not about a standard for right living, it is not about what you have to go do to be a “good” Christian; rather, from beginning to end it is about knowing and being in relationship with Jesus. In fact, the entire Bible is a revelation of Jesus and everything points to Him and describes Him and declares His glory. The Bible is about how Jesus gratuitously showers His love on humanity. It is about why we should trust ourselves completely to His love and care. It is about why we are so entirely incapable of truly being the lord of our own lives and why He is so entirely capable, worthy, and the only one able to be the Lord of our lives. It is about our need to exchange our life for His, our wisdom for His wisdom, and our truth for “*the*” truth—the person of Jesus Christ living in and through us. If you are willing to make this exchange, guess what, like Paul you will also have the mind of Christ for you will “*know*” the truth both personally and intimately.

I am the life. Once again, we have to understand the full and radical implications of this comment which like the other two phrases is focused on the personal pronoun, the verb, and the definite article “the”—I am the... Only if Jesus gives you His life will you live forever in the presence of God. The exchange must take place: His life for your life. However, let me make one clarification, without His life you will live forever, but let me just say that separation from God for all eternity will be anything but life. In fact, it will be nothing short of ongoing and continual terror.

In addition, only if Jesus gives you His life will you experience the life of God here and now. I want you to understand, that according to ***1 Peter 2-4***, God has promised that we can share in His divine nature and experience all of his rich and wonderful promises, including His peace and rest and the powerful promise that

we will escape the decadence all around us caused by evil desires. That means you no longer have to be enslaved to your flesh to obey its demands and you have no obligation whatsoever to do what your sinful nature urges you to do (***Romans 8:12***).

But this is all a result of knowing Jesus. In fact, Peter tell us that God will bless us with His wonderful peace as we come to know Jesus, our God and Lord, better and better. But keep in mind, this “know” is not about the theory, it’s not about what He taught, it’s not about the ability to tell others what He taught, it is about being in an intimate relationship with Him where you come to know His personality, His character, the ways He does things and why He does things. It is about Jesus becoming your best friend ever so you can experience His life in you.

But to know Jesus in this kind of intimate way you have to trust yourself to Him in the most intimate areas of your life. Trusting is the precondition to experiencing and “*knowing*” Jesus.

When you think you can manage your own life and actually control your experience here on earth, when you think you can find life (joy, peace, rest, and satisfaction), you are placing yourself in the position that only Jesus can rightfully fill—again substituting the individual for Christ. You can’t do it and history tells us that no one has ever been able to fill that role. Again you must make the exchange; it is the only way to have life and to experience His life.

“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.” These 3 exclusive statements with an exclusive declaration for the pathway to the Father is intended to keep us from ever taking the role in our own life that Jesus wants to have. These 3 statements drive home the fact that we are absolutely desperate all the time for Him to fill us and give us His life!

John 14:7-12

"If you had *known* Me, you would have *known* My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have *seen* Him." Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to *know* Me, Philip? He who has *seen* Me has *seen* the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.

Following the 3 I Am statements, Jesus sets up a dynamic that is ridiculously difficult for the disciples, and most believers, to understand. And that is the notion that the Father actually lived in the Son. Thus, when people interacted with Jesus they were *always* simultaneously interacting with the Father who lived in Jesus. Jesus pointed to His works and made the point that mere humans cannot do the kind of miracles that Jesus has done; rather, it is clearly the work of the divine not just in the raw power but even in the specific application of that power or the appointments that were chosen for Jesus to fulfill. Every aspect of Jesus' life was intentional and had the imprint of the Father on it and this was something that was easily discernable by those who could "*see*." Let's look at what He said:

John 14:7

"If you had *known* Me, you would have *known* My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have *seen* Him."

Now there are various levels of “knowing.” There is the ability to know a fact, there is the ability to know the reasons behind the fact, but there is also a “knowing” that is very specific to a person. Knowing who the person is and what they are like, knowing their character, their nature, the depths of their personality, and so on, and that is the kind of “knowing” to which Jesus is referring.

Philip if you had truly been in an intimate relationship with me, you would also have known my Father and would have been in an intimate relationship with Him. You would have known all about Him. I am sure this bummed out Phillip. But then Jesus lets Philip know that very soon that is to be the kind of relationship He is going to have with both the Father and the Son.

Within hours Jesus will be killed, within days He will live again, and within weeks, He will send the Holy Spirit to live within every true believer and place within them a new nature that is separate and distinct from their old sinful nature. He will imbue all true believers with His nature and it is in that new nature that the Holy Spirit will reside. As a result Phillip, along with all true believers can know Jesus and the Father in such an intimate way that Jesus truly becomes to them the way, the truth, and the life.

In addition to “*knowing*,” Jesus also uses this phrase “have *seen* Him” and clearly states that if anyone has *seen* Jesus they have *seen* the Father. The Greek word we have translated “seen” applies to both the ability to physically see someone but to also discern their presence with absolute clarity. This is the same word Jesus used when He told the man who had been blind that He had seen the Son of Man. Clearly the man could not physically see, but He was able to discern that Jesus was God such that when Jesus walked up to Him and made mud from His saliva and put it in the man’s eyes and told him to go wash, the man did not take a swing at Jesus but went to the pool and washed.

“He who has *seen* Me has *seen* the Father.” Jesus was communicating to Phillip that whether he realized or not the presence of the Father freely poured from Jesus life and it was discernable to anyone who was looking. In fact, there was no way to really distinguish between the two. Yes, the disciples were talking, connecting, emoting, and having physical interaction with Jesus, but at the exact same time they were talking, connecting, emoting, and having interaction with the Father. This is why in ***John 10:30*** Jesus confidently declared: the Father and I are one—unmistakably Jesus and yet unmistakably the Father.

John 12:44-45

“If you trust me, you are really trusting God who sent me. For when you *see* me you are *seeing* the one who sent me.

John 14:10-11

The words I say are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does His work through me.

Do you understand what is really happening here? Do you think this was just a theology lesson on the relationships within the Godhead? I don't. What I see Jesus doing is setting everything up to make even a more remarkable revelation that will blow everyone's mind and it has to do with us and how we are to experience Jesus as our way, our truth, and our life. In exactly the same way that the Father lived in the Son and did His work through the Son (even the words Jesus spoke were from the Father), this is the dynamic that is to occur between the Son and every true believer. A little further in this dialogue Jesus said:

John 14:20

When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

It is exactly the same concept. When you become born again, when Jesus gives you His nature, God abides in you. *Ephesians 3:17* says that as you trust Jesus more and more He will be more and more at home in your hearts. In other words, He will take greater and greater possession of your being such that if you “*trust*” Him He will live through you in the same way that the Father lived through Him. You will then be in a place where you can confidently know that what you say comes from Jesus, what you do is appointed by the Father, and where you go, is per the direction of the Spirit. Look at what Jesus says in verses 12-14.

John 14:12-14

"I tell you the truth, anyone who *believes* in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!

First of all, the precondition to what Jesus says is the requirement to believe (“anyone who believes”). We must *trust* ourselves to Jesus and if we do He will do everything else. That is what He said, you can ask anything in His name and He will do it. And the works that He will do will be larger and greater in magnitude than even He did while He was here on earth. Notice that He will do it so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. He did not say that you will do it or that He will

instruct you in what you should do; but He will do it. It will just be through you. You will be the vessel, the instrument, but He will be the one who takes action.

I want you to notice something very personal and intimate here. Even through Jesus is the one who actually does the work, we are kind of, but not really, the initiators of much of that work. You see God desires us to be part and parcel in the execution of His will in heaven here on earth and we do that in part through asking. He wants us to experience Him in every aspect of His work and He wants us to participate so that we can see how He is actively answers our prayers. And remember, we can ask for anything in His name and He will do it.

I will explain that more in a second so hold on before you go off half cocked and starts asking God for a million dollars expecting Him to drop it in your lap or asking Him to have that girl or boy fall in love with you. But before I explain that, I want to stick to the main point of this whole dialogue. Jesus wants you to know Him as your way, your truth, and your life such that you are willing to fully *trust* Him with your life. That is when the real fun begins. That is when you get to be used by God in amazing ways to do amazing things as He lives through you.

What I have found, however, is that most people tend to grasp this idea of Jesus “living in you” on an intellectual level and are able to even talk about this “Christian” phenomenon to unbelievers, but they do it almost in a pop culture sense: “If you ask, Jesus will come into your heart.” We use the words but they become to so many of us just colorful metaphors—a religious cliché—yet, we don’t even really know what it is like to be an instrument, or a living vessel, through which Jesus does His work. So often as believers we live as if Jesus is somewhere up in the heavens and not really living right here in our New Creation.

As a result, too many of us are stuck trying really, really hard to be good “Christians” and our eyes never lift off ourselves to see or know what He wants us

to do, what He wants us to say, or where He wants us to go. We are simply too busy doing for God that we never really get to “know” Him. Or else we are so fixated on our life and what is happening around us that we hardly have time or energy to “know” Jesus as our way, our truth and our life—we are too busy taking care of things and making sure our life is somewhat under control—as if that was even possible. And, of course, most of us are obsessed with finding a way to get God to do for us what we want Him to do (even though all we have to do is ask).

But regardless, of the cause, the issue is the same. We have been reluctant to take the Word of God as the *ultimate authority* over our lives. We think that Jesus was just doing His thing spouting out religious talk which we, of course, like to mimic. But that is not the case. He wants you to *trust* Him and let Him have control over every, and I mean every, area of your life so that He can take greater possession within your being. This is what it means to “*know*” Jesus verses merely being acquainted with Jesus. This is what it means for Jesus to be your Lord and not just your Savior. This is what it means to let Jesus be your way, your truth, and your life.

So whatever impedes you from trusting yourself to Jesus, you must cast it off. I don’t say that lightly because I don’t think we can just say, “be gone” and it goes away, for that has not really worked for anyone. But this idea of casting off has everything to do with *daily* recognizing that you have been crucified with Christ (*Romans 6*). Hence, the power of your old sinful nature has been literally killed. However, you still must *daily* make this your reality. You do this by comparing the truth about Jesus (who He is and what He promises to be for you) with all the ways that you protect yourself, defend yourself, provide for yourself, and attempt to survive this life and be willing to discard the lie that you can do anything on your own. Discard the lie that you have even the slightest ability to navigate the paths of

your own life. Discard the lie that you have ever been able to do it right. Discard the lie that you will ever do it right. Discard the lie that you have the ability to reason and apply your wisdom to your life, and to your Christianity, and make right choices with regard to relationships, your future, your present, or anything at all. Discard the lies that Jesus does not love you in the way that He has said He loves you. Discard the lies that He is not your Gatekeeper or the Good Shepherd. Discard every arrogant thought that raises itself up against the true knowledge of Jesus Christ. This is the process of actively believing the truth. This is who you walk by faith and become absolutely filled with the Spirit of God. Paul describes this process as follows:

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

The key to “*knowing*” Jesus is to “*trust*” Jesus. The key to trusting Jesus is to take your thoughts captive and remove or discard anything and everything that does not align itself up with the ***full counsel*** of the Word of God. That is what it means to punish all disobedience. Oh, by the way, I mean the ***full counsel*** of the Word of God (from beginning to end), not just tidbits here or tidbits there or your filtered ideas of what is or is not the truth. Remember you must have the mind of Christ in order “*see*” and understand.

In wrapping this up, let me give you a very practical example of this and, in so doing, I will circle back around to the whole notion of asking anything in Jesus' name and He will do it.

Taken at face value, which a lot of people do, they adopt a theology that says that God will literally do for us what we want as if He is some genie in the bottle that is there to serve our desires and our passions in this life. They tell people that if they have enough faith this can be their reality. And when they don't get what they ask for, people become disillusioned and even angry with God or else they sink into a big whole believing that they will never have enough faith. But either way the enemy has a great victory and unleashes a lot of damage in their lives.

Clearly such teaching is not in accord with the *full counsel* of the Word of God. Just like last week when we studied the whole notion of the rooms and the rapture of the church, we had to search the scriptures (in that case both the Old Testament and New Testament) in order to get a good understanding of that pivotal end time event, and we similarly have to look to other parts of the Bible to get our understanding of what Jesus meant when He said "anything in His name." Fortunately, the Holy Spirit gives us the answer very succinctly and we don't have to do a lot of searching. Turn to **1 John 5** to get the "rest of the story."

1 John 5:14-15

This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

You see "asking anything in Jesus name" is equivalent to asking anything according to His will. And we can be fully confident that if we are aligned with His

will when we make our requests, then He will not only hear our requests but He will do whatever it is that we ask. He may use you, He may use someone else, or He may just do something supernatural, but regardless He will do it; after all it is His will. So now that we know the rest of the story. Therefore, we must now be willing to take all our thoughts captive and align them with this truth and punish (or remove) all thoughts, beliefs, ideas, that are in conflict with this truth.

Yes, we can be fully confident that God will hear us when we are in alignment with His will. However, the only way we can be in alignment with His will and even discern His will is if we *trust* Him and *know* Him in the most intimate of ways. This means we must be willing to surrender to His love and turn over the reins of our life to His Lordship and let Him truly be our way, our truth, and our life. Therefore, tonight I invite all of you to surrender who you are to His amazing love and let Him have His rightful place as Lord of your life so that so that when others meet you they will know that they have had an encounter with both Jesus and the Father. The thought of it is simply amazing.

Let's Pray