

## Teaching "I Am The Way The Truth & The Life John 14:1-14

Good morning, everyone. This is the 6th in a series of 7 sermons on the I AM statements of Jesus. In declaring I AM Jesus was expressing his oneness and unity with his heavenly Father and the eternity of his being. The I AM statements, reveal Jesus' character and the purpose of his calling. Through these words we can know who Jesus is and declare with confidence like the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 1 v2, I know whom I have believed.

So, let's return to the text and put it into context by looking briefly at the previous chapter 13. It's the Last Supper. Jesus has predicted his betrayal. Judas has left the scene. He tells them in v 33, my children I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me and just as I told the Jews (7 v 35) so I tell you now: where I am going you cannot come. Despite Peter's protestations, Jesus tells the group that Peter the Rock will crumble and deny him 3 times. No wonder their hearts were troubled. Jesus has been teaching them that the son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. But I wonder did the disciples think about the words of the Jews, 7 v 35, where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him. Will he go to where our people live scattered among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? What does he mean? Jesus strives to calm their worries, 14 vs 1 and 2, don't let your hearts be troubled trust in God, trust in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. I'm going there to prepare a place for you. I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

Thomas just can't get it but he's not afraid to admit he doesn't get it. Thomas is like so many of us. We only believe what we see. We can only process what's in front of us. It reminds me of Cordell Hull, the Secretary of State under Franklin D Roosevelt during WW2. He was known as a very meticulous lawyer, very precise and careful in his language. One day on a train journey with a friend, his friend looked out of the carriage window and said those sheep have been sheared recently. Cordell looked up and said, Well! Sheared on this side anyway. Thomas was not prepared to go further than what he could see and understand. He's rooted in the physical and not the spiritual realm. Thomas doesn't know where Jesus is going. Therefore, he doesn't know the way. Jesus doesn't berate him for being spiritually dull. He uses it to expand the revelation of himself. Jesus replies I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. **I am the way.**

Jesus is the way to our Father in heaven, the way to eternal life. Have you ever asked for directions? The way will say, oh if you want to go there, I wouldn't start from here. The enthusiast he will give instructions which are so complicated that you lose the will to live as they repeat the same incomprehensible instructions at least 3 times. Experience tells us if we are going on a long arduous journey, we need to be clear in our minds about the destination. We need a good starting point and a guide who is familiar with the destination and, who is prepared to meet us at our starting point and take us personally to our destination. Jesus ticks all those boxes because he is the starting point, the way, the guide, and the destination. Jesus knows the way to the Father. He's been there. John 1v1, in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. He was with God in the beginning. He is the starting point, John 10v 9, I am the gate whoever enters through me will be saved. He is the way, the way of suffering and servanthood - the way of the cross. 1 Peter 3 v 18, Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous to bring you to God. He is the guide, John 10 v 11 I am the Good Shepherd he lays down his life for the sheep. He is the destination, John 14 v 11, I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Jesus is saying, if you want to know the way you need to know me.

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The disciples and subsequent believers have this wonderful promise, I am not just going to show you the way, tell you the way, or give you instructions on how to get to the Father. If you ask me into your heart I'm going to come and take you by the hand to my Father's house and you'll be with me. He promises to personally lead his followers to the Father. I Thessalonians 4 v 14, we believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. **I am the truth.**

When Jesus was questioned by Pilate, John 18 v 37 Jesus said, I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me. Pilate replied, what is truth. We are all seeking the truth or at least a version of the truth that vindicates our actions. In the aftermath of the Troubles, there seems to be endless calls for inquiries. Everyone is seeking justice and truth. In the world today the difference between good and evil, truth and falsehood, fake news and reality has become ever more blurred.

We live in an age of relativism. Truth and morality are relative and not absolute. No standpoint is uniquely privileged over all others. No-one is wrong- everyone is right. The important thing is that we all get along. Your truth may be different to my truth. That's alright for I have no right to hold you to my standards. Tolerance must reign supreme, and the truth be damned. But relative truth is like a ship without a rudder or compass and battered by the stormy sea of individual's thoughts and ideals. The problem with relativistic reasoning is that the standards are being set by fallen imperfect beings capable of making huge mistakes. Determination of right and wrong can only be made absolutely by a perfect being, God. Isaiah 45 v 19, I the Lord speak the truth I declare what is right. To doubt God's word is to say that there is no dependable truth at all. If you cannot accept the words of our creator God where in all creation will you go in search of the truth? What is truth? Jesus says, I am the truth. Note it's not I tell the truth. Jesus is the absolute standard and embodiment of truth.

Cynics will say, he would say that wouldn't he. Just because Jesus said it doesn't necessarily make it so. I am Spartacus. Why should we listen to Jesus? Let's look at his track record. He fed the 5000 and the 4000. He said I am the bread of life. He healed the blind man and said I am the light of the world. He raised Lazarus and said I am the resurrection and the life. He said to the waters, peace be still. Did the storm rage on? He said to the paralytic, arise take up your bed and walk. Did the man's legs remain lifeless? Jesus predicted his death and resurrection. Did it come to pass? I am the truth. I am the end of the search, the full expression of the truth about life, the world, and God. The hope of life beyond the grave is rooted in the most certain of realities the veracity and trustworthiness of Jesus Christ. **I am the life.** Every other path leads to spiritual death. Only Jesus can give eternal life, spiritual life as opposed to spiritual death and separation from God. 2 Thessalonians 1v 8 and 9, he will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and the majesty of his power. Jesus says in John 10 v 10, I have come that they who believe in me may have life and have it in abundance. That life is not one of endless rules, regulations, and a desperate struggle for achievement. But a living loving relationship with God through Jesus Christ himself. Abundant life is not about an abundance of stuff, but the knowledge of what life really is. Living in accordance with God's purpose for us. It's about knowing the depths and height and length and width of God's love for us and responding to that through a personal and dynamic relationship with Jesus. It's about being able to praise God in good times and in tough times. It's about being new people in Christ, knowing we

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are God’s children. I John 3v1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God. And that is what we are.

It’s not about giving stuff up, working on our moral values, turning over a new leaf. It's not about human effort. John 3v16, for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, so that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. God give up his son for the sake of a relationship with each one of us. Jesus alone is the life because he was not subject to death but made death subject to him. Jesus is the resurrection life. An African Muslim who became a Christian was asked why he changed faith. Suppose you're going down a road and the road forks in two directions. You don't know which way to go. But if you met two men at the fork one dead and one alive. Which one would you ask to show you the way? Because he is risen, we can have a relationship with him. Because he is risen, he can touch our lives. **No one comes to the father except through me.** No one whatsoever, absolutely no one.

This text inspires mission, motivates evangelism, builds churches, drives us to worship and give thanks that we know Jesus. There is no other way. God has spoken. Peter at Pentecost, salvation is found in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given to man by which we must be saved. Christ’s salvation is exclusive because he himself is unique. Jesus alone is the way to God. But that way is open to all. Prayer 3 in Holy Communion service 2. He opened wide his arms upon the cross and with love stronger than death he made the perfect sacrifice for sin. Jesus is the only way to life because he died and was raised. Jesus is alive! Tim Hughes sings about that happy day. Sing it out, Jesus is alive. Shout it out, Jesus is alive. He's alive. Celebrate. Jesus is alive. He's alive. Confucius is dead. Mohammed is dead. Buddha is dead. Plato is dead. Only Jesus is alive. On Easter Sunday, the celebrant declares Christ is risen, and we respond the Lord is risen indeed. Allelujah. I prefer the liturgy in the Roman Catholic tradition. Christ is risen. And we with him. There's only one way to heaven. You can't blag your way in. You can't schmooze your way in. Can't work your way in. Can't pay your way in. There is only one way. Ray Stedman tells this story of his Bible study group. When they came to discuss this verse, a lady bristled with indignation, this is too narrow- minded. She’s not alone. It certainly is perceived as such in our PC, woke world. Ray said to her if you want to reach somebody by mobile phone you must dial the correct 11-digit number, or you won't get through. Almost isn't good enough. So is the network provider narrow- minded. She replied, I think you should interpret these words in a less narrow- minded way. OK he said, no one comes to the father except through me. How would you like me to interpret that? I'm not a theologian she said and stumped off. But remember Jesus wasn't talking to theologians he was talking to 11 ordinary man and speaking very plainly to you and me today.

Well as we conclude, I wonder have you a troubled heart this morning. Brexit, fishing quotas licences, international instability, rising cost of living, food shortages, the environmental crisis, political corruption, escalating violence home and abroad. It’s time to realise we can know the Father and creator of the universe because the Lord Jesus Christ has revealed him to us. Why should our hearts be troubled when the creator and governor of the universe can be our Father because of Jesus’ redeeming work on the cross? We all have a choice. Receive Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Believe in him as the way, the truth and the life or try the Frank Sinatra way, I did it my way and hope for the best when we die. As we approach this Holy Communion service remember that if we believe in Jesus for our salvation receive him into our hearts and give him in the place of honour in our lives, Jesus first, then we can say with confidence through the shedding of his blood, I am redeemed out

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of the hand of Satan. Through the shedding of his blood, all my sins are forgiven. Through the shedding of his blood, I am cleansed of all my sins. Through the shedding of his blood, I am justified, made right with God and through the shedding of his blood, I am sanctified, set apart for God and no longer in Satan's territory. If you haven't taken such a step of faith, or feel you need to re-commit will you come now: follow the way, accept the truth, and live the life through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory to God for his mercy provision and grace Amen