

I have become so lazy in my life. Where there is opportunity to use a machine, I will use it before I apply my brain. The machine I would use most regularly would be the satnav in my car. Even for the most simple of journeys that I should know where I'm going I will use it. It drives Alison mad, and it's maybe a sign of laziness.

Today as we look at this familiar passage from John 14 I think people today don't know their way in life. In fact just yesterday I was with a gentleman in hospital who although connected to a Church of Ireland parish, and even having requested to see a chaplain whilst in hospital, said that he would prefer that I didn't pray after my visit. Even though there was uncertainty to the man's plan for treatment, he still didn't need prayer.

I worry that there are more and more people who think they know the way to running life. The amount of people that since COVID have not returned to Church, not just this church, but any church is staggering. Sundays have changed for them, and frankly I worry that they are now lost.

I wonder how many today consider Jesus' words, "I am the way, I've always been the way, I am the truth, I always will be truth, and I am the life, I'm not dying I'm alive forever".

In the madness that this world is in, in the real issues that people face every day, Jesus' words bring hope. So let's have a quick look at them.

Firstly, he says, **I am the way**

This is where Jesus' claims are both inclusive and yet exclusive. In claiming that he is the way, then it is open to everyone to receive. No one is turned away. Just look at how many people Jesus spent time with and ate with who the religious folks of his day considered as scum – he never excludes. But to say he is the only way is a statement today which goes against the grain in this pluralistic society – even as we look at the weekend of the coronation, I heard some commentators say that they thought the Church of England could have done more to include other faiths. Why would we do that if Jesus says that he is the only way to God?

When we tell people that the only way in life comes from placing Jesus as the centre, this could be considered by many as rather arrogant, intolerant and narrow minded. But everyone has to choose. Either people see Jesus as a Liar, a Lunatic, a Legend in someone's made-up mind, or he actually is the Lord. And therefore if he's the Lord, then there's no alternative. So why do so many resort to something else? It's actually quite depressing to think that for many, this world lasts 70-80 years and that's it, that we're just a bunch of chemicals that are continually evolving; that in some way there's no direction to our existence and purpose; that the relationships and love we have built up with family counts for nothing at the end of the day?

And you see the reason why a lot of people can't see that Jesus is the only way, is because people think they are in control and they know where they are going. I think the last number of years and the uncertainty of our economy and the safety of our world says that no one is in control. In these uncertain times we must ensure we put your trust in Jesus for the way ahead. And for those in our family who are not placing Jesus at the centre, I believe it is time for all of us to have those conversations with them.

## THE TRUTH

Secondly Jesus says he's the only truth. In a world that has grown accustomed to the term fake news as a result of Donald Trump, where the internet can tell you one thing on a website and then say something different on another, where do we truly find it today? Today's postmodern world says that whatever you believe to be true is acceptable; what might be true to you might not be true to another.

When Jesus stood before Pilate he explained that he had come to testify to the truth, and Pilate sarcastically replied "What is truth?" Pilate misunderstood all that Jesus stood for because in Jesus we see the fulfillment of hundreds of prophecies relating to his existence. This was no haphazard accident. Jesus exists as part of God's plan to restore the world. He is the only truth we can look to for guidance.

And yet this is a threat to society – when Jesus says that the only truth in life can be found in him. What? Jesus you don't expect me to listen to your rules? I can do whatever I want. And that folks is why the world is in the mess it's in, because we have allowed everyone to be and think whatever they want.

## SO FINALLY, WHAT ABOUT LIFE? The Life that Jesus gives.

When we acknowledge the truth of Jesus that sets us free from the grind of life; once we receive the offer of his love - his undeserved favour and forgiveness, we begin to live our lives with real purpose and meaning.

I wonder do you wake up most days feeling that you love life, and you can sense the purpose you have in it? I suspect many people in society loathe getting up because each day is the same as the last. But that's not what Jesus comes to offer.

It is about a personal, dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ so that you know the depths and heights and length and width of God's love for you. It's not just about seeing a little fruit in your life, or about getting by each day, or about being fed by the rector each Sunday. This is your time where Jesus wants you to blossom, being saturated with spiritual fruit. But to have that life we have to be close to Jesus. Remember he said, If you remain in me you will bear much fruit.

A Life that Christ offers is like when you pull the sponge out of the water and it is dripping and running everywhere because it is so full it can't hold any more. Is that how you feel?

A life that is full of Jesus should transform how you love your family, how we turn away from negativity, how we start loving people who we can't stand, how we devote more time to being in his presence rather than in front of a screen, how we move away from the critical and enter into the encouraging mind of Christ that gives life.

Folks, I'm sure right now you can be honest with yourself and consider whether your life reflects the joy and the purpose which Jesus offers. If it doesn't then be honest with him today and receive him into your heart once again. If today you can think of family members or friends who don't have that life that Jesus offers, then keep praying for them, but also pray that Jesus gives you the opportunity to speak with them. He will by his Spirit give you those openings. But more than anything, when people see Jesus living and bursting out of you, that will be the biggest witness that you can be to those around you.