

#1790

Cf. #257; #484; #543; #944 #1248; #1538

John 14:6<sup>1</sup>  
Jesus is The Way,  
The Truth & The Life  
14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
Free Text, Gospels

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LWMS Collection  
Church Council

<sup>6</sup> Jesus answered, "I Am The Way and The Truth and The Life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER IN HEAVEN  
EXCEPT THROUGH JESUS  
I. JESUS IS THE WAY  
II. JESUS IS THE TRUTH  
III. JESUS IS THE LIFE

In the Name of Jesus, who Alone is The Way and The Truth and The Life, Dear Fellow-Redeemed,

During these last Sundays, we have reviewed Jesus' "Bread of Life Discourse," recorded in John Chapter Six. We heard Jesus say that in order to live eternally, a person had to eat, munch, crunch, gnaw his flesh and drink his blood (6:53ff). We noted that Jesus was not referring to Holy Communion, nor to a literal eating his flesh and drinking his blood – that would be cannibalism. Instead, Jesus was referring to having complete and total faith alone in him as one's Savior. This faith in Jesus alone carried the promise of the resurrection from the dead on the Last Day and eternal life in heaven. In John Chapter Six, Jesus said,

**<sup>35</sup> ... "I am the Bread of Life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.... <sup>40</sup> My Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (6:35,40).**

All along in this "Bread of Life Discourse," Jesus has been speaking about faith in him alone that gives eternal life in heaven.

This morning, we are looking at the seventh of Jesus' "I Am" statements. This seventh statement summarizes what Jesus has been saying in his "Bread of Life Discourse." Jesus says, "I Am The Way and The Truth and The Life. No one comes to the Father

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<sup>1</sup> *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984. All Scripture references are taken from this translation unless noted otherwise.

except through me" (14:6). Our text this morning states: NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER IN HEAVEN EXCEPT THROUGH JESUS. NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER IN HEAVEN EXCEPT THROUGH JESUS ... I. JESUS IS THE WAY; II. JESUS IS THE TRUTH; III. JESUS IS THE LIFE.

NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER IN HEAVEN  
EXCEPT THROUGH JESUS  
I. JESUS IS THE WAY

Jesus is the only way to get to heaven. In this world, however, other ways to get to heaven – to have peace and eternal life – are proposed. There is the euphoric contemplation that is recommended by Buddhism. There is the servile patience recommended by Hinduism that promises a reincarnation to a higher life form; of course, if a person is really bad in the status he has in life, he could be reincarnated as a bug; in addition, Hinduism is polytheistic – believes there are many gods. There is Islam, which believes that if a person is good enough or dies killing infidels – unbelievers, such as Jews, Christians, etc. – that person will get to heaven; that is what motivates suicide bombers. There is the concept that as long as a person believes in a god – some sort of higher power, supreme being, creator of the universe – that sincerity of belief will be sufficient to get the person a place in the celestial lodge above. Likewise, there is the idea that as long as a person leads an upright life, is a faithful husband, wife, father or mother – that good life will merit eternal life in heaven. Concerning all of these different ways, Solomon writes in the Book of Proverbs, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death" (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25). In other words, all of these different "ways" thought up, contemplated, and followed by mankind, only lead to death and damnation eternal. Jesus is The Only Way.

Jesus is The Only Way. Jesus is specific in his announcement. He says, "I Am THE Way." There is no other way to come to the Father in heaven and have eternal life. Jesus alone is "THE Way."

APPROPRIATION

Is Jesus your only way to come to the Father in heaven – to have eternal life? Perhaps you do not buy into the concepts of Buddhism and its euphoric contemplation; or, into Hinduism and its reincarnation; or, Islam and its innate violence. Perhaps the concept of god as some vague higher power or supreme being, is not what you believe – nor should you. God has, after all, revealed himself to you in his Son Jesus. If you want to know what God is like, look at his One and Only Son, Jesus (cf. Hebrews 1:1-3). But there is a temptation that assaults this true faith in Jesus as the only Way.

You can be tempted to think that because you attend church, because you perhaps read your Bible at home or devotion booklet, because you try to live your faith by being a good child, man, woman, or parent – because you try to live your faith, surely you ought to have a place in heaven with the Father. The problem in this thinking is the word "because." Certainly, you ought to attend worship, read your Bible or devotions at home

and live a godly live, but not “because” such activity will get you to heaven, but rather as an outgrowth or fruit of your faith in Jesus.

Isaiah warns us, “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away” (Isaiah 64:6). Isaiah says, “All of us” are “unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.” It is interesting that Isaiah, whom we might regard as being right up there with the best, includes himself when he says, “All of us” are “unclean” etc. Isaiah includes himself! If Isaiah includes himself, certainly, we – who cannot even come close to the sanctification of an Isaiah – we also are included too! Isaiah says that “all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.” In other words, our “righteous acts,” our “good works,” are not good enough. In addition, Isaiah points to the results of our uncleanness and the filthy raggedness of “our righteous acts.”

Isaiah says, “We all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away” (64:6b). Once again, Isaiah includes himself, and he points to the end of all flesh – shriveling up like a leaf and blowing away in the wind. St. Paul put this point in these words, “Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned”; and, Paul says, “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 5:12; 6:23a). All of us, Isaiah included, face death because we are sinners. There is no way to avoid death because of sin – no way, except Jesus who alone is “The Way.”

Jesus alone is “The Way” to have eternal life in heaven with the Father. This means simply to have faith in Jesus as your Savior – faith, reliance, trust, belief in Jesus alone. That faith in Jesus alone comes to you through God’s Word – “The Truth” which points to Jesus.

## NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER IN HEAVEN EXCEPT THROUGH JESUS

- I. JESUS IS THE WAY; and,
- II. JESUS IS THE TRUTH

It is popular today to say that there is no such thing as absolute truth – that truth is relative. Truth is relative to who you are, to your environment, to your education. People may like to think that there are “many truths”; and that truth is what you make it to be. Thus, you can believe what you want to believe, because that is truth for you. What is truth for you may not be truth for me or for someone else. This opens the door to all kinds of perversity and wickedness.

The Bible states,

***<sup>19</sup> The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: Sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; <sup>20</sup> idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions <sup>21</sup> and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. ... those who live like this will not inherit the Kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21).***

Now that may be truth for you but not truth for me, because I do not believe that such perversities will send me to hell.

The Bible states,

***<sup>9</sup> Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders <sup>10</sup> nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the Kingdom of God*** (1 Corinthians 6:9&10).

Now identification of those activities as sinful and wicked, may be truth for you but not truth for me. I may believe that homosexuality, lesbianism, being gay; same-sex-marriage; living together before marriage – I may believe that all of those activities are good, acceptable, beneficial and commendable. You might not think such things are “truth,” but I do.

In addition, my truth may be that the Bible is outdated and that it is not applicable to today’s generation. I may think that the Bible is no longer relevant. So there is no longer any absolute truth – no absolute standards. But this kind of thinking puts a person outside of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus said, “If you continue in my Word, then you really are my disciples, and you will know the Truth and the Truth will make you free” (cf. John 8:31,32). Jesus also proclaims that his “Word is Truth” (John 17:17b). Jesus’ Word, God’s Word, the Bible, is absolute Truth. Jesus says that those who hold on to and continue in his Word will know the Truth. The Truth that believers in Jesus know is, first of all, that they are sinners, displeasing to God, and ought to receive eternal punishment in hell. Secondly, God’s Word the Bible proclaims that the Truth of God’s Word makes people free – free from sin, death and hell – free by faith alone in Jesus – faith which is created and sustained by God’s Word alone.

Thus, God’s Word, the Bible, is absolute truth. The Bible is God’s inspired and inerrant Word (cf. 2 Peter 1:20,21; John 10:35). That means that the Bible is true in all that it says. The Bible also warns that no one should change, alter, add to or subtract from God’s Word (cf. Deuteronomy 4:2; Revelation 22:18,19).

#### APPLICATION

But there is a temptation here too. The fact that the Bible is God’s Word in truth and purity can become a mindless mantra for us: “The Bible in truth and purity!” “The Bible in truth and purity!” “The Bible in truth and purity!” But, if we are not following what the Bible says in truth and purity, then we are deceiving ourselves.

The Bible in truth and purity assures us that all of our sins are forgiven. But if we use that truth to excuse and continue in sinful behavior, then we are condemned. St. Paul commented on this very thing. He said, “Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no

means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" (Romans 6:1b,2). God's Word condemns our sinful behavior, including the things that others may not see and of which others may not be aware.

Too often, our dreams and fantasies are contrary to God's Word in truth and purity. Our sinful thoughts, unknown to others but known to God, condemn us (cf. 1 John 3:19,20). When we permit to slip by opportunities to testify to the Truth of God's Word because of our cowardice and reluctance or because we are too busy "making a living" – that too is sin. When we quietly try to "fit in" with this godless age and culture, that is sin. Ask yourself the question: "If being and acting like a Christian were a crime, would there be enough evidence to convict me?" Recognize again the Truth of God's Word being at work condemning our sinful thoughts, words, actions, attitudes and behavior – both our active sinning – doing what God forbids – and our passive sinning – not doing what God commands. That brings us back to the Truth that Jesus is our Savior and Redeemer, and that only by faith in him do we have eternal life in heaven with the Father. Moreover, God's Word in truth and purity motivates Christian behavior.

The Word of God in truth and purity motivates our Christian behavior. That Word assures us of sin forgiven and compels us to live our lives for our LORD Jesus. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again" (2 Corinthians 5:14,15). Those who "live" are those who believe in Jesus as their Savior through the Truth of God's Word. They "live" in this life, not for themselves, but for Jesus – according to God's Word in Truth and Purity. Believers in Jesus also live eternally.

NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER IN HEAVEN  
EXCEPT THROUGH JESUS  
I. JESUS IS THE WAY;  
II. JESUS IS THE TRUTH; and,  
III. JESUS IS THE LIFE

When Jesus is speaking about the fact that he is "The Life," is he speaking about life on this earth? No. God describes life on this earth through the Prophet Isaiah,

**<sup>6</sup> A voice says, "Cry out."  
And I said, "What shall I cry?"**

***"All men are like grass,  
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field.  
<sup>7</sup> The grass withers and the flowers fall,  
because the breath of the LORD blows on them.  
Surely the people are grass.***

**<sup>8</sup> The grass withers and the flowers fall ...  
(Isaiah 40:6-8a).**

All flesh is like grass – here today and gone tomorrow. All of the flowers of the field are beautiful in their time of thriving, but they fade away and die. That is the lot of mankind. Solomon says the same thing in the Book of Ecclesiastes,

***<sup>18</sup> ... “As for men, God tests them so that they may see that they are like the animals. <sup>19</sup> Man’s fate is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath; man has no advantage over the animal. Everything is meaningless. <sup>20</sup> All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return”*** (Ecclesiastes 3:18-20; cf. Genesis 2:19).

Moses says the same thing in Psalm 90:

***<sup>3</sup> You [O LORD] turn men back to dust,  
saying, “Return to dust, O sons of men.”***

***<sup>5</sup> You [O LORD] sweep men away  
in the sleep of death;  
they are like the new grass of the morning—  
<sup>6</sup> though in the morning it springs up new,  
by evening it is dry and withered.***

***<sup>7</sup> We are consumed by your anger  
and terrified by your indignation.***

***<sup>8</sup> You have set our iniquities before you,  
our secret sins in the light of your presence.***

***<sup>9</sup> All our days pass away under your wrath;  
we finish our years with a moan*** (Psalm 90:3,5-9)

Obviously, when Jesus says that he is “The Life,” he is not speaking about life on this earth. Life on this earth comes to an end. Life on this earth ends in death – “with a moan” – a sigh. Jesus is speaking about eternal life.

When Jesus says, “I Am ... The Life,” he is speaking about eternal life in heaven with him and the Father. Jesus spoke about this eternal life in his Words to Martha on the occasion of the death of her brother Lazarus. In his sixth “I Am” statement, Jesus said, “I Am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die” (John 11:25b&26a). Jesus’ resurrection from the dead on Easter Sunday morning is the guarantee that those who believe in him will never die (cf. 1 Corinthians 15).

When a believer in Jesus’ dies physically, his soul is immediately in heaven with Jesus (cf. Luke 16:22; 23:43). Then, on the Last Day, Jesus raises up the bodies of believers, so that in both soul and body, believers are with the LORD Jesus forever (cf. 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4:13ff). Those who believe in Jesus alone as their Savior, have eternal

life in heaven with the Father forever; they have this eternal life through faith in Jesus, who is “The Life.”

#### APPROPRIATION

Do you have this eternal life in heaven with the Father? You do not have it on your own. But you do have eternal life through Jesus, who is “The Life” – who is your life.

You have eternal life by faith in Jesus. You have faith in Jesus through the work of the Holy Spirit in the Means of Grace – the Gospel in Word and Sacraments. The Gospel in the Word is the Good News that Jesus’ perfect life has been credited to you and that you are covered with his holiness and righteousness. The Gospel in the Word is the Good News that Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross has been substituted for the punishment in hell that you deserve. The Gospel in Holy Baptism assures you that you have been saved (1 Peter 3:21) and have eternal life in heaven. The Gospel in Holy Communion assures you again and again that you have forgiveness of sins – and where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also eternal life and salvation (cf. Luke 22:19&20). Death no longer has any power over you.

Yes, one day, dear believer in Jesus – one day you will die – but only physically. On that day, your soul will rest securely in heaven with Jesus. On the Last Day, Judgment Day, Jesus will raise you from your grave, so that in both body and soul you will live in heaven with Jesus always.

#### CONCLUSION

How does a person get to heaven? How are you sure that you will be in heaven? You have this certainty not by any earthly means. You are not, on your own, good enough to get to heaven. Rather, it is by faith alone in Jesus that you are guaranteed eternal life in heaven.

You have the guarantee of eternal life in heaven through Jesus, for Jesus is “The Way and The Truth and The Life” – Jesus is your Way and your Truth and your Life. Amen.