

JESUS SAID, "I AM THE WAY"

John 14:1-14

Key Verse: 14:6

"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

Jesus' words, "I am the way," are one of the seven "I Am" statements of John's gospel. This statement is very significant when spoken in our culture, which emphasizes diversity and tolerance. In many ways, this cultural emphasis is good. It has helped people to break down human barriers and see the world from many new perspectives. We can experience the beauty of God's world in a much fuller way. However, in terms of salvation, Jesus clearly says that he is the way. He is not one of many ways, but the only way. Some people use this truth as a theological argument to coerce agreement, in an overly simplistic approach. This is why many people react negatively, thinking that it is too narrow a viewpoint which only fosters bigotry and ignorance. But this is not at all what Jesus had in mind. In fact, Jesus' words came from deep love to lead people to salvation. We need to consider his claim thoughtfully and prayerfully. There are two questions in this passage which Jesus answers: Thomas' question and Philip's question. Their questions are very relevant to us. Jesus' answers give living hope, clear life direction and eternal salvation. Let's listen to Jesus' words.

First, Jesus comforts his disciples (1-3). Jesus began, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me" (1). Why were the disciples' hearts troubled? As we saw in chapter 13, the table talk at the Last Supper had not been uplifting. Rather, it was gloomy and sorrowful. Jesus had predicted his imminent death through Judas' betrayal and also foretold Peter's denial. Most troubling to the disciples was that they did not know where Jesus was going and that they could not follow him. When they heard these things, they felt they were being abandoned and were without any direction. They were on the verge of deep despair and depression. At this moment Jesus comforted them with great hope. Jesus wanted them to trust him as they trusted in God, indicating that he is God. Jesus always wanted his

disciples to have faith in him instead of falling into anxiety over their situation. This word speaks to us also. (PIC) Sometimes we face great uncertainty about the future. The economy fluctuates and the political situation is dark. Some Christian leaders have stumbled and many people feel that they cannot trust in anyone or anything. But in such moments, Jesus wants us to trust in him. This is how we can truly overcome doubt, anxiety, and fear. “Do not let your hearts be troubled” is Jesus’ imperative. This means that we must decide not to let our hearts be troubled by trusting in Jesus. This is the divine antidote to worry. Satan attacks us in many ways, planting doubt, fear and anxiety. But we must guard our hearts by trusting in Jesus.

After planting faith, Jesus gave them hope by promising them a room in the Father’s house. He said, “My Father’s house has many rooms” (2a). The words “My Father’s house” refer to the kingdom of God in a very intimate and personal way. It is the perfect paradise where our Father dwells with us and cares for us; it is a safe place. And his children love him and love one another and live in harmony. The Father’s house has many rooms. (PIC) These rooms are not little boxes but beautiful and spacious mansions, surrounded by delightful gardens and the streets are made of gold. There is no pollution or disease, crime or pain, mourning or death (Rev 21:3-4). It is full of life, love, peace and joy. This is our eternal dwelling place. In this world, nothing is permanent and we cannot keep anything forever. Eventually we will all die. However, we have hope to dwell in our Father’s house which will never perish, spoil or fade away. Apostle Paul says, “For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands” (2Co 5:1). This hope is freely given to those who have faith in Jesus.

How can we be sure of this? It is because Jesus said so. Jesus always tells the truth. He never lies. His promise is trustworthy. If we hold on to his promise we will never be disappointed. Jesus said, “...if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?” (2b) Then Jesus gave them another great promise. “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am” (3). This implies that Jesus’ death would not be the end. Jesus died for our sins on the cross. After that he rose again and ascended into

heaven. (PIC) He will come again with great power and glory as the King of kings with thousands upon thousands of angels. He will take his people back to his kingdom to dwell with him forever. This is really a great hope. It is not a dead hope, but a living hope. When we have a living hope in our hearts, we can overcome all kinds of hardships and live a victorious life for the glory of God. Thank you, Jesus, for giving us such a great hope!

Second, Jesus is the way and the truth and the life (4-7). After making wonderful promises, Jesus told his disciples, "You know the way to the place where I am going" (4). On what basis did he say this? From the beginning of his ministry, Jesus had taught through word and deed that he came from God and was going back to God, and that he was the way to eternal salvation. For example, Jesus said, (PIC) "I am the gate for the sheep; whoever enters through me will be saved" (9:9). He also said, (PIC) "I am the resurrection and the life, whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies" (11:25). Though Jesus had fully revealed that he is the way to eternal salvation, Thomas did not understand what he was saying. Thomas was honest, and plainly told the Lord, "We don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" (5) On the surface, his question seems legitimate. But in fact, it came from his unbelief. (PIC) To him, the Father's house seemed too abstract, not real. Jesus' resurrection and his return seemed like a fairy tale. In reality, he did not want to accept Jesus' death, or his own death. Even though Jesus tried to comfort him, he could not receive it because he was scared of death. This is why the Father's house seemed so vague and irrelevant to him. We can understand Thomas. If we don't accept the truth of Jesus' death and resurrection seriously, the Father's house seems like a fairy tale. Instead of having hope in the Father's house, we try to escape the reality of death by having some kind of false hope. Like Thomas, we are vulnerable to the fear of death. Let's listen carefully to Jesus' words so that we may overcome the fear of death with the living hope in the Father's house.

Anyway, because Thomas asked this question, Jesus revealed a profound truth about himself: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (6). Jesus' declaration about himself is amazing. Throughout history, no one could say, "I am the way." These days religious pluralism is dominant. Many people practice a smorgasboard

religion, picking bits of good teachings from a variety of sources. People say that there are many different pathways to the top of the mountain; though different, they all lead to the same place. Samuel Palaka of India told us about one person he shared the gospel with. He accepted Jesus as God and said, "Now I have 692 gods, including Jesus." But Jesus made it plain that we should not believe in him plus other gods or ways. Jesus is the only way to God. Acts 4:12 says, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved." 1 Timothy 2:5 says, "For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus."

Why is Jesus the only way? Here we must consider the uniqueness of Jesus. Jesus is the only one who came from God and went back to God (Jn 3:13). Jesus is the only one who is in very nature both fully God and fully man (Php 2:6-7). Jesus is the only one who died for our sins as a perfect sacrifice (Heb 10:14). Jesus is the only one who defeated the power of death through his resurrection (Ac 2:24; Ro 1:4). Jesus is the only one who has authority to give eternal life to those who believe in him and to judge those who reject him (Jn 5:21-22). Jesus is the only one who ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, and intercedes for us as our Great High Priest (Heb 7:25). Jesus is the only one who can give the Holy Spirit to dwell in those who believe in him. Jesus alone is the new and living way through whom we can draw near to God (Heb 10:20-22). Only through Jesus can we approach God's throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (Heb 4:16).

(GRAPHIC) The way is related to the truth and the life. When we know the way, it leads us to the truth and gives us life. The truth and the life are important themes in John's gospel. The word "truth" appears 23 times, more than in any other book in the Bible. The word "life" appears 41 times, more than in any other book of the New Testament. In fact, Jesus himself is the truth and the life. His words are the truth that give us life (6:63). He said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (8:31b-32). "In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind" (1:4). Jesus said, "Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged

but has crossed over from death to life” (5:24). What could be more valuable than the truth and the life? We do not find these in the world, only in Jesus.

When Jesus said, (PIC) “I am the way,” it does not mean that he is simply a path to God. Instead, he is the ultimate destination. That is why he said, “If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him” (7). Knowing Jesus is the way of knowing the Father. We need not try to know the Father in another way. If we know Jesus, we know the Father simultaneously. This is most important for every person. As we begin a new semester, (PIC) many students who are thirsty for the truth will enter universities and are really seeking God in their hearts. Let’s pray that they may know Jesus, who is the way and the truth and the life.

Third, Jesus and the Father are one (8-14). As soon as Jesus said that knowing him was knowing the Father, Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us” (8). Philip did not accept Jesus’ word. Why? He had a concept of God that was majestic and glorious. He must have thought about how God revealed himself at (PIC) Mt. Sinai in an awesome display of power. The mountain shook, the atmosphere was filled with holy smoke, and there was thunder and lightning. Or he may have thought of the glorious visions of (PIC) Isaiah or Ezekiel. He wanted Jesus to show him that kind of revelation. But when he saw Jesus, (PIC) who was poor, wearing shabby clothes, and constantly dealing with rejection and suffering, Jesus did not look like God. Don’t we have the same tendency? We want to see Jesus’ glorious image in a supernatural way. Yet we really need to pay attention to what Jesus says.

Everyone has a deep desire to see God because we are made in God’s image. It is at the core of our identity. The question is how? Jesus said in verse 9, “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” This was a kind of rebuke. Actually, Jesus had revealed himself to his disciples in many ways: through his life together with them, his words, his actions, and especially his miracles. They saw God in Jesus. However, Philip spoke as though he had never seen God in Jesus. Like Philip, sometimes our spiritual eyes (PIC) are closed to God’s presence with us. God manifests himself in many ways: through nature, people, events, at a Bible conference,

and so on. Especially God speaks to us through his written words in the Bible. But we can be totally unaware of God's presence due to our spiritual dullness. One person has been showered by God's words and loved by God's servants in many ways. But he felt that God had abandoned him because his eyes were fixed on his idol. Only recently has he come to realize that God has been with him patiently and faithfully to purify him, out of his holy love. Let's pray that the Lord may give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that we may know him better (Eph 1:17). May the Lord open the eyes of our hearts so that we may see him and how he is working in us.

After rebuking Philip, Jesus planted the truth once again: "Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?" (10a) This idea is repeated (10b-11a). Simply speaking, Jesus is declaring that he is God incarnate. No one has ever seen God, but Jesus came into the world to make God known to us (1:18). Why is it so important to believe that Jesus is God? If Jesus is God, he is the object of praise, adoration and worship. He gives our lives absolute meaning and purpose, and is worthy of our full commitment. Yet, like Philip, many Christians are not fully satisfied by Jesus due to a lack of commitment. When we commit ourselves to Jesus, our souls are satisfied.

In verses 10-11, Jesus gives three proofs that support his claim to have union with the Father. First of all, his words. The words of famous human beings are often empty. But Jesus' words are full of understanding and wisdom. Jesus' words give us life. His words have power to transform us. Through his words our sins are forgiven and our weary souls are revived. It is because Jesus' words come from God. Secondly, it is on the basis of his person-his identity and character. Jesus is the sinless Son of God and the manifestation of perfect integrity. Even his enemies acknowledge this (Mt 22:16). Finally, it is on the basis of his works. From changing water to wine, to feeding the five thousand, to raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus had done works that only God could do.

In verses 12-14, Jesus gave great promises to those who believe in him. Despite the disciples' unbelief and lack of commitment, Jesus encouraged them to become great men of faith. In verse 12 Jesus said, "Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will

do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.” When we simply believe in Jesus we can do what Jesus did, and even greater things than Jesus--not in quality, but in quantity. Jesus’ works on earth were limited in time and space--he ministered for three years, mainly among the people of Israel. However, we have more than three years and can go all over the world. Jesus does not want us to be mediocre, but great men and women of faith who can do great work of God. Faith makes people great.

In verses 13-14 Jesus tells how we can do great things for God. He said, “And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.” This tells us the power of prayer. When we pray in Jesus’ name with faith, according to God’s will, God hears our prayers. The purpose of prayer is not just to get what we want. It is to bring glory to the Father through Jesus. Sometimes, even though we pray earnestly, God’s answer is not what we expected. Then it is easy for us to doubt God and lose heart. But we must acknowledge that God’s will is deeper and more mysterious than we can comprehend. We should trust him in any situation.

(PIC) We are living in an era of uncertainty. Everything in the world changes like shifting shadows. Many people wander without knowing the meaning and purpose of their lives, and they suffer from fear and anxiety. But Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life.” (PIC) When we trust in Jesus we can find the true way of life, and a living hope in the Father’s house. We can live dynamic lives and do great things for God. Let’s trust in Jesus.

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