

JESUS IS THE WAY AND THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

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.'"

APAKHABAR! That is a very common Indonesian greeting that means, how are you? For those of you who do not know me my name is Jonathan Reese. I serve Northeastern ministry as a 1 to 1 Bible teacher and prayer servant and fellowship leader. This is my first time delivering the message at the 11 am Sunday worship service, and I am very much moved by God's amazing grace!

John Newton was a slave owner and an enemy of the faith before he turned his life over to Christ. He later wrote the famous hymn, "Amazing Grace." In the hymn he wrote: "I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see." On his tombstone were written these words, "John Newton, Once an infidel, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Pardoned and appointed to preach the faith he had long laboured to destroy."

Today we will be looking at the sixth of the seven "I AM" declarations by Jesus. This "I AM" is spoken during the upper room dialogues with his disciples just before his arrest and trial. This is the last supper and the last night of private teaching that Jesus will spend with his disciples. In this passage, Jesus makes perhaps his most incredible and famous declaration of who he is. And his claim does not sit well with many people today. Everyone must decide whether to accept or reject Jesus' words. I pray that we may all take Jesus' words to heart, and trust in Him!

Part I. Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life (1-6)

In previous "I AM" declarations, Jesus talks to others. In this particular "I AM" declaration, Jesus talks only to his disciples. Jesus addresses them first in verse 1, which says, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me." Jesus knew that the disciples were troubled.

Why were the disciples troubled? Jesus told them that Judas Iscariot would betray him, and that Peter would deny him three times. These things bothered them. Moreover, they were upset the most because Jesus said he was about to leave them.

Jesus said, "You believe in God, believe also in me." The disciples had seen Jesus reveal his Messianic ability to turn water into wine. They had seen Jesus feed over five thousand people with 5 loaves and 2 fish. They had even seen Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead. These things brought joy to the disciples. They all put their security in him.

But when Jesus talked about leaving and going somewhere that they cannot follow, they utterly despaired. The disciples felt as if they were being abandoned by Jesus and were now without any direction. They felt their source of security was being taken away from them. The disciples were indeed troubled.

Are you troubled? I have been troubled since my mother-in-law's passing six weeks ago. I had a different idea about how things would go. Frankly; I had hoped to bring her here for her later years. I became full of doubt, anxiety, and fear. But Jesus addresses how we can overcome doubt, anxiety, and fear. "Do not let your hearts be troubled" is Jesus' imperative. Fear and doubt and anxiety can lead us away from Jesus. But when we trust fully in Jesus, we can overcome. Jesus said this to plant faith in the hearts of his disciples.

After comforting his disciples, Jesus gives them the reason why they can take real comfort in him. Verses 2-4 say, "Jesus says, 'My Father's house has many rooms. If that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.'"

Here, Jesus refers to God's Kingdom as His Father's House. These verses are actually detailing our ultimate hope! Jesus is talking about the place where there is no more pain, no more Covid, no more violence, no more rage, no more murder, no more suicide, no more tears, where God the Father is, and where Jesus is going. Jesus is talking about heaven.

In short, Jesus is urging them to have hope in God's Kingdom! Human beings can live without many things, but no one can live without hope. Hope is essential for our lives. Jesus' words are completely chocked full of hope of heavenly glory! Jesus is telling them that they have everlasting life, and an eternal inheritance in heaven, and that He will come back for them so that they can be where He is! This was the great hope that Jesus had for his disciples, that he would come back and bring them to God the Father in heaven.

Let's stop and meditate on the amazing love Jesus demonstrates here for his disciples. Jesus did not keep a record of all the times that Peter had spoken without thinking, or how much of a burden they had been to him throughout his 3 ½ year Messianic Ministry. Jesus still promised them that he was preparing a place for them in his Father's house.

Do you want to go to a place like the one that Jesus is describing? Jesus is preparing a place for all who follow Jesus. Jesus also told his disciples in verse 4, "You know the way to the place where I am going."

What was the disciples' response? Look at verse 5. "Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?'" Perhaps all the disciples wanted to ask this question, but Thomas spoke first.

When Jesus talked about His Father's house and preparing a room for them, it was vague and confusing to Thomas. Maybe we all understand Thomas a little too well. While Jesus tries to plant hope in the Father's house, our minds are fixed on other things; so Jesus' words don't make sense to us. Let's ask the Holy Spirit's help to enlighten us with the meaning of Jesus' words, so we may have heavenly hope in our hearts.

Jesus then revealed a profound truth about himself in verse 6, "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

Jesus said, "I am the way." There was a time when mankind knew the way. It was in the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve had a right love relationship with God. But they listened to Satan, disobeyed God, and lost the way. Collectively, we all lost the way to God because of sin.

But Jesus came to provide the way back to God. Jesus gave sight to a blind man who accepted Jesus as the Messiah and he became a child of God. (John 9, John 1:12, 13) Jesus helped a sinful Samaritan woman find streams of living water when she accepted Jesus as the Messiah, and she could live a new life in God the Father through Jesus. (John 4) Jesus became the way back to God through his death, when he said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34a) Through Jesus, all human beings, no matter what they have done, where they have been, or how far they have fallen, can come to God! Jesus is indeed the way!

Though God provided Jesus as the way, mankind has looked for other ways besides Jesus. What are some of those ways? Many people choose to live according to their feelings, and make their way as they go along. Many people say, "If it feels good, do it," or "It must be ok, because everybody does it." Others default to whatever works to be their "way." On NEIU campus, there has been reports of excessive partying that includes drug and alcohol consumption in the dorms. This is a clear indication that many students do not know the way, and are struggling. Praise Jesus, who can save all wandering, lost people, and help them find the way back to God!

Jesus also said, "No one comes to the Father except through me." Jesus' words sound too exclusive for many people today. We are in a time of relativism, where many people have that bumper sticker that says "coexist." While it is important to be tolerant of one another's views, tolerance does not change the heavenly reality of who Jesus is. Why is Jesus the ONLY way? Jesus is the only way because Jesus is God. ONLY Jesus said that he came from God, and that he was going back to God, and he even told his disciples that he was preparing a place for them in His Father's house; heaven! Jesus is the ONLY way because ONLY Jesus' blood became the atonement for our sins. Jesus is the ONLY way because ONLY Jesus rose again from the dead. Jesus is the ONLY way because ONLY Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life. Jesus is INDEED the ONLY way to the Father!

Let's read verse 6, our key verse, together. Please. "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" How is Jesus the truth? I might be repeating myself here, but because of sin we are all born at a deficit that we cannot fix by ourselves. We are naturally susceptible to believe lies that are woven into the decaying world that we live in. For example, many people believe that all they have to do to get to heaven is to be a good person, find a career, and everything will be ok; that somehow everything will work out fine. But the reality of sin makes this impossible without knowing the truth. Jesus said in regard to truth, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'"(John 8:31-32)

The "truth" is not easy, because it cost Jesus everything. The "truth" doesn't come naturally, because of the power of sin. Jesus' words, Jesus' teachings and Jesus' life are the truth! How can we know that Jesus is the truth? By listening to his words. The words Jesus gives us reveal truth and life.

There was a young boy who liked to draw, and he was quite good at it. But one day at school, classmates began to jeer and mock his drawings, and he began to believe what they said, and he thought he was not artistic. But when he met Jesus, he

was freed from the lie that had caught him! His artistic ability was released once again and he drew many beautiful pictures for the glory of God! People who accept Jesus are freed from the Devil's lies! Truth is constant, universal, and unchanging. Jesus is the truth because of the words he spoke to us. It might sound harsh to some, but ONLY JESUS can be the WAY and the TRUTH!

Jesus also said that he is the "life." Since the beginning of time, every person had to face the power of death, and lost the battle. Death is the undefeated champion for every opponent, except for Jesus Christ. Jesus overcame the power of death when he rose from the dead. Jesus' resurrection from the dead opened the way to God for all who come to him.

Human beings are kept out of heaven because of the power of sin, but Jesus came to bring us eternal life. John 5:24 says, "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." When we come to Jesus, no matter the things we have done, no matter what pain we have caused, we are brought into a new life! And an interesting thing happens in the lives of people who turn to Jesus and receive times of refreshing... their hearts and souls come alive! They have passion in what they are doing, they face every day with a sense of victory, they want to do something for Jesus!!

I have seen many who are growing like oak trees spiritually while they participate in campus ministry at Northeastern, UIC, Loyola, Oakton, and others as well! Several people were baptized in our church during the COVID pandemic. Why and how did this happen? John 1:4 says, "In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind." Jesus became their source of life, their source of joy, because Jesus is the way and the truth and the life! May God continue his mighty work of spiritual revival in all Chicago area campuses, that many troubled and lost college students may come to know Jesus, the way the truth and the life! May God restore America into a nation that clings to Jesus as the way and the truth and the life. AMEN!

Part II. Jesus is one with the Father God (7-14)

In verse 7, Jesus says, "If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." There is a certain emphasis in verses 7-11, as Jesus says virtually the same thing 6 times. Jesus references his closeness to the Father again and again, in order to bring the disciples into the full effect, real time blessed reality that Jesus is indeed one with God the Father.

Because of God's image in all human beings from birth, everyone wants to know God, even people you would not expect would like to know God. Speaking plainly, the problem is that sin gets in the way and obscures the truth and brings to all of us the sting of death. In sin, there is condemnation, shame, guilt, pain, regret, and so on. But in Jesus, there is peace, joy, forgiveness, a new life waiting for us, and most importantly; there is fellowship with God the Father in Jesus Christ.

When we have this peace radiating within our souls, we can bring the amazing truth of the Gospel to everyone we know. We can give our life testimony to people, and tell them what we were once like before we met Jesus. We can go to our local campuses or to our friends or neighbors or co-workers with the Gospel, and begin 1 to 1 Bible study with those who are thirsty to know God the Father, and we can bring them to Jesus!

This all happens, but that is not all! Jesus will not send us out without help from above. Verses 13 and 14 say, "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." When we are in fellowship with God the Father through His one and only Son Jesus Christ, our prayers will be heard.

When we pray to have a spiritual revival and fight against the fear, uncertainty and anxiety that Covid has brought to this world, Jesus empowers us to overcome our busy schedules, and teach the Bible 1 to 1 and in small groups to spiritually hungry people. When we pray for God to raise 120 shepherds, Bible teachers, spiritual leaders, and future missionary candidates for all nations, we can start to see this prayer topic being lived out! God is surely listening to our prayers and doing his mighty work!

I came to Bible study in January of 1987. When I first came, I made some progress and was considered a young and up-and-coming spiritual leader candidate. But I did not really and truly come to Jesus and find my way back to the Father. Mostly, I showed off and advertised myself whenever possible.

Because I didn't solve my life problem in Jesus, the whispers of the world and human thinking came in. I was already an alcoholic when I left the ministry in 1995 to try to find my own way, but I was a liar. I could have listened to any of the countless servants of God who counseled me to come humbly to Jesus, so that I could be a blessing. But I remained a burden and became an enemy of God!

My sinful desire and lust led me to the lowest place that anyone can imagine. But somehow, God preserved my life and gave me parents that had an intervention on

me to get me to go to rehab. I would not stop drinking or smoking marijuana. I nearly died 3 times in 18 months due to alcohol poisoning, being rushed to the ER each time. But Jesus caught hold of me, and helped me to repent at the 2010 Summer Bible Conference through Mark 1:15, "The time has come,' he said. 'The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!'"

Little by little, God enabled me to come out of the terrible place that my sins had led me to, and brought me into a heart-to-heart relationship with Jesus through God the Father! I became a member of the layman messenger team, and I served the word of God at a nearby nursing home and NEIU, and presided over the 6pm sws.

Not only that, but God gave me a shepherd heart for Indonesia, a nation that does not know the way to Jesus because of the deceptions of Islam. When I prayed to go there as a missionary, God made my dreams come true as I went there FIRST as a missionary and witness of the life-changing power of Jesus, the way, the truth and the life. And SECOND, to marry the most wonderful, gracious, loving, beautiful, and patient woman in the entire world...Frida!

God has enabled me to get to 12 years of sobriety, and I serve the word of God to one Bible student named Joshua each and every week at NEIU. Recently, I lost a very good part-time job at a fancy restaurant without warning. But God gave me the firm conviction that if I had to choose between that job and teaching the Bible to one Northeastern student, I would choose to teach the word of God to one Northeastern student and leave that job. A few days later I met Joshua at Northeastern who started a conversation with me, while I was having a phone Bible study with someone else! The life I am living now, is...a MIRACLE! Who could imagine! Praise Jesus, who became my way out of sin, the way out of the lies and deceptions of Satan, and the way into a new life of faith in fellowship with God the Father!

Are you struggling with your life direction? We are living in uncertain times, as the world seems to bring only sorrow and pain. Many people are in the darkness, with no purpose of life, suffering so much. To all of Gods' creation Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Don't overthink it, please meditate on John 14:6 and open your heart! Jesus is indeed the way and the truth and the life! AMEN!