

THE ONLY WAY

John 14:1-14 Text vs. 6-7 *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."*

Last Sunday we learned what Jesus meant when He said, *"I am the door."* He meant it was through Him, and Him alone, that you gain access to God. It's a one-way street. And in our lesson today Jesus is saying it again. *"No one comes to the Father, except through me."* He said this when He was together with His disciples having His Last Supper in an upper room with them. He had tried to prepare His disciples for what was just ahead for Him. They believed everything He had taught them. They had witnessed His many miracles. They had heard Him preach. Yet, some did not fully understand what He was talking about when He had said, *"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 that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going."* (John 14:2-4)

His talk of leaving them and going back to heaven to live with his Father troubled them. It left them with a sense of emptiness. So, Jesus was making it clear to them what the *way* to heaven meant. In Greek, the word *"way"* means *"road or path."* So, what was the road or pathway to heaven? Thomas asked Him, *"Lord, how can we know the way?"* wanting to know so he could follow Jesus there. *Tell me, where's that road?* And Jesus made it clear, leaving no room for doubt when He said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, but by Me."*

To the Jewish mind, Messiah was to come to overthrow the oppression of Rome and sit on the throne of David as King and ruler over the Jews. But this was the *first* time Jesus had come to Earth. It wasn't the time yet for Him to rule upon the Earth. That will happen when He comes again to conquer the kingdoms and rulers of this world. His mission then was to establish a spiritual kingdom!

Meanwhile, many have tried to find their way to God by themselves. They read the *street signs* of life but have no idea which way to turn. So, they decide to just go straight through life hoping they will stumble upon God. Some have even asked for directions. But it was from the wrong person who steered them in the wrong direction. Remember last week when Jesus warned there had been imposters who had come *before* His time? And there would be those who would come after His time. They would try to get His sheep to follow *them*, instead of *Him*!

Satan has always used false prophets to try and persuade folks *their* ministry was equal to, or greater than Jesus.' But without a doubt, those "phonies" lead unsuspecting followers in the wrong direction. Away from God. Down the path to personal and spiritual destruction and left confused. Some have even stopped looking for *"the way"* altogether. However, Christians can rejoice they have found *the way* to heaven. It's Jesus who has been there all along showing them *"the way."* When Jesus is your guide, you know exactly how to get from here to there. When you follow Jesus, there's no chance of your getting lost.

Two children rode a school bus every day to school. They lived in a neighborhood next to a big church and their mother worried that one day something might go wrong. So, she wrote down their home address and directions on how to get home. She gave each child one of the instructions saying, *"If you get lost, show this to some adult."* Several weeks later it happened! The children got off the school bus at the wrong stop, in the wrong neighborhood and realized they didn't have that slip of paper with their address and directions how to get home. The little boy began to cry. But his little sister got a sudden burst of inspiration. She smiled, grabbed her little brother by the hand and began walking through the city streets turning corners with care. Always looking! Finally, they made it home. Their mother was nearly out of her mind when she saw them coming. *"How did you find your way home?"* The little girl said, *"Since we live next door to this big church with that great big cross on the top, I just walked toward the cross. We made it home!"*

See, when you're lost in this world, keep your eyes on the cross! When trouble comes your way, keep your eyes on the cross! When you don't know which way to turn, keep your eyes on the cross! For some, 2023 has been a year of turmoil. People are worried about the economy, even though they know God is in control. And this year has been a year of defeat for some. A few wicked people who don't value life or morality have been elected to high offices. For some, it's been a year of pain. Jobs have been lost. A loved one passed away. Someone close has turned on you. Families are in trouble. Sickness has ravaged some lives. Sometimes there doesn't appear to be a satisfactory answer to anything! And it's *"not knowing"* what lies ahead that brings a kind of terror. People need to know what's happening. But what *is* going to happen next? And there it is, right in verse 27. Jesus said it! *"Let not your heart be troubled. Neither let it be afraid!"* He was trying to make clear that which brings confidence and reduces fear will bring peace. And that's the way to heaven. *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father, but by Me."*

On a final examination in a course on philosophy at U.C.L.A. a few students had left blank the answer to one question: *"What is courage?"* Some wrote frantically, giving all kinds of examples, expounding on theories. But one student

turned in the essay with just two words to describe what courage was. "THIS IS" That student received an A! So, what is courage? With all due respect to that student from UCLA, courage is far more than a clever response on a college exam. That student "*took a chance*" hoping a cute answer would get the teacher's attention and approval, which it did! But courage goes far deeper than just taking a chance or hoping to get by on witty statements and imaginative behavior.

The Marine Corps' motto is *Semper Fidelis*. Its short form is "*Semper Fi*" used to motivate and express that which unites past and present Marines. "*Semper Fi*" speaks volumes. The Marine Corps identifies itself through Honor, Courage, and Commitment. Those three words describe higher standards of personal conduct in order for a Marine to have devotion to professionalism and discipline. Courage is the mental, moral, and physical strength ingrained into every Marine. It carries them through the challenges of combat. It helps overcome fear. Saturday Magazine had a quote once that said: "*Courage does not consist in feeling moral when conquering fear! The hero sees the lions on either side, and goes straight on, because therein lies his duty.*"

Plutarch, a major Greek philosopher and priest at the ancient Temple of Apollo in the sacred district of Delphi was consulted about important decisions throughout the ancient world. Plutarch said, "*Courage consists not in risking without fear, but being firmly minded in a just cause.*"

And one poet wrote, "*Courage is an independent spark from heaven's bright throne, by which the soul stands raised, triumphant, high, alone.*" In other words, *courage is the result of faith*. Faith in a just cause. Faith in the Will of God.

And Jesus spoke about His death as a *just cause*. He said it in such a way that you can share it with others. He spoke plainly about His sufferings that were to come. So, don't complicate how Jesus died for sinners. It's simple. Yet, it's wonderful, because Jesus took your sins upon Himself and was punished for them so you can be forgiven by God. You need to share that Good News plainly, without complicated words. Jesus spoke about His suffering and said, He must suffer. There was no other way your salvation could be accomplished. And that should remind you that the need for salvation is urgent! No one can be saved without the forgiveness of God. And there's no other way to heaven than through Jesus. Thomas asked, "*Lord, how can we know the way?*" Jesus told him, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, but by Me.*"

That's it. Plain and simple. Belief in Jesus as your Lord and Savior is the only way you're going to get to heaven! Have you believed that? If you haven't, believe it today! Jesus your only way to heaven! AMEN