

# I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life

## John 14:1-6

### INTRODUCTION

Three summers ago, my wife Karen and I had planned to take a two-week river cruise down the Rhine River in celebration of our 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. That, of course, was derailed – or should I say “sunk” – by the pandemic. But ever since then we have been on the mailing list for Viking River Cruises.

As I was beginning preparations for this message, the latest issue of their voyages arrived in our mailbox. The options are many and the descriptions are enticing:

- Paris to the Swiss Alps
- Holland and Belgium
- Vienna and Bucharest

Some day we will get there. I don't know when exactly ... but someday.

There is another trip I have planned. I don't know when I am taking that one either. But someday. In fact, some day we will all take this same trip.

- We don't read about that trip in a Viking catalogue.
- No, we read about it in John 14.

*(Jesus speaking)* 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. (John 14:3)

During this Lenten season as we seek to “behold” the Lamb of God:

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. (John 1:29)

We are partially doing so by beholding Him in the words of His seven I AM statements recorded in John's Gospel. Last week we focused on

I AM the Good Shepherd.

Today our focus is on:

I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)

With those words before us, let me tell you about the trip we all will take one day.

### #1: THERE IS A SPECIFIC ROUTE TO TRAVEL: THE WAY

If you had been born in a Jewish home in the time of Jesus, you would – from the moment of your birth – heard your parents and religious leaders talking to you about “THE WAY.” It referred to how you should live if you wanted to please God.

The Scriptures are filled with references to "THE WAY":

Walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days ... (Deuteronomy 5:33)

Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you saying ""This is the way; walk in it." (Isaiah 30:21)

Teach me your way, O Lord. (Psalm 27:11)

Throughout your life as a Jew you would have always understood "THE WAY" to mean obedience to a set of rules or commandments. Thou shalt and Thou shalt not.

But Jesus changed that with this statement in John 14:6. He tells that "THE WAY" is actually a person. Not a rule. A person. I AM the way.

I was in Home Depot last week. While I was there – I must confess – I violated the "man code" by asking for help in finding a particular item. The person in the orange vest started to give me directions, then paused and said, "Just follow me. I will take you there."

- She didn't tell me the way.
- She was the way. All I had to do was follow her.
- I love how God gives me sermon illustrations from time to time!

I know a dozen different ways to get to my in-laws' house in Van Buren, IN. But there is only one way to get to heaven. That is following Jesus. He is the way.

- I don't always know what I will encounter along the way as I follow Him.
- I don't what experiences I will have, or what ones I will avoid.
- I don't even know how long it will take. It might take years. It may be over soon.
- But I do know the only way I will arrive it by following Him.

It is a common lie today that "many roads lead to heaven." Many roads will lead you to Van Buren, but there is only one way to heaven. Jesus makes that clear:

I AM the way and the truth and the life. **No one comes to the Father except through me.** (John 14:6)

If I want to get there, there is a specific route I must travel.

## #2: THERE IS A CERTAIN REALITY I MUST TRUST

I AM the way and the truth ... (John 14:6)

After being convinced that Jesus is THE WAY, you next need to learn to fully trust Him. That is reflected in the "TRUTH" part of this I AM statement of Jesus.

Interestingly from a Biblical perspective TRUTH is considered a matter of character. It is not a concept or a thing, but a character trait.

One writer noted:

Our world is bound up in contradictions, distortions and misunderstandings, both about God and the purpose of life. You look at a person and you don't know if they are genuine or pretending. You aren't sure if the odometer reading on that used car is accurate or rolled back. Those musicians may have lip-synched that concert you attended last night. And those politicians? Don't get me started.

There is an important thing about truth. A man's character does not really affect his teaching about geometry or astronomy or Latin verbs. But if a man proposes to teach moral truth, his character makes all the difference in the world.

An adulterer who teaches the necessity of purity, a greedy person who teaches the value of generosity, a domineering person who teaches the beauty of humility, is bound to be ineffective. Moral truth cannot be conveyed solely in words; it must also be conveyed in example.

And that is precisely where the greatest human teacher must fall down. No teacher has ever embodied the truth he taught ... except Jesus. Many people can say "I have told you the truth" but only Jesus can say "I AM the truth."  
(William Barclay)

Our grandson Gabriel will spin an elaborate story, laughing the whole time. You know he is making it up as he goes. But then he will ask "Do you believe me?" I always answer "I believe every word you ever say." To which he will respond, "No you don't!" It is a game we play.

But in real life, this happens. You hear the words and they want you to believe them, but you know better. We have been lied to enough that we are skeptical of everyone. But Jesus is THE TRUTH. And as we follow Him, we begin to trust Him more.

### **#3: THERE IS A REASON TO TRY**

I AM the way and the truth and the life. (John 14:6)

Life is much more than merely existing. When Jesus talked about the life He came to offer, He called "abundant."

Last week when I preached about I AM the Good Shepherd, I started the reading of the text in verse 11. If I had started in verse 10, you would have heard these words of Jesus:

The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. (John 10:10)

Some texts you have heard call that the "abundant life." Rich and satisfying. Far more than merely existing.

In the final analysis, every person is seeking a life that has meaning ... that is rich and satisfying. I am convinced that this is the underlying cause for nearly every social problem we have in our world. Drugs, alcohol, sex, violence, rage, internet addictions ... all of it stems from a search for something that will either add meaning to life or deaden the pain of having no meaning. Even if it is only temporary, it is better than nothing at all.

But it happens in sequence. Jesus said way, truth and life in that order because that is the way it happens.

- You can't find a rich and satisfying life without the way and the truth.

All throughout the Scriptures God teaches His people that lives that are committed to Him have purpose and meaning.

I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11)

Our friends in Campus Crusade for Christ (now known as CRU) have been trained to tell us:

God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.

As you follow Jesus (the way) and learn to trust Him complete (the truth) you will find your life develops a new meaning. You will see how God's love works through others to you, and then how that same love flows through you to other people. You will learn that God has created you for a special purpose, and you will find that purpose to be more meaningful than you could ever have imagined.

## **APPLICATION**

He is the way, the truth and the life.

St. Thomas Aquinas was a 13th-century Italian philosopher and theologian who significantly shaped Christian doctrine. Writing on this I AM statement, he said:

Follow thou me. I am the way and the truth and the life. Without the way, there is no going. Without the truth there is no knowing. Without the life there is no living. I am the way which thou must follow, the truth which thou must believe, the life for which thou must hope. I am the inviolable way, the infallible truth, the never-ending life. I am the straightest way, the sovereign truth, life true, life blessed, life

uncreated. If thou remain in my way thou shalt know the truth, and the truth shall make you free, and thou shalt lay hold on eternal life.

Behold Him. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. (John 1:29)

Amen.