

## Sermon for 24.02.07

### Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth and the life"

- Jesus is the way to the Father (primary statement – the truth and the life are secondary, supportive statements). Thomas has asked about the way to the Father.
- Jesus is the Truth – Brought the truth of God into the world – proclaimed and embodied it
- Jesus is the life – Through him we have life. Bread of life, resurrection and the life, John 1:4 – in him was life, and that life was the light of men

Thomas says they don't know where Jesus is going so how can they know the way.

Jesus says "I am the way to the Father"

The ONLY way – "No one comes to the Father except through me."

People may try to find their own way – tower of Babel

Jesus was now very near to his death. Speaking to the disciples in the room, Jesus was leaving the disciples to 'prepare a place' – this is not necessarily a physical place but is probably more to do with the fact that what Jesus was about to do was to make it possible for us to be in communion with God. It is Jesus' death (going to the Father) and resurrection that make it possible for us to have the relationship with God that God desires us to have.

Without this it is not possible for anyone to have communion with God since no-one is worthy. But if we go through Jesus, it is possible to have communion with God – but ONLY through Jesus.

There is no access to God independent of Jesus. Jesus is the link between God and man.

One of the most popular gadgets on sale today is the satellite navigation system. Maybe it's because of our ever increasing network of roads, or perhaps it's because we travel more than we used to. Perhaps it's to avoid traffic congestion or maybe it's just because many of us often find ourselves getting lost. That was how satellite navigation was originally marketed and still is. It may help with many things such as avoiding traffic jams and even warning you about speed cameras, but it's primary function still remains to help you find the way to your destination, to tell you which way to go.

I don't currently have a 'sat nav' system, which is a shame because I have the worst sense of direction in the world. I can get lost anywhere. The comedian Jimmy Carr was once on Top Gear and he said "you know when you're really lost when you see a sign saying 'town centre' and you think to yourself 'but which town?'"

I guess we've all been lost at some time in our lives. If you're a woman then you might ask someone for directions but probably not if you're a man. Men don't tend to ask for directions, we just plough on hoping that we might see something we recognise.

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There is some argument over the placing of this passage. Some argue that John 13:31 - 14 should actually appear after chapters 15 and 16 but in any case, it is now getting close to the time when Jesus would be crucified. Jesus had already predicted Judas's betrayal of him and at the end of chapter 13 Jesus tells them that he will only be with them a little longer (v33). Chapter 13 verses 18-38 make it clear that Jesus knew that the time of the cross was drawing near. It also makes it clear that Jesus knew exactly what was going to happen to him.

Put yourself in the disciples' shoes for a minute. These bunch of guys who have worked with Jesus for nearly three years now, shared good times, have amazing stories to tell and then this. Jesus tells them that Judas will betray him, Peter will deny that he knows him, and Jesus is going to leave them. This conversation must have been quite unnerving.

Now in chapter 14 Jesus says to them **"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me."** Jesus seems to know that the disciples are feeling a little apprehensive about the future. So he tries to explain to them that these things are for a reason. **"Trust in God; trust also in me"**.

Jesus tells the disciples he is going to his Father's house to prepare a place for them. We will come back to that shortly but then in verse 4 he says to them, "You know the way to the place where I am going".

I really like the next bit of this passage. Thomas's response to this is a completely normal reaction. "Lord, we don't know where you're going, so how can we know the way?" It's like Thomas is saying "we don't know where your Father's house is. Had you have said "I'm going to my Father's house which is next to the fish mongers" then of course we would know the way, but we don't know where your Father's house is".

Thomas and probably the other disciples judging by Phillip's comments later and also those of Peter in the previous chapter, had not really understood what Jesus meant. They wanted to follow Jesus but they didn't understand where he was going, what it meant.

We should think of this not so much in terms of Jesus going to get the bedrooms ready in heaven but rather Jesus is talking about his death and resurrection. Jesus was about to make it possible for us to be in communion with God. It is Jesus death and resurrection that make it possible for us to have the relationship with God that God desires us to have. Without this it is not possible for anyone to have communion with God since no-one is worthy.

Of course, people try all sorts of ways to get to God without Jesus. There are many theories about God and heaven and what happens after you die. But Jesus came to bring the truth into the world. Often we see Jesus correcting people's wrong interpretations of the scriptures or their warped ideas of who God is. Jesus brought clarity and understanding by bringing the truth about God into the world. He proclaimed the truth about God wherever he went. That little phrase that is used in the A.V. "verily verily I say unto you...". In the NIV it is translated as "I tell you the truth...". My Greek tutor likes to translate it as "I do solemnly declare...". Even in those days, there were plenty of wrong ideas floating around about who God was and what he was like and what the kingdom of heaven was. Jesus brought the truth about these things.

Jesus said "I am the way". If we go through Jesus, it is possible to have communion with God – but ONLY through Jesus. (v6 "no-one comes to the Father except through me.")

It is not possible to enter communion with God until we go through Jesus. We stand guilty before God because of the things we do wrong on a daily basis. None of us are clean enough to stand in the

presence of God. We may think that we are better than someone else, we may see stories of horrific crimes and we have the audacity to think that we are better. The truth is that we have also fallen short of the standard.

I remember Ruth and I once went to play 'pitch and putt' when we were on holiday. The first few swings I had at the ball completely missed. The club failed to make a connection with the ball at all. Now it really didn't make any difference if I missed the ball by a couple of centimetres or if I missed it by a mile. The outcome would have still been the same, the ball would still not have moved. The same is true of our sin. Whether we miss God's standard by a little bit or by a mile, we have still missed and the outcome is the same, death.

On the cross, Jesus took our sins on his shoulders and took the punishment for us. We can therefore have a relationship with God, the barriers have been removed.

Paul says to the Ephesians:

<sup>12</sup> In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. <sup>13</sup> But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.

(Ephesians 2:12-13)

Through Jesus we have life. John mentions this many times in his account of the gospel. John 1:4 "In him was life, and that life was the light of men". John 3:16 "whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life". John 6:35 "Jesus declared "I am the bread of life"". John 11:25 "I am the resurrection and the life"

We can only have this life, this relationship with God if our sins are dealt with. We need to accept the sacrifice of Jesus as a sacrifice for us.

There is no access to God independent of Jesus. Jesus is the link between God and us.

As we have looked at the 'I Am' sayings, many of them lead to this point.

When I was younger, living in the West Midlands and travelling everywhere by bus, there was a series of adverts on the buses to promote themselves. They featured various silly ways to travel and the company claimed there was only one sensible way, which of course was West Midlands Travel (the buses).

There are all kinds of silly ways that people might try to get closer to God, but Jesus is the only real way to a relationship with God. Any attempt to get there another way is futile.