

Sayings of Jesus 3 – I am the Way, Truth and Life

Reading: John 14:6 “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me”.¹

Introduction:

This lesson is a continuation of the series of lessons that are looking at various “sayings” of Jesus. The aim is to determine what they mean for us as Christians in practical terms. This week’s lesson comes from **John 14:6**.

Just to put this verse into context, the setting is the period of time Jesus spent with the disciples after the Passover meal (**John 13:2**), and before they all went out to the Garden of Gethsemane (**John 18:1**). He had just told the disciples that He was about to go away to prepare a place for them, and that He would come back later to receive them. He also said that they knew where He was going, and also the way to get there (**John 14:2-3**). But Thomas was confused, and asked Him for some clarification. Jesus then replied with the words spoken in verse 6.

In this lesson, we will examine what Jesus’ response to Thomas means for both mankind in general, and for us as His followers.

LESSON

1) Sin separates man from God, but there is a way he can come back to God

Jesus’ words in **John 14:6** imply at least three things;

- sinful man is separated (or away) from God,
- sinful man needs to come back to God, and,
- there is a defined way for sinful man to come back to God.

Sin is described in scripture as being “... *a transgression* (or breaking of) *the law* ...” (**I John 3:4**). Sin is not just a case of doing something that we shouldn’t do, it is also a case of when we don’t do something that we should do (**James 4:17**).

At some point in our life, we separated ourselves from God because of our own sins (**Isaiah 59:1-2**). No one forced us to sin. We did so, and continue to do so, when we submit to our own desires and temptations (**James 1:13-15**). Because of our sins, we became, as Paul says, “... *children of wrath* ...” (**Ephesians 2:1-3**).

The consequence of sin is “death” – separation from God (**Romans 6:23**); condemnation (implied in **Romans 8:1**); being subject to God’s indignation and wrath (**Romans 2:8**). On judgement day, those who remain in this sinful state will suffer eternal punishment in the “... *everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels* ...” (**Matthew 25:41, 46**).

But God doesn’t want anyone to have to suffer this fate (**2 Peter 3:9**), and so He has made it possible for sinful man to be reconciled back to Him (**Romans 5:10**). And the way by which sinful man can have that reconciliation is what Jesus said in **John 14:6**.

¹ All Biblical quotes are from the New King James Version Bible (NKJV).

Sayings of Jesus 3 – I am the Way, Truth and Life

2) Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life

During His ministry, Jesus made various “*I am*” claims that are recorded in the gospel of **John**². But in this verse, He says that He is three specific things – the way, the truth, and the life. We will briefly look at each of these three terms.

a) Jesus is the Way

In every-day terms, a “way” is a path, a direction, a track, or a road. It is a route that takes you from one place to another. In the context of this lesson, it is the way that we go from living a life of sin and worldliness that alienates us from God (**Colossians 1:21**), to living a life that is righteous, pleasing to our heavenly Father (**Colossians 1:10**). And that way is Jesus – the “... *living way*” (**Hebrews 10:20**).

- Note that Jesus did not say “*I am a way*”, but “... *the way* ..” (emphasis mine – SK). This means that there are not a variety of ways to follow – there is just one, and only one.

Jesus shows us the way to live righteously – He is our example in both conduct and attitudes (**Philippians 2:5; 1 Peter 2:21**). Therefore, in order for us to follow His way, we need to study His life from the gospels – how He inter-acted with people; how He spoke to them; how He responded to their needs; even how He responded to those who opposed Him and plotted against Him. But also, we need see how He was obedient to God the Father in all things (**John 8:29**), putting His own desires aside in order to do what the Father wanted (**Luke 22:42; John 9:4**). And then, after we have seen how Jesus lived, we are to do likewise (**1 Corinthians 11:1**), following His example, and doing what He has commanded us to do (**Matthew 28:20**).

There will, of course, be times when following His “way” will have its difficulties. Those who choose to live righteously can expect to face persecution (**2 Timothy 3:12**). There will be times when we will have to put aside our own wants and desires in order to do His will (**Matthew 10:39**). Following Him means taking up our own cross – being ready to suffer if need be for His cause (**Matthew 10:38**). But through all the hardships, God will be with us (**Hebrews 13:5**) – He knows who are His (**2 Timothy 2:19**), and He is able to preserve us for His heavenly kingdom (**2 Timothy 4:18**).

Therefore, follow Jesus - He is the way, the one and only way.

b) Jesus is the Truth

Truth is defined in Wikipedia³ as meaning “*in accord with fact and reality*”. In other words, truth represents that which is real, the way things really are.

When it comes to matters of religion, morals and ethics, the world tries to tell us that there is no absolute truth. The world wants the “freedom” to direct its own steps⁴ – it doesn’t want to have to abide by any absolute divine standard (**John 3:19-20**). Therefore, it exchanges “... *the truth of God for the lie*” (**Romans 1:25**).

² For example, **John 6:35** – “*the bread of life*”; **8:12** – “*the light of the world*”; **10:9** – “*the door*”; **10:11** – “*the good shepherd*”; **11:25** – “*the resurrection*”; **15:1** – “*the true vine*”.

³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truth> as at 19.03.2014.

⁴ However, **Jeremiah 10:23** states that man cannot direct his own steps.

Sayings of Jesus 3 – I am the Way, Truth and Life

But the world is wrong. There is absolute truth – God’s Word is truth (**John 17:17**). And it is only through obedience to that truth that we can be set free from the burden of sin and death (**John 8:32**). Jesus Christ is the very embodiment of that truth. He is “*the Word*” that came in the flesh (**John 1:14**). His disciple, Peter, could see and understand this. When many other disciples had turned away from Jesus and no longer followed Him, Jesus asked His disciples if they were going to leave as well. But Peter said, “*Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life*” (**John 6:68**).

Jesus has the words that can lead us to eternal life – He has the truth. Therefore, if anyone wants to know the truth, then they need to turn to Him and learn from Him (**Matthew 11:29**), for He is the truth.

c) Jesus is the Life

In the beginning, Jesus was the creator of physical life (**Colossians 1:16**). He created the first man and woman (**Genesis 1:27**), from whom all people are descended. Therefore, we exist physically because of Him. And not only did He create us, He also showed us (during His earthly ministry) that He had the power and authority to bring people back to life who had already died – for example, a young man from Nain (**Luke 7:11-15**), Jairus’ daughter (**Luke 8:41-56**), and Lazarus (**John 11:1-44**).

Physical life is one thing, but spiritual life is another. All people, no matter whether they are good or evil, have a physical body and a soul (**Matthew 10:28**). But when it comes to spiritual (eternal) life, it is only those who obey the Lord who receive it – both in the here and now, and in the life to come (**John 10:10**). Those who live in worldliness and reject God are described as being dead, even though they live physically (**Ephesians 2:1b-3; 1 Timothy 5:6**). Once their life here is over, they face the reality of spending eternity in everlasting punishment (**Matthew 25:41; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9**).

But for those who repent and turn to the Lord, they receive the promise of eternal life (**John 5:24-25; Romans 6:22; 1 John 2:25**). He made it possible through His blood (**Hebrews 10:19-20**). But this eternal life comes only through Jesus (**John 11:25; 17:2-3**). In **1 John 5:12** we read;

“He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

Eternal life is only through Jesus. Therefore, those who wish to have eternal life need to surrender their own life and serve Him (**John 12:25-26**).

Jesus is indeed the way, the truth, and the life.

3) He is the only way to have access to the Father

Please note what Jesus says in the second half of our reference verse for this lesson (**John 14:6**). He says, “*No one comes to the Father except through Me*” (NKJV). This is a very exclusive statement, and we learn three fundamental facts from it;

- a) It is possible for us to have access to the Heavenly Father.
- b) That access (to the Father) is available through one person – Jesus.
- c) You cannot have access to the Father by trying to go through someone (or something) else.

Sayings of Jesus 3 – I am the Way, Truth and Life

So what does it mean “*to come to the Father*”? The Bible commentator Barnes says in his notes on this passage of scripture⁵;

“To come to the Father is to obtain his favour, to have access to his throne by prayer, and finally to enter his kingdom.”

In other words, it means coming to the Father to receive His grace and mercy; to be reconciled to Him; to be able to come to Him in prayer⁶; to be in His kingdom, the church. All these things are possible because of what Christ has done for us (**Ephesians 1:7-10; Colossians 1:20-22; Hebrews 10:19-22**). We cannot come to God on our own merits (**Ephesians 2:8-9**). We are reliant on the blood of Jesus to cleanse us and make us whole (**Romans 5:9**). No one else can take the sin and darkness from us. When Peter stood before the Jewish Sanhedrin to defend his preaching of the gospel, he said;

“..... for there is no other name under Heaven given among men by which we must be saved ...”. **Acts 4:12**

It is only Jesus who is the mediator between God and us (**1 Timothy 2:5**). It is only Jesus who has been the acceptable sacrifice for our sins (**John 1:29; Hebrews 10:12**). It is Jesus who is the author of our salvation (**Hebrews 5:9**), no one else can save us; no one (**1 Thessalonians 5:9; 2 Timothy 2:10**).

Therefore, if anyone wishes to be saved, if anyone wants to be right with God, then they need to obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and be faithful to Him until death (**Acts 2:37-38; 22:16; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 2:10b**). There is no other way to come to the Father.

Conclusion:

So in conclusion, what does this mean for us, and mankind in general?

Firstly, we need to look to Jesus and follow His example on the way we should live, the way that we should think; the way that we should act (**1 Peter 2:21**).

Secondly, we need to turn to His word for the truth. The world may try to convince us that there is no absolute truth, but there is – His Word (**John 17:17**) – and we need to follow it (**Matthew 28:20; 2 Timothy 1:13**).

Thirdly, if we want to have eternal life, then we need to surrender our own lives and put our life under His control (**Galatians 2:19-20**).

And finally, we need to reject all religions and teachings that differ from what has been presented in the Bible (**Galatians 1:8-9**). Some of these other religions and teachings may have some elements of truth to them, and they may have some benefits for our life here on earth. But at the end of the day, they do not address the issue of our sins (**Colossians 2:23**) and make us right with God.

There is only one gospel (**Romans 1:16**). There is only one faith (**Ephesians 4:5**). There is only “... *one hope of your calling* ...” (**Ephesians 4:4**), and that one hope is Jesus (**1 Timothy 1:1**), none other.

When we do these things mentioned above, when we turn to and follow Jesus, then we have access to the Father, and can enjoy all the spiritual blessings that are available to us (**Ephesians 1:3**).

⁵ <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/john/14.htm>

⁶ There is a New Testament example of where God has heard the prayers of someone who had not yet come into contact with the blood of Christ – e.g. Cornelius (**Acts 10:1-4**). But Cornelius still had to hear and obey the gospel in order to be saved (**Acts 10:24-48**).