

Jesus, the Way

John 14:1-18

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.’”

What is your question? Did you come to this conference with any question in your heart? Maybe you didn't think you were coming to this conference to ask questions. But in fact, one of the best ways to seek God is by asking questions. Many people have found God as a result of having a big question in their heart—a question that cried out for an answer. When we figure out what is the most important question to us, and then ask it to God, we can hear God's answer personally. So let me ask you again: what is your question?

The words Jesus speaks in this passage are answers the most important questions anyone can have. We are going to see what those questions are. You can think about how these questions are relevant to you. And let's see what difference Jesus' answer can make in our lives. I pray that Jesus will meet you today with a new answer for your question.

Let's look at verse 1. Here Jesus says, **“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me.”** Jesus knows that his disciples are troubled. The disciples were not *in* trouble; they were *troubled*. Being *in* trouble, as you know, means that you're about to face some consequences of doing something naughty. But being troubled means the problem is on the inside: anxiety, stress, conflict, fear. When you were a little kid, you got in trouble, but not many things really troubled you. But now you have reached the age where not only can you get in trouble; you've also begun to be troubled about things.

Why were Jesus' disciples troubled? In the second half of chapter 13, Jesus told his disciples plainly: **“My children, I will be with you only a little longer,”** and **“Where I am going, you cannot come.”** What could be more terrifying than to hear the words, **“Where I am going, you cannot come”**? Has someone you depended on ever left you, and gone somewhere you could not follow them? The disciples had been utterly dependent on Jesus as their teacher and shepherd. But now, Jesus seemed to be just dropping them and leaving. The disciples began to be overpowered by anxious thoughts. “What will happen to me? What about everything we hoped to gain by following Jesus? Is that all nothing now?”

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Jesus knew his disciples' struggle and was filled with compassion for them. So first, he simply said, **“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”** We might phrase this as, “It’s okay. Don’t worry. Everything will be fine.” Do you like to be told this? I think everybody does. Sometimes I forget that Jesus actually said things this comforting. Jesus really does love you and me and doesn’t want us to suffer under fear and doubt.

Jesus not only had compassion on his disciples; he knew the root cause of their anxiety, and he had the true remedy for it. In verse 1b he said to them: **“You believe in God, believe also in me.”** In Jesus’ medicine for a troubled heart, the first ingredient is faith in Almighty God. To the words, **“believe in God,”** Jesus added, **“believe also in me.”** Jesus made faith in God equal to a personal trust relationship with him.

Then Jesus gave his disciples a specific promise to heal their fears. Look at verse 2. **“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?”** I think for most people, the main cause of anxiety is a lack of assurance about the future. Do you agree? Now is a time in your life when there are so many unanswered questions about the future. Where will I go to college? Will I have friends that really accept me? Will I marry happily? Will I find a place where I belong?

Here, Jesus promises his disciples a perfectly secure future in his Father’s house. Of course, he is talking about heaven. You might think that you are too young to think about heaven. But the truth is that in our hearts, each of us longs for paradise—a place of peace and security. I know it’s difficult for some of you when your parents move around and you have to cope with sudden changes in environment and living conditions. Maybe the hardest part is not knowing if you really belong anywhere. So how wonderful it is that Jesus promised us a heaven that is like a family’s home with many rooms—not one big room with many bunk beds, but many rooms! It means this is a place where we will be perfectly accepted and loved for what we are, where we will belong forever. If we are in Jesus, we are already members of this household of love. And Jesus promised that after he is done preparing our place, he will come back personally to take us there.

Now, look at verse 4. **“You know the way to the place where I am going.”** The disciples felt like they were just getting booted out into the world totally unprepared. But Jesus didn’t think so; he even says that they already know how to arrive at their destination. To the disciples, this must have sounded unbelievable. **Thomas** said, **“Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know**

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the way?” Actually, I thought Jesus made it very clear where he was going; he was going to heaven. But Thomas’ question is a reflection of a genuine inner struggle that we have all shared: Despite all Jesus’ teaching, Thomas still feels like he doesn’t practically know the way to take in life.

Thomas asked: “How can I know the way?” Can you relate to this question? Where did I come from? Where am I going? How do I get there? How can I know the way?

Is this question as important to you as it is to me? Sadly, there are people who don’t really care to know the way. Plenty of people think it’s enough to live for pleasure, or for achievement, or to receive bits and pieces of love from people. But we need more than this, because we are human beings, made in the image of God. God made us with a soul! And our soul needs to find its way back to God. Though living for fun feels good for a while, our body wears out, and even our soul cannot bear it. Think about the self-destructive lives of so many young celebrities. They show what happens when we ignore God’s truth about what we really are—that we were made by God and we are made to find our way back to God. Life itself only “works” when we find and follow the true way.

So, how can I know the way? Jesus was ready for Thomas to ask this. Let’s read verse 6. **“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”** Was this the kind of answer Thomas was expecting? When we ask someone to tell us the way, we usually expect them to point us in some direction. But Jesus pointed at himself. Jesus’ statement **“I am the way”** means that “the way” is actually a person.

How can a person be the way? Jesus, the person, can be the way because he made the way to God for us. Because of our sins, we were cast out of paradise; we could not go back to the Father’s house. The way to God was closed and there was no way to open it. We were only lost in this fallen world and destined to die under God’s wrath. That’s the reality. But God so loved us that he sent his son Jesus to make our way back. When Jesus died on the cross, God received his sacrifice as full payment for all our sins. This forgiveness removes all God’s wrath against our sins, so that now we are fully accepted and can come into God’s presence as his own children. So when Jesus said, **“I am the way”**, it didn’t just mean he came to show us the way we should take; he was literally offering himself as the sacrifice that would bring anyone who believes in him back to God as God’s child.

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Jesus plainly said, “**No one comes to the Father except through me.**” I know that to many people, it sounds better to say there are many ways to God. But Jesus’ word doesn’t leave any room for us to say that. So the real question is, can we believe Jesus when he says that he is the only way to God? Yes we can. We can believe Jesus because, in all human history, there is only one person who came into the world and said, “I am the way,” and then died to make the way. Jesus becoming the way by his death and resurrection fulfilled all of the Old Testament scriptures where God promised his people a Savior. Only Jesus so loved you and me that he died for us to make our way back to God.

Jesus even went beyond merely answering Thomas’ question. After saying “**I am the way,**” he added, “**I am the truth,**” and “**I am the life.**” Jesus really wants us to know that he will be everything to us, including truth and life. We are all thirsty for truth. But when we didn’t have Jesus, because of the power of sin in us, we traded the truth for false promises from the world. And we are all hungry for life; we want to really live, not just survive. But without Jesus, no matter how hard we tried to “get a life,” the real joy of life always seemed just beyond our reach. It was our sin making us fall short of the glory of God’s life every time.

But the best news is that, when we have Jesus, we have the truth—not because of what we know, but because Jesus himself is the truth and he guides us into truth. When we have Jesus, we have abundant life, because Jesus, the Son of God, is the unstoppable, overflowing source of life. How do we get these things from Jesus? We have all these things when we have a personal relationship with Jesus. Jesus came into this world as a person so we could know him personally; this is how we have the way. If you will make Jesus your way, he will lead you into all truth and give you life.

When I was in high school, I thought my way in life was pretty clear, because I was an excellent student and seemed to have a bright future. I thought my way was to go to college, get a PhD, become a scientist, and then sit back and let everyone recognize my genius. It seemed like a good way. When I was accepted to Princeton University for grad school, it was like a dream come true; my way seemed even clearer. But strangely, after I moved to New Jersey and started at Princeton, my way became darkly clouded. My preparation was so inadequate compared to all the other graduate students, especially in math. Does anyone else find math difficult? I was paralyzed by my inferiority complex and I sinfully procrastinated for weeks and months at a time, failing to make any progress toward a PhD. When I saw my professor coming down the hall, I actually ran the other way and hid. My dreams were crumbling away, one wasted day at a

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time. I know some of you have already had similar kinds of failures and disappointments in your life, even while still in high school.

In my struggle, Jesus came to me and said, “Remember, I am your way.” Jesus knew that none of the attainments I hoped for on earth could truly fulfill me. Through studying the Bible, I became convinced that there is no achievement that can compare to knowing Jesus and becoming like Jesus. When I sought to learn from and follow Jesus, things began to change for me. I was fed and strengthened by Jesus’ words; I was enabled to live for God and overcome my fears one by one. Jesus established me in the family of God with my loving and supportive brothers and sisters in New Jersey UBF. Jesus also saw my loneliness, and gave me my own family by sending M. Anastasia from Kiev to be my wife, helper, and best friend (on earth). He set my feet on a rock (Ps 40:2). Still, I can get tempted and carried away by some shallow hopes of achievement or enjoyment. But Jesus mercifully comes to me again and again through his words, and shows me that only he is rich enough to fill my desire. Jesus, the way, is my way.

Because Jesus is the way, the true goal of our life is to know Jesus. You might say, “This still doesn’t tell me which college I should go to.” But when we commit our way to Jesus, he will take personal responsibility for working out his great purpose for our life. That’s what it means that he is the way.

The remainder of this passage is full of amazing promises Jesus makes to those who make him their way. Verse 12 says, **“Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.”** Believing in Jesus means that we will do great works. It’s incredible that here Jesus doesn’t mention any other qualifications or “spiritual achievement level” or anything. There is not even a minimum age requirement! Jesus includes whoever believes in him as great-work-doers. It’s because faith opens the door for Jesus himself to work in us without any limitation. We are young. But when we believe, we will do greater things than these.

Lastly, in verses 16 and 17 Jesus promised to those who love him, **“I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth.”** He means the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the way Jesus comes to us to live with us permanently in our heart. Have you been searching for someone who could be really close to your heart, a true soul-mate, and yet you couldn’t find any person who could fill that role? This is exactly what

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Jesus wants to be for us by sending us his Spirit. Jesus says, **“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”** (18)

So, did you hear your question in this passage? Did you see how Jesus himself is the answer? Jesus so loved us that he gave himself to us to be our way, our truth, and our life. When we understand that Jesus is the way, we make him our way by becoming his disciples. Then our life becomes truly abundant. May God bless you today to invite Jesus into your heart as your way.