

JESUS - THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE

(John 14:1-6) *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know."* Thomas said to Him, *"Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"* Jesus said to him, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."* - NKJV

In John 13 we find Jesus Christ and his disciples at supper. He performs the most humble act of service for them by washing their feet, and they share fellowship with one another in the breaking of bread and sharing the wine. Judas is given one last opportunity to turn from the path of betrayal, but he chooses to betray Christ. At the end of verse John 14:30 we read *"the ruler of this world is coming..."* signifying the darkness not only of the hour but also of the heart of Judas and the world into whose hands Christ is going to be betrayed. Christ then begins His final discourse with His disciples which will run into John chapters 14-17. Jesus speaks of His betrayal and then in verse 33 Jesus speaks of His departure from His disciples and how they, at this time, will be unable to follow Him. He sets forward the great commandment that they should love one another because by this, men will know that they belong to Him. Then in John 13:36, Peter asks where Christ is going, and we have a short conversation between Christ and Peter in which Peter's denial of Christ Jesus is predicted. I can understand Peter's question; he has genuine love for Christ. These men had given up all to follow Him for the last three years, and now He says where He is going, they cannot follow. Bewilderment and perhaps exasperation lead Peter to question Christ's statement. Then we enter chapter 14, and this wonderful passage concerning Christ, salvation, and eternal life.

The Way - He alone is the Way, because He alone has intimate knowledge of God the Father which is not marred by sin. He came from the Father and is returning to the Father. He does not merely show the way, He is the Way. We are persons and the God, from whom we are estranged and separate by sin, is a personal God. Therefore it should come as no surprise that the Way to reconciliation with God is through a person. Christ is the Way in that He is the Way from God to man and from man to God. In

the letter to the Hebrews, the author tells us that Christ alone is the Way into the presence of God, Hebrews 9 verse 8 and 10 verse 20. In Hebrews 9 verse 7, we read that it is only through the blood of Christ that the Way has been opened. The blood of Christ shed on the Cross atoned for our sin and in so doing opened the Way to the Father which up till that point had been closed. Hence the veil across the Holy of Holies in the Temple is rent asunder when Christ says "It is finished" or "it is accomplished."

The Truth - in John 18 verse 38, Pilate will ask "*What is truth?*" and many people today ask the very same question. The reality of the world in which we live is that for many people "truth" no longer exists in the absolute sense. In answer to the question "*what is truth?*", Jesus replies "*I AM the truth.*" Christ is the Truth. He is the truth about God the Father because He and the Father are one (verse 10). He is the truth about man. He is the truth about sin and its consequences. He is the truth in that He alone has the power to make life coherent irrespective of its ups and downs. In essence Christ is saying to them that if they turn aside from Him, they will find only lies and deceit. If they feed on anything or anyone else spiritually, they will not find nourishment for their souls. If they seek for another Way to God the Father other than Him, it will not be the truth and it will not lead to life but to death. Christ is God incarnate and in Him alone is found the truth of God and the truth of eternal life.

The Life - He alone is the life because He alone is not subject to death but made death subject to him. Christ is not here talking about life in the sense of breath or spirit which animates our body. He is the author of life (John 1 verses 3-5), the redeemer of life, so the Life of which He speaks here is the opposite of death. As death spells separation from God, so Christ as the Life, speaks of communion with God. Christ, in His person, is Life. He is the resurrection life, the firstborn from the dead, and as such offers eternal life to all who come to Him. This Life is not cheap, it came at the cost of His own life on the Cross.

The logical conclusion to this sentence is then found in the second part of the verse: "*no one comes to the Father but by me.*" There are many today, even within the Christian denominations, who would want to reject or water down this exclusive claim of Christ. He is the way because He leads us to the Father. He is the truth and the life because in Him alone we apprehend the Father. We are dependent upon Christ for the knowledge of redemptive truth and for the spark that causes that

truth to live in our souls (and for our souls to become alive to that truth). It follows that no one comes to the Father but through Christ. Without Christ there can be no redemptive truth, no everlasting life, and hence no way to the Father. The two parts of verse 6 cannot be separated since they are the logical conclusion of each other.

Today you are on the way to eternity, as we all are. Today you are following some "way", and you are listening to some "truth." I want to ask you, is it leading you to "eternal death" or "eternal life?" Christ said that in Him alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. In Him alone are we reconciled to God. Today, what way are you walking? To What truth are you listening? Death or Life, which way do you choose? There is only one Way to God - Christ Jesus. There is only one Truth - Christ Jesus. There is only one Life - Christ Jesus. You cannot come to God but by Christ Jesus. The real heartbreak today is this: so many of you are today on the wrong way, listening to the lies of this age and destined for eternal death, when by faith it would be all so different. Come today to the One who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Come to the Father through the finished work of the Son. Come and see what He has prepared for you in His Father's house.

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JESUS CONFRONTS THE LEGALIST

Consider Luke 6:1-11:

"Now it came to pass on a sabbath, that he was going through the grainfields; and his disciples plucked the ears, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands. But certain of the Pharisees said, Why do ye that which it is not lawful to do on the sabbath day?"

And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read even this, what David did, when he was hungry, he, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and took and ate the showbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat save for the priests alone? And he said unto them, The Son of man is lord of the sabbath.

And it came to pass on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man there, and his right hand was withered. And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath; that they

might find how to accuse him. But he knew their thoughts; and he said to the man that had his hand withered, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. And Jesus said unto them, I ask you, Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to destroy it? And he looked round about on them all, and said unto him, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored. But they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus."

A pleasant day's hike through the grainfields turned sour when Jesus and His disciples ran into some Pharisees (Luke 6:1-2). Ever on the lookout for infractions of their traditions especially by Jesus and His followers, these legalists objected to the disciples "harvesting" grain in violation of the Sabbath. Never mind the group's hunger. For that matter, never mind that they were obviously snacking: after all, how could a handful of tiny heads of wheat or barley make a satisfying meal?

But the Pharisees would take Scripture out of context or add to it in order to condemn people for normal, God-given behavior. They ignored God's love and the freeness of His grace.

The Pharisees had lost sight of the intent of the Law and had taken upon themselves the impossible task of earning God's favor through moral perfectionism. The more they labored to "keep the Law," the more they wrapped themselves in an ever-expanding cloak of man-made rules and regulations. Worse, they judged every one around them by their impossible standards.

Jesus challenged them by using the very Scriptures they claimed to honor (6:3-4). Furthermore, according to Matthew's account of this incident Jesus questioned their basic attitudes, which seemed to have more to do with ritual than with the mercy that God values (Matt. 12:7).

Yet the critics only seemed to harden in their legalism, continuing to dog Jesus' steps on another Sabbath, when He visited one of their synagogues (6:6-7).

Legalist may be the hardest people to reach with the message of God's love. Jesus never won the Pharisees over as a group. But neither did he allow their abuse of Scripture or people to go unchallenged.

From the *The Word in Life Study Bible*, p. 1785
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ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS EVIDENCED IN EVERY CONVERSION

Note that each of these following examples of conversion took place AFTER the Christian era began in 30 A.D. (Acts 2). Luke records the events of Acts 2 as "the beginning" in his quotation of Peter in Acts 11:15 .

Scripture	Who	Heard the Word	Believed in Jesus	Repented of Sins	Confession	Baptism
Acts 2:37-42	Those at Pentecost	X		X		X
Acts 8:12	Samaritans	X	X			X
Acts 8:13	Simon		X			X
Acts 8:26-39	Ethiopian	X	X		X	X
Acts 9:1-19	Saul					X
Acts 22:6-12	Saul					X
Acts 10 1-48	Cornelius	X				X
Acts 16:9-15	Lydia	X				X
Acts 16:25-34	Jailer		X			X
Acts 18:8 & I Cor. 1:14	Crispus		X			X
Acts 18:8	Corinthians	X	X			X
Acts 19:1-7	John's Disciples	X				X

It is to be noted that of the action taken in these instances of conversion in the book of Acts (instances where the details of conversion are recorded), BAPTISM is mentioned EVERY time. Surely this is a significant fact in view of such passages as these:

"Therefore we are buried with him by BAPTISM into death" (Rom 6:4) .

"For as many of you as have been BAPTIZED INTO Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27) .

Baptism is the medium through which Christ's death is reached. How do we put on Christ? Through baptism!

HARRY COBB
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GOSPEL MEETINGS

DATES

Dec.
2 - 4

PLACE

Southside Church of Christ
One Mile South, Highway 51
Springtown, TX

SPEAKER

Danny Abercrombie
Gay, GA &
Dana Chandler
Wedowee, AL &
Harry Cobb
Wedowee, AL

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. With whom did David commit adultery?
2. According to Deuteronomy, how much interest was a man to charge his countryman in Israel?
3. What did God tell Moses that he was going to do when he saw the Israelites sacrificing to an idol?
4. What position as tax collector did Zacchaeus hold?
5. Who does the Psalmist say counts the stars and gives names to all of them?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. Who did the Lord instruct to carry out his fierce wrath against the Amalekites? KING SAUL (1 Sam. 28:18)
2. For how long did Jeremiah prophecy that Judah would serve the king of Babylon? SEVENTY YEARS (Jer. 25:11)
3. Of what were the jars made that held the water that Jesus turned to wine? STONE (John 2:6)
4. At whose house did the Jews of Thessalonica think that Paul and Silas were? JASON'S (Acts 17:5-6)
5. According to 2 Chronicles, who were the only ones permitted to enter the temple of the Lord to guard the new king? LEVITES (2 Chr. 23:6)