

JESUS IS THE WAY

John 14:1-14

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."

In today's passage, Jesus declares that he is the way and the truth and the life. Jesus is the way to heaven. To know the way is to have a clear direction and purpose in life. May God help us to know what it means that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life!

I. "MY FATHER'S HOUSE" (1-4)

Look at verse 1. *"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me."* Jesus saw the troubled faces of his disciples. They had an anxiety attack. Why were they so anxious? During the Last Supper, Jesus washed their feet. Then he shocked them by talking about his betrayal by one of the Twelve. He also said, "My children, I will be with you only a little longer... Where I am going, you cannot come" (13:33). Peter did not like what he was hearing. He asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." Then Jesus said that Peter would disown him three times that very night (13:38). This was too much for them to take. They were overwhelmed with all kinds of anxiety. They had left everything to follow Jesus, hoping for a better life. For three and a half years, Jesus took care of them, traveling with them everywhere, teaching them the word of God, and training them to be men of faith. They became excited when his popularity grew rapidly. Each time Jesus performed a miracle, they felt good about following him as his disciples. They were dreaming about getting cabinet positions in the earthly messianic kingdom they thought Jesus would establish. But now their dreams were about to be shattered into pieces. They felt like campaign workers whose candidate just lost an election. They were weighed down with anxiety about their uncertain future. What would they do without Jesus? They had no idea about what to do and where to go without their master. They became restless. They were like people in our generation who are gripped with anxieties because of uncertain future.

How did Jesus help them? Jesus did not say sympathetic things like, "I am sorry I have to go," or "Take care of yourselves." Instead, he said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me." Jesus knew that their problem was not their human situation or future uncertainty. It was lack of their faith in God. So he told them to have faith in God. Faith in God overcomes the world. What does it mean to believe in God and believe in Jesus? To believe in God means to accept God's word of promise in our hearts. Matthew 6:33 is just one of many promises of Jesus. Many men and women of God in history overcame their anxieties by holding on to this promise: "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Jesus saw that his disciples' hearts were troubled. What glorious promise did Jesus give them to help them?

Look at verses 2-4. *“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? 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. You know the way to the place where I am going.”* In these verses Jesus promises a place in heaven for each of us. The kingdom of God is the ultimate hope for all Christians. This is the key point of the gospel. Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead in order to fulfill this promise of the kingdom of God. His cross and resurrection opened the door to the kingdom for those who believe in him, including you and me.

Notice that Jesus called the kingdom of God “my Father’s house.” Why? It was because the disciples had only a vague idea about the kingdom of God. Their dreams and expectations were earth-bound. The kingdom of God was not real to them. Sadly, this is true to some Christians today as well. Let us read verse 2 together. *“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?”* Jesus teaches us that heaven is real--as real as our father’s house. If I asked you what heaven is, how would you answer? Many of us will say that heaven is where God is. And that is true. The problem is that heaven seems unreal, like an imaginary place that is somewhere over the rainbow. We tend to imagine heaven as a far-away place where God and angels floating around on white clouds. But Jesus says clearly, “My Father’s house has many rooms.” At the end of each semester, our students say, “I am going home,” meaning they are going to their parents’ house. When you say, “my parents’ house,” you mean a real house, one with red bricks or white sidings, which has bedrooms, living room and kitchen with delicious smell of food. Your parents’ house is real. But, somehow, heaven seems to be different. It is a far-away place that does not seem real. In this passage, Jesus teaches us that heaven is real. It is as real as our parents’ house. He says there are many rooms in our Father’s house. And he was going there to prepare a place for us. It is not an imaginary place. It is a real place. Then he gives us this promise: *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.*

Throughout history, our God has been faithful in keeping his promises. He kept his promises to Adam and Eve, and Noah and his family. He kept his promises to Moses and the Israelites. He kept his promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to Zechariah and Elizabeth, and to Mary. Our God has a good track record of keeping his words. We can trust in God because he has never reneged on his promises. And the promise of the kingdom of God is the ultimate promise. This is the main point of the gospel. Jesus’ very first message was “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mk 1:15) Jesus planted this hope of the kingdom of God throughout his ministry. Why? Because the kingdom of God is our true hope. Man cannot live without hope. But there is no everlasting hope in this passing world. All hopes based on this world will eventually disappoint us. The kingdom of God is the only everlasting hope for all mankind (2Co 5:1). May God help us to accept Jesus’ promise of the kingdom of God!

II. "I AM THE WAY AND THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE" (5-7)

Jesus' promise of the kingdom of God did not touch the disciples' hearts. Because they were still young and they liked this world. Likewise, we tend to make the same mistake that the kingdom of God is something only elderly people should think about.

In response to Jesus' glorious promise, Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" (5) Jesus was very clear on where he was going. He was going to his Father's house to prepare a place for us. But Thomas didn't get it. He said he still did not know where Jesus was going. He felt he was lost. He was lost because he did not accept the words of Jesus. Jesus had told them where he came from and where he was going. But Thomas insisted on his own logic and human way of thinking. He could not accept the glorious promise of Jesus.

To this doubting man, Jesus gave one of the most important verses in the Bible. Let us read verse 6. *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* No one ever dared to declare, "I am the way and the truth and the life." But Jesus declares in this verse that he is the way and the truth and the life. Then what does it mean that Jesus is the way and the truth and the life?

First, Jesus is the way. Jesus is the way to heaven. Why is Jesus the way? Jesus is the way because he opened the way to the kingdom of God through his death on the cross and resurrection. Before Jesus, men could not approach the righteous God because of their sins. But Jesus set us free from the bondage of sin and death through his cross and resurrection. Jesus made it possible for us to gain access to the righteous God (Ro 5:1-2). Jesus is the way of salvation. Jesus is the only way to the kingdom of God. Let us memorize verse 6. *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* In our pluralistic society, people cringe at our belief that Jesus is the only way to heaven. They would call us narrow-minded bigots. But Jesus is not a way to heaven. He is the way. He is the only way. No one can come to God except through Jesus. It is because he is the only one who gave his life on the cross to take away our sins. He is the only one who rose from the dead on the third day to open the door to the Kingdom of God.

When I decided to follow Jesus as a lay missionary for campus mission, one of my college professors, who cared for me dearly, was not happy. He advised me to reconsider it. He told me to climb all mountains first before making a decision like that. To his eyes, my decision to become a missionary was based on the inexperience of a young man. But in fact, God helped me to make the decision based on Mark 1:17. I thank God who has blessed my decision and guided me to this day. I was a wretched sinner who was lost in the darkness of sin. But Jesus shined his light on me and gave me a true purpose and life direction in campus mission. Before Jesus came into my life, I only had small hopes for life, such as a pretty house with garden, a job with good pay, and so on, not knowing that these hopes would disappoint me in the end. Now I have the hope of the kingdom of God

that will never disappoint me! Indeed there are many ways in this world. That is the reason many people are lost. But Jesus is the only way to the kingdom of God.

Second, Jesus is the truth. What is truth? Truth is what is true in all situations. Truth remains true when all other things change over time. Truth remains constant even when circumstances change. Truth is also universal, applying to everyone in the world; it must be true to all people, rich or poor, wise or foolish, strong or weak. Where is such thing in this world? Nothing in this world is permanent. Things of this world perish, spoil and fade away (1Pe 1:4). Therefore, truth must come from God who is eternal. Jesus is the truth because he came from God. Jesus is the truth because he is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow (Heb 13:8).

John 17:17 says, *“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”* The word of God is truth because it never changes. 1 Peter 1:24-25 read: *“For, ‘All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.’”* The word of the Lord never changes; as such the promise of the kingdom of God never changes. Heaven and earth will change, but the word of God will never change. John 8:31-32 says: *To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”* The word of Jesus can set us free from the bondage of sin and death!

Third, Jesus is the life. Jesus is the life because he is the Creator God. John 1:1-4 says: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men.* Jesus is the life because he is the author of life, and thus the source of life. He gives eternal life to whoever comes to him and believes in him (3:16; 5:24). You might say that you already have a life. There are two kinds of life, physical life and eternal life. Today, people are living with material abundance that their ancestors did not have. People can enjoy bits and pieces of comfort and convenience. So they should be happier than their ancestors. Strangely, there are many unhappy people. Many people don't have life because they don't let Jesus come into their lives. They may look good or even beautiful outwardly, but they don't have life in them, just like cut flowers in a vase. What is the most valuable thing to a person? Of course, it is his or her life. It is his or her spiritual life or soul because our physical life is rather limited. So Jesus says in Mark 8:36-37: *“What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?”* Jesus gives eternal life to those who come to him. Jesus is waiting at the door of our hearts. May God help us to accept Jesus so that we may have eternal life and the true hope for the kingdom of God!

John 5:24 says: *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”* This verse is a wonderful promise of God for all sinners like you and me. This verse gives hope to all those who are condemned because of their sins. Jesus promises us eternal

life. This is the reason why he came to this world, to serve sinners and to die for them on the cross.

Again, how can we receive eternal life? Hearing the word of God is a first step. Jesus promises that those who hear the word of God and believe him have eternal life. The way of salvation is very simple. But some people are engrossed with their sinful desires. They want to hear only what they want to hear. They hear the word of God, but only selectively. The Jews heard the word of God, but because they were full of themselves, it was as though they did not hear anything. When we really hear the word of God, we believe Jesus who was sent by God to save us from our sins. Then God gives us eternal life. We have crossed over from death to life!

We don't know what will happen to our life tomorrow. We don't know when God will call us home. But we do know that when our life is done in this world, we will be with Jesus in the kingdom of God. Do you have this assurance?

III. "WHATEVER YOU ASK IN MY NAME" (8-14)

Look at verse 8. *Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."* Philip did not believe in the kingdom of God because he did not see God with his human eyes. Perhaps his motto was, "I don't see, therefore I don't believe." There are many Philips in this world. If they don't see any immediate benefits, they refuse to believe. To them, the kingdom of God is no more than a fairy tale.

How did Jesus help Philip? Look at verse 9. *Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"* In fact, Philip had seen God in Jesus (1:18). He had also seen the miraculous signs through which Jesus had demonstrated the mighty power of God (11). In the face of the overwhelming evidence, why didn't Philip believe? It was because he calculated. As we studied in Chapter 6, Philip had a math-oriented mind. At a glance he could estimate the size of the crowd of over 5,000 and calculate how much food would be needed to give each person a bite. When he calculated, everything looked negative. Even Jesus' word of promise didn't seem to add up.

Jesus still loved Philip to the end. Look at verse 12. *"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."* Jesus encouraged Philip to believe rather than calculate. Jesus gave him a vision to become a great man who can do great things by faith in God.

How could Philip do greater things than Jesus? Look at verses 13-14. *"And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."* This tells us that one who prays can do great work of God. Usually smart people calculate rather than pray. They depend

on their own ability rather than the Almighty God. They are too proud to pray to God. The problem is that when things don't go according to their calculation, they give up and despair. Philip had this problem. So Jesus taught him the power of prayer.

When the Apostle John was young, he was ambitious and confident. He did not value the power of prayer. So he did not pray. He tried to catch some sleep even when Jesus struggled in prayer. But later, he learned that prayer was the only source of his strength. He said, *"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us"* (1Jn 5:14). Jesus wants all of us to trust in God in prayer. Jesus wants us to do great work by depending on God in prayer.

In this passage, we learned that Jesus is the way to heaven. Without hope in the kingdom of God, we cannot but become anxious in this age of anxiety. But Jesus assures us that he has gone to the Father to prepare a place for us. May God help us to do great things through prayer while we wait for his Second Coming to take us back to the Father's house!