

Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life

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[0 : 00] Go for it, brother. Thank you, Bear. Thank you so much. Thank you, Shirley and the other leaders. It really is a privilege for me to be here. So I wasn't given a topic.

I was just told, hey, first sermon in the year, you pick. And it was like, what do I do? Where do I go? And then I thought, what is the most simplest, life-giving reality for me?

And I thought, well, let me just do that. And so I went to the church at Moorhead City early this morning because I'm part of the prayer team.

And Donnie's preaching there. And before we prayed, he said, I'm going to just share this this morning in Moorhead. And I'll be sharing it next Sunday at Havelock.

And when he shared, I was like, oh, Lord, you are such a good planner. You make us look clever, you know. So I'm just so excited that I'm not flying blind.

[1 : 09] But I feel like the Lord's sort of leading us as a church in every one of the sites. And it's just really exciting. So what I really want to talk to you about is Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.

And many of us have heard that scripture. It's in John 14. We've heard it a thousand times. And it almost feels like Jesus is just saying three versions of the same thing, like he's the way, the truth, and the life.

But actually, those are three different things. And I want to start with the end, the third one, the life. And then I want to hit the truth a little.

And then I want to talk about the way. Because although we read it from left to right, way, truth, life, I think it's presented to us the other way around.

And then we start hearing the truth about it.

[2 : 22] Right? At least this is how I came to Jesus. And I start finding out, like, who he really is. And then I find out that there's actually a way that he has designed for me to live that makes complete sense once I've tasted him and I've met him and I've begun to understand.

It makes complete sense. But the thing about the ways of God is they're completely different to the ways of the world. They are completely different.

And I'm going to touch on two ways that I think are life-giving but certainly different. So let's start with our text. And it's John 14, 1 through 7.

This is Jesus speaking. And he's with his best friends the night before he dies. Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself that where I am, you may be also.

[3 : 46] And you know the way to where I'm going. And Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?

And Jesus said to him, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.

Now the context of this is actually at the Last Supper. And what has just happened is there's been this really awkward moment where Jesus said, someone's going to betray me.

And John puts, Peter looks at John and goes, ask him. And so John puts his head on Jesus' chest like my 16-year-old boy will do.

[4 : 49] Man, he's six foot going on two, but he'll put his head on my chest like this. And at that moment, whatever he asks me, I'll do. Right?

Right? And so John puts his head on Jesus' chest and says, who is it? And Jesus actually says, the one who dips his hand with me. And of course, Judas does it.

And then Jesus looks at him and says, go do what you've wanted to do. And Judas gets up. It's awkward. He leaves the room. And half the disciples were, what is that about? What?

And some of them actually thought he was running an errand for Jesus because he carried the money that the team, he had the purse. And so that's just happened.

And so Peter pops up. And we read this in the previous three or four verses. Chapter 13, verse 36. Simon Peter said to him, Lord, where are you going?

[5 : 49] And Jesus answered him, where I am going, you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward. And Peter said to him, Lord, why can I not follow you now?

I will lay down my life for you. And Jesus answered, will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.

So I think Peter senses that where Jesus is going is a very dangerous place, and it may even be death. And so he says, I'm even willing to die, but we're not going to be separated.

I'm with you all the way. And Jesus basically says to him, well, you're not going to make it through the night. So this is, like, really confusing and distressing for the disciples.

They were hoping for sort of an ordinary Passover. I mean, just five days before this, Jesus came riding into Jerusalem on a donkey.

[7 : 03] He was finally getting the recognition they were hoping for. He's the Messiah. There are thousands worshiping him. We finally made it.

We're on national TV. And Jesus just drops these bombs. But I want you to notice that in verse 1, Jesus' opening words were, let not your hearts be troubled.

He's just told them Judas was going to betray him. He's just told them he's going to die. He's just told Peter he's not going to make it through the night.

And instead of saying, yeah, I knew you guys were fickle. Gosh, I knew you guys were lily-livered, yellow cowards.

Are you going to leave me? No, he goes, let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me.

[8 : 06] And then he starts talking about his father's house. He says, in my father's house, there's a lot of room. There's room for you.

And then he says in verse 3, and I'm going to go and prepare that place for you so that I can come again and take you to be with me.

I want you to be with me. Yeah, you guys. Who are not going to make it through the night. Who are all over the place.

I want to be with you. Now this is the life of Jesus. It is attractive. God doesn't stand there looking at you going, I told you.

I told you. I knew you were going to do it. You've disappointed me. You've let me down. No, no. You were never holding him up. So you're not going to let him down.

[9 : 08] He's fine. He's fine. And we have this challenge today. We are in distressful times.

There's bad news that we've heard. I don't know if you've read in the news lately. I don't watch much TV. I do most of the news reading. But churches are closing.

Christianity has taken a terrible hammering in the West. Right? As a pastor at the church, I have seen people under tremendous breaking strain.

Two weeks before Christmas, two people came into my office. And their opening words were, I've never told anyone this in my life. And they ended up telling me things that are terrible.

Terrible. So these are distressing times. And God is bringing to us in Jesus life.

[10 : 15] Some of us have experienced friends who've walked out of the room. And it's felt like Judas. What are you doing?

What are you chasing after? We were a team. We were together. Where are you going? Some of us had friends like Peter who just didn't seem to make it through the night.

They were like, they haven't left, but they're just like acting like they don't know him. What is Jesus promising here?

He's promising peace. He's promising a peace that passes the circuits in your head. He says, don't be troubled.

What else is he promising? In verse two, much room. My father's house is a big house. And it's got a big, big table.

[11:23] And there's lots of food. And it's the kind of house you want to live in. You don't just want to eat once a week there. You want to live there. That's my father's house.

There is room for you. And then he says this, I am coming back because I want to be with you. I don't know if you've ever made a list of people that really want to be with you.

I mean, they would travel across the country on a skateboard. You know, to be with you, whatever, catch a train, whatever. I don't know how many people really want to be with me.

I am on God's list of people he really wants to be with. Do you know what that does to my brain?

David says, there are some things that are too wonderful for me.

They are so over my pay grade. I'll just take them at face value. That's my father. That's our father.

[12:37] Now we're talking about the life of God. You know, the life of God, that word life is actually the word Zoe, which means the spacious life of peaceful fellowship with God.

that the spatial life of peaceful fellowship with God. It means one of the, one of the definitions is the absolute fullness of life or real genuine life.

Jesus said, I am real genuine life. Now this is the catch. This life isn't just automatic. We're going to move now from Jesus is the way, truth and life.

We're going to move from the life, who he is, his life giving, a father's house, peace to you. I want to be with you. I want to backtrack on that. And I want to go to truth, truth.

Now, there is a one, there is an author that's been a tremendous blessing for me. Some of you may recognize his name. His name is John Marcoma.

[13:43] He has a wonderful book out on the ruthless elimination of hurry. He's also got a wonderful podcast called practicing the way of Jesus.

I want to record. I think he's one of the best preachers in this area right now, far better than I am, but he quotes a philosopher, Charles Taylor, secular man, who says, our generation is facing a unique challenge.

And we're talking about truth now. We've spoken about life. We're talking about truth now. We're moving back in the statement. He says, in generations past, truth has always been from outside of us as individuals.

It's come from society's norms. It's come from elders in the community. It's come from history. But for the first time in modern history, truth now comes from inside of every individual.

truth is true. I have my truth. I have my truth. And you can have your truth. And that's fine. But my truth is my truth. I am the ultimate authority.

[14:52] I have to be authentic. I have to live. truth. And, you know, I need to be true to my feelings. And this has made the whole idea of Jesus being the truth really weird.

Because my Jesus is kind of a hippie Jesus. He goes barefoot. And he's a free love Jesus. The other guys are like, my Jesus, my Jesus loves Cadillacs and whatever.

But, you know, my Jesus, he's the big bucks guy, you know. And the other guys are, my Jesus is the spectacular, popular, and then my Jesus, he's the one who does amazing things and miracles all the time, whatever, you know.

And we drift from the Jesus of the Bible. And so it's become really tricky. But I want to tell you, Jesus is the only one who decides what is right and what is wrong.

And it's in his word. He tells us who we are. We don't decide who we are. I can stand up here and tell you all day long that I'm a six foot seven NBA champion.

[16:09] I'm Elvis Presley come back from the dead. I mean, it means nothing. He defines me. He tells me what to do, how to do it, and when to do it.

He is the truth. Now, this is where, oh, maybe not. Like, I want the life. I want that thing you spoke about in the beginning.

You know, the big house with all the food. That's the thing I want. But like, I don't want to be told what to do. All right? And unfortunately, it's a package deal.

You can't take one third of Jesus. And so now I want to move to the way. And this is where I'm going to spend most of my time, and it won't be much time. But in Matthew 5, 6, and 7, then Jesus teaches us the way.

The ways of Jesus. If I could only have three chapters in the Bible, if they said to you, you have got 30 seconds to cut out three chapters of the Bible for the rest of your life, you're never allowed to

read the rest of the Bible, I would cry bitterly.

[17:21] But the three chapters I would cut out is Matthew 5, 6, and 7. Because it's Jesus' teachings all in together. And I want to encourage you, if this sermon interests you, make Matthew 5, 6, and 7 part of your diet for 2022.

I want to encourage you with that. But this is what Jesus says. And I'm going to cover two things, and then we're done. And this is about the way of Jesus and how different the way of Jesus is to our world.

So Matthew 6, starting from verse 1 to verse 9, and it'll probably be our last scripture. Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them.

For then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogue and in the streets, that they may be praised by others.

Truly I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret.

[18:43] And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others.

Truly I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, you go into your room, shut the door, and pray to your Father who is in secret.

And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard.

For their many words, do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask.

We're going to be talking about the ways of Jesus.

The first thing I want you to notice, he uses the word practice. The Christian walk, the way of Jesus, is to be practiced. Now don't think to yourself, oh, I thought grace was free, I don't have to do anything, I am loved as much.

[19:56] That's all true. But remember, grace changes you. It doesn't just save you, it sanctifies you. It changes you. And so the Christian walk is practice.

Look at what Paul says, in Philippians 4, 9, the things you have heard and received, and learned, and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

John says in chapter 3, 21, but he who practices the truth, comes to the light. Peter says in 2 Peter 1, 10, Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about his calling and choosing you, for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble.

Now, to follow Jesus doesn't just come naturally. If you wanted to run a marathon, you don't go, oh, there's one next weekend, let's run one, honey.

No, you'll drop over if you're not used to running after two or three miles with your lungs burst.

Right? There'll just be a wet puddle in the road where you once were.

[21:13] Right? No, you practice. So, three, four months ago, I loved playing soccer, I loved playing volleyball, and I also played pickleball.

That's my latest pickleball. And I injured my shoulder, and then I re-injured it a couple times after that because, you know, with your right arm, you catch things when they drop or you see a cockroach on the garage floor and you grab a shoe and you hit it and then you die next to it because you've just re-injured your shoulder.

So, that happened to me three or four times. So, I needed to do something. I mean, my family's playing volleyball, everyone's playing soccer, I'm sitting at home. So, I started playing pickleball with my left hand.

And I was the weakest, like, you know, like, I was the one with the broken wing, you know. And I practiced and practiced and practiced and three months later, I can start playing with my right hand and then when it switches to my left, I'll hit with my left.

And I had to decide. I didn't just decide one day. I'm going to get back into things. No, I had to learn again. And this is what the way of Jesus is.

[22:23] It's learning a whole new way. If you run out of here, and this is what I'm fearing, you run out with what I share and go, yes! I'm going to do this.

I'm going to buy a Nike t-shirt and I'm just going to do this. You will burst a lung. You will give up after three days because you're learning to play with your left hand.

I had a man call me and she came into my office two weeks before Christmas. He said, I love Jesus. I'm not enjoying my wife. I'm not enjoying my work. I'm getting a new house. I'm not even excited. I'm not enjoying anything in my life. I said to him, when last did you take a break? He said, last Christmas. I said, why? Don't you have money? He said, no, I have over a million dollars in property. I said, do you not have any leave? He goes, no, I've got six weeks of leave. [23 : 24] I said, you need to take a break. You need to take a Sabbath. Yes, you take Sundays off, but you need to take a Sabbath. He goes, really?

I said, yes. Take Christmas break and then take an extra week. He says, what must I do? I said to him, well, what are you planning on doing with your wife? He says, we're going to renovate the house, fix the house.

Okay, that sounds like a, in my mind, I didn't say it. That sounds like a great Christmas break. But he goes, what must I do with the second week? I said, well, what do you like doing? So he goes, well, five years ago, I used to go hunting.

I said, go hunting. Go and be in the bush. He called me two days in to the bush. He goes, I'm coming home. I can't handle this. You see, Jesus has called us to Sabbath, but if you haven't practiced Sabbathing, you don't know what to do with yourself when you get the time off.

You just want to do another project. You just want to start saving your leave. For what? What do you want to save your leave for? So you've got three years of leave after 60 years of working?

[24 : 34] Big deal. And you don't love your wife. You're not enjoying her. You're not enjoying your food. You're not enjoying anything. What's the use of that? But you've got to practice how to rest, right?

So I want you to notice that the ways of Jesus take practice. You start small. What are the ways of Jesus? Well, just read the Gospels. Just start there. Don't start with some guru guy, meditation. I love those books. I read them too. I read them all. Not all. A lot of them. I love them. But just start with Jesus. What did he do? What were his rhythms? All right?

Now I want you to notice the second thing. It takes practice, number one. Second thing is it's done in secret. God's best work is done in secret.

Remember we read it. It says, when you pray, shut the door. Pray in secret because your Father who is in secret will reward you in secret.

[25 : 40] He says the same thing about giving. When you give, don't let your right hand know what your left hand is doing. Give in secret. Your Father who is in secret. Our Father does his best work in secret.

So in 2018, I'm in South Africa. We're in a game park. And I've got my sister, my daughter-in-law, my oldest son, and my youngest son.

And all they want to see in this game park is a lion. We heard him roar the night before. When you are in the African bushveld, you hear a lion roar.

No one else makes a sound. It's like, it's like, the air just leaves the room, even though he's over there in the valley. So we're out in the land rover.

We're trying to see this. We can't find the lions. They know it. And we're like, all we want to see is lions. There's a giraffe and there's a zebra and everything. We've seen that. We want to see the lion.

[26 : 40] We want to see the lion, right? So the park ranger, the next thing he pulls up and he stops in the middle of nowhere. And he looks over the side of the land rover.

And he goes, look at that. And I look. And he's this, this beetle. It's the Southern African dung beetle. And the dung beetle, man, he's about as big as my thumb, maybe a little bigger.

And he's the most amazing creature. I never knew this. You know, a game ranger is talking about dung beetles. This is the guy who picks up all the poop. And he goes, this dung beetle, if it wasn't for this dung beetle, every animal in this park, including the lion, would be sick.

Because he cleans up. And the way he cleans up is he'll make a ball and he reverses. His back legs are on the ball. It becomes about as big as a softball. And he reverses like this.

And he's normally got a little partner on the top that's helping. And they have a GPS system. And they will, she will direct him, or I don't know which one the guy does or whatever.

[27 : 50] But they direct that and that ball will roll and then they lay their babies and the eggs and everything and they use that. And they have a GPS system because when they try to take these

beetles, and I'm going somewhere with this.

When they take these, they try to take these beetles to Australia and they went through the x-ray thing and they lost their GPS. So they were useless, dung beetles.

But they can GPS their way. And I'm going, who cares about the lion? What an amazing creature here in secret.

And this is what it's like in the Christian life. We always want the king of the jungle. That's where it is.

And it's all gods. And I'm not knocking the lion. But I'm going to tell you, there are things, think about the stars God has made that no human will ever see.

[28 : 52] Think about the creatures. Even now, we've never seen them. God is this God of the secret. Now, I always used to be scared of my secret life.

I wanted to avoid it. I didn't like being alone. I needed to be busy. I needed to keep my mind busy. I needed to keep busy with the work of God.

Because when I stopped and I slowed down, I was afraid of what was inside of me. The noise was so much. And I realized the way I was treating my life was like, it was like the storage unit that had stuff in it that hadn't been sorted out for years.

And there were rats and roaches and all kinds of creepy crawlies in there. And whenever I thought about my life, I thought, man, wouldn't it be nice if God could just help me clean out this storehouse, this warehouse, and just make it clean.

And it never happened. And then I began to realize God didn't just want an empty warehouse that's clean.

[30 : 13] He wanted a place to live with me. He wanted new furniture, cushions, snack bar.

and he wanted to get into that warehouse and begin to clean it with me. And he wanted to arrange certain things because it's his house too.

In fact, it really belongs to him. All of this belongs to him. And I began to realize, Lord, this is different.

You want me to build a secret life that's going to become the most precious part of who I am and no one in the planet will know.

Not even my wife knows the stuff that's in there. And I don't hide because of shame. I run there because my father is the God who does his best work in secret.

[31 : 23] And I don't have to try and impress people and put everything on Facebook because when I do, I have my reward. Five likes.

Really? Really? All that sweat and perspiration for five likes? Now maybe you get more likes.

I'm happy for you. I want you to notice this. He goes, when you pray, one of the old translations says, go to your closet.

Go to your closet. Now there's a place where you do your washing. There's a place where you park your car. There's a place where you keep your food. where is the place you pray?

Where is your closet? And what does that closet look like? Is it a place that Jesus loves to be with you at?

[32 : 37] Do you have a place at your work or in your home where when that little closet door closes or that place under where the clothes hang in your shoe rack or whatever?

Wherever! Where your wife and your children know when daddy's there? He's doing things in secret.

Do you have any sort of a lifestyle where you're giving and nobody on the planet except Jesus knows? The ways of Jesus.

The ways of Jesus are beautiful. At the end of your life you will not be waiting for this home the father's house.

The father's house would have come to you. There's much room and he loves to be with you and there's peace even if all of hell's breaking loose.

[33 : 51] You've got your secret life and I'll tell you your wife will love you for it. It won't threaten her. She'll say hey honey when last did you visit your secret place?

I think you need to go. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Jesus said I am the way the truth and the life.

No one comes to the father but by me. so we're going to we're going to go to a restaurant today none of you can afford including me.

We're going to eat food that's paid for but not all the money in the world can actually afford it and it's for believers and it's called the Lord's Supper.

[34 : 57] it's a secret place actually. Most of Jerusalem had no clue what was happening in that meal that we started the story with this morning.

But it's blossomed and you and I are enjoying that meal today. So I'm going to ask our musicians to get ready and and I want you to take this and know that this is this started in a secret place.

And I want you to think about God's challenge to you today. 2022. Now I'm going to start small.

This isn't a big this is just representation and we're going to start small. But we're going to as we take communion we are going to invite Jesus into our storehouses.

We're going to invite him in. It's embarrassing man. You don't want him to come much further than the front door. Actually Jesus don't leave the welcome mat. Just stay on the welcome mat and peek into the front door.

[36 : 20] You don't want to come into the back. That's okay. He's not going to push his way in. He's patient with you. He loves you. He's actually seen all your junk but that's okay. So as we come this is the first step of vulnerability.

Lord I let you in to my house. I let you in through the bread and the cup. I welcome you. I'm asking you to invade. I'm asking you Lord to have your way in me.

So we're going to take the bread and you open it. Lord Jesus we thank you for the body of the Lord Jesus Christ that was broken for us.

Lord as we eat it we thank you that truth and life is produced. thank you Father for Jesus Christ today. Now on that same night he took the cup he said my blood's going to be shed for you.

I'm going to clean you inside from the inside out. He'd already washed their feet. He said the blood of Jesus will cleanse you from the inside out.

[37 : 41] This is more than ceremonial. This is your soul, your spirit, the renewing of your spirit. So Lord Jesus thank you for the blood that was shed for us for the remission of our sins.

Jesus name. Amen.