

Title: "Jesus, The Way, The Truth, and The Life"

Text: John 14:1-14

We have been preaching through the seven "I AM" sayings of Jesus throughout the season of Lent.

-And there are two of them left.

-Today we will look at Jesus' proclamation, "I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life,"

-And next Sunday on Easter, we will look at Jesus proclamation, "I AM the Resurrection and the Life."

So turn with me today to John 14, on page 1641 of the pew Bibles, and I will be reading verses 1-14.

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It's a remarkable statement that Jesus proclaims here:

"I Am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

He is saying these words to his disciples as they are gathered in that upper room in Jerusalem for the Passover Meal on the night before He was to be crucified.

He has told his disciples that He is about to be taken from them,

-and that where he is going they cannot yet follow.

-The will follow him later, he says, but not yet.

And they are grieved at the thought of Jesus leaving them.

-They have given their lives to following him,

-and now he tells them that he is going someplace that they can't follow, and they don't get it.

So Jesus is comforting them here.

"Don't let your hearts be troubled," he says to them. "Trust in God, and trust in me.

-It's going to be ok. Really.

-In my Father's house are many rooms, and I am going to prepare a place for you.

-And then I am going to come back and take you to be with me so that where I am you may be also."

And then Jesus says, "And you know the way to the place where I am going."

-And good old down-to-earth doubting Thomas says, "I don't think so. Lord, we don't know *where* you're going, So how can we know the way?"

That's when Jesus proclaims, "I AM the way. And I Am the Truth, and the Life.

-And no one comes to the Father except through me."

Now that answer to Thomas tells him and all the rest of us two things:

1. Jesus is talking about going to the Father. That's where He is going. Back to the Father.
2. And secondly, it tells us all that the way to get there is by relationship.  
-It's about who you know.

And for Jesus, going back to the Father means that he is returning to throne of God in the heavenly realms from whence He was sent to earth in the first place.

But his relationship with the Father had never been severed.

-Though Jesus was incarnated here on earth, he and the Father were still intimately connected.

-This is what he is telling the disciples all through this passage.

"I am IN the Father, and the Father is "IN me," Jesus says.  
"So if you have seen me, you have seen the Father."

"So if you really knew me," Jesus says to his disciples, "you would know my Father as well. And from now on, you do know him and have seen him."

Now for Jesus' disciples then, and for us now, what this means is that:

- the Way to the Father is a person: Jesus Christ.
- And the Truth about the Father is a person: Jesus Christ.
- And the Life of the Father is a person: Jesus Christ.

And so what really matters for all of our lives is whether we know that person!

-You see, eternal life is about having a relationship with that person who is the way, the truth and the life of God.

Reflect on that with me for a minute today.

- a. What does it mean for us that the Way to God is a person.
- Thomas speaks up on all of our behalf and says to Jesus, "I don't know where you're going, so how can I know the way."
  - And Jesus says, "I AM the way."

What I want you to notice is that Jesus didn't answer Thomas by pulling out a map to show him where he was going.

- And he didn't answer Thomas by writing down a set of directions.
- And for us 21<sup>st</sup> Century Christians, he doesn't give us a GPS with coordinates to plug in.

What he tells Thomas and all of us, is to rely on our relationship with him because He is the way.

- Instead of giving a map, or directions, or GPS coordinates, Jesus climbs into the car with us and says, "Let's just go together on a journey."
- And all along the way will be life."

My friends, that is good news for us.

- It means we don't have to worry about where heaven is Or how we're going to get there.
- It means as long as we know Jesus and he knows us, -and we're sticking with him and relating to him, -then we enjoy the ride of life, because with him in the car, Heaven is "here in now," -and it will also be "then and there" wherever that is.

Jesus says, "Stick with me and I will lead you, for I AM the Way."

The Way is a person, so what matters is being in relationship with that person.

- Knowing Him IS eternal life.

b. So what does it mean for us that the TRUTH about God is a person?

Well, notice again that when God really wanted us to know

- the truth about who He is and what He is like,
- and the truth about who we are and what we are like,
- He didn't send us a memo.
- He didn't write us a set of 95 theses.
- He didn't give us another set of 10 commandments.
- That hadn't worked very well the first time.

Instead, he sent us a person.

- He sent us His Son, and said, "You want to know the truth, get to know Him.
- Walk with him, talk with him, laugh with him, cry with him.
- Share your life with Him, and invite Him to share his life with you.
- The more you know him, the more you'll know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

Think with me for a minute about the Garden of Eden and what happened all the way back there in the beginning.

- In the middle of the Garden was the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- It's what you might call the Tree of Truth.

The serpent came to Adam and Eve and said, "Hey, eat the fruit of that tree and your eyes will be opened and you'll know the truth."

And the question is, why had God forbidden Adam and Eve to eat of the fruit of that tree?

- Did God NOT want them to know the truth?
- The devil made it seem that way.
- The devil made it seem that God was withholding this good fruit called truth from them.

But what if the issue was really that God wanted to teach them the truths of good and evil Himself.

- What if the issue was relationship, even all the way back in the Garden of Eden.

What if God wanted to walk with them and talk with them,  
-and like a parent with his or her children, God wanted to  
teach them at age appropriate levels what He knew they  
needed to know.

It wasn't that God didn't want them to know the truths of life.  
-It's that He didn't want them to learn those truths apart from  
relationship with him.

After all, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was in the  
garden.

- It wasn't outside the garden, beyond their grasp.
- It was there as part of the good fruit God intended for  
them to cultivate and pursue.
- It's just that he wanted to feed it to them step by step in  
relationship with him.

But they listened to the enemy, and grabbed it for themselves,  
-and the truth they learned didn't set them free,  
-but put them in bondage, and all of us their descendants.

Yet now the Father sends His Son to be the Truth for us.  
-To re-instate the relationship with God.  
-To atone for the sin that broke that relationship in the first  
place,  
-and to invite us back into a relationship with God  
-And He says, "I am the Way to that relationship, and I am the  
Truth of that relationship because the Father lives in me.

"So if you want to know the truth of what the Father is like,  
look at me.  
-If you want to know the truth about what you as a son or  
daughter of the Father are supposed to look like, look at me.  
-If you want to know the truth about how to live your life:  
-what you're supposed to do,  
-and how you're supposed to think, and what you're  
supposed to believe....look at me."

"I will teach you," Jesus says. "I will teach you the Truth and  
the truth will set you free.  
-Just stick with me. Walk with me. Talk with me.  
-I will teach you as we walk in the way together."

c. And what does it mean for us that Jesus is the Life?

Notice that nowhere in this whole section, or anywhere in the Gospels does Jesus speak of the abundant life that He offers us as an accumulation of money or things;  
-or as a “rockin’ and rollin’ sex life,”  
-or as an achievement of success, fame, or prestige.

When he speaks of the abundant life, he is always inviting people into a life of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, goodness, and self-control.  
-Those are the fruits of the Spirit.  
-Those are the signs that the life of God’s Kingdom is present and growing.

And they all come as a by-product of the relationship one has with the Father through Jesus the Son.  
-Jesus says, “I am that life. That is the life I am living with the Father present in me every day.  
-If you want to know what that life looks like, look at my life,” Jesus says.

And if you do look at Jesus’ life, you see it wasn’t all a bed of roses.  
-Not from the very outset.  
-He was born in a barn, Herod tried to kill him, he grew up in a tiny village as the carpenter’s illegitimate son.  
-He spent thirty years learning the carpentry trade, then became an itinerant rabbi,  
-who after three years got himself crucified.

You might think, that is not the kind of life I’m looking for!  
-And if that’s all there was to Jesus’ life, you’d be right to go looking somewhere else for the abundant life.

But it really isn’t all that there was to Jesus’ life.  
-There’s a reason that after 2000 years, we are all still here talking about Jesus’ life.  
-There’s a reason that his one life turned the world upside down.  
-There’s a reason no one really remembers who the rich and famous people of the Empire were in AD 33.

-But no one has ever forgotten this carpenter turned rabbi from Nazareth in Galilee.

It's because His life was transformational.

It's because even his death was transformational.

It's because his resurrection to life caused people to look back at the life he had lived with an entirely new set of glasses.

Now they could see what the disciples at least in part had discovered,

-that this Jesus had lived the life of an obedient Son of the Father in heaven.

-And it was a life full of grace and truth.

-It was a life full of the fruits of God's Spirit.

-It was a life in which the Kingdom of God was displayed.

-and it was an amazing life.

And it was a life of Jesus that could not even be shut off by death.

-It was an eternal kind of life he lived, then and now!

I know in my own life, that His life continues to bring an eternal kind of life to others everywhere it goes.

-And it's not just a hope of heaven for after we die.

-It's an eternal, resurrection life that He can give us right now for us to taste and experience in the present.

And it's not that Jesus turns our lives into a bed of roses any more than his life was a bed of roses.

-No, it's that if he is with us in all that life throws at us,

-then everything that happens to us can be an opportunity for experiencing grace,

-and growing in love, and learning more patience,

-and discovering God's faithfulness.

Even our death experiences become opportunities for experiencing resurrection and new life if Jesus is with us.

-Because he IS the life.

This past three days I was in Minnesota with a group of 5 other men from our Conference of churches,

-who work together to promote church multiplication around the country.

And the reason we were meeting was because back in February when we had met in Orlando,  
-every one of us was discouraged and feeling like our church multiplication movement in the 4C's was dying.

In fact, after that meeting in Florida one member of our team stepped down from the team and quit.

- And I came home and told Nancy I felt like doing the same.
- This meeting in Minnesota was an emergency meeting to try and get us back on track.
- And as Nancy will confirm, I didn't really want to go.
- And then when we saw the weather report for the coming snow storm out there, I thought maybe I had a good reason for not being able to go.

But you know what?

- I also felt a bit of a calling to go, and felt like I had some things to say.
- And amazingly enough, we all flew in just before the storm hit,
  - and we were all holed up together in a cabin for two days while it snowed like crazy outside,
    - which was actually kind of beautiful and cozy and fun.
- And in those two days together, resurrection happened.
- And a new vision was birthed.
- A new plan and process conceived.
- And I felt like just the right people with just the right skill sets were in that cabin to pull it together.

We slowed down and spent time in prayer, and then spent hours in work and dialogue,  
-and we all came away feeling life Jesus had showed us the way, and provided the truths we needed to hear, and breathed new life into a movement that seemed dead.

That's because this is who He is and always has been.

- He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.
- Knowing him is eternal life, and we can experience it now.