

No Other Way: John 14:1-14

Introduction: The passage appointed for today contains the famous statement by Jesus at verse 6: 'I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except by me'.

This is a claim of an absolute monopoly on how a person can find peace with God. It makes some people angry. They say things such as: 'Who are you to say *you* are right and everyone else is wrong? Or they say: 'What about the people who have never heard about Jesus, what happens to them? Or they say: 'It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you *believe* something'. Others say there is truth in *all* religions, so it is wrong for Jesus to claim a monopoly on truth, and still others say there is no truth in *any* religion so this claim should be rejected outright.

All this leaves ordinary people confused and many Christians intimidated into silence on something the Bible is absolutely unapologetic about, namely that Jesus, the only begotten Son, is the only way to God. For example in Acts 2:12, Peter said: 'There is no other name under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved'.

So let's have a look at John 14:6 and work out what we are to make of it.

There are three steps: 1: What the words mean,
2: Why they are true,
3: What we have to do about them.

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1: What the words mean

Firstly, Jesus says, 'I am the way ...,' the way to what? The way to God; 'no one comes to the *Father* except by me'. But in what sense is Jesus the way to God? He is the way in that his death on the cross achieved whatever was necessary to bring sinful people into fellowship with a sinless God. That is what makes our Holy Communion service so very important and appropriate. It looks back to God's saving act of atonement in the death of Jesus.

We should remember also that just a few hours after Jesus spoke the words we are looking at here, he was praying in the garden and asked that if it was possible, to let this cup of death pass from him. There was no other way. The reason is clear; at the cross Jesus, the God/man accepted the condemnation and punishment for the sins of the world. By taking the punishment for us he opened the way and into the presence of God.

No one else could do that. That is why *he* and he alone is the way to the Father.

Then he says: 'I am the truth.' This phrase is as big as you want it to be. You can never exhaust its meaning. Jesus is the true revelation about God. He always speaks the truth. But more than that, Jesus is the central figure in creation and the functioning of the universe. Colossians 1: 17: 'He is before all things and in him all things hold together.'

Jesus is the truth in every sense of the word and that is why he can be trusted and why faith in him is the only way to the Father.

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Thirdly, he says: 'I am the life.' The word 'life' in the context of John's Gospel means *life with God*. John 17:3 says: 'This is eternal life, that they might know you and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.'

2: Why these words are true

The short answer is that Jesus came back from the dead. That fact alone vindicates everything Jesus ever claimed for himself. His resurrection is the proof of his power and if we were to know nothing else, that would be sufficient. But actually there is more.

We must understand that Jesus is not some emissary or agent of God. He is more than that. He is the very embodiment of the eternal God of all things. Listen to what other things are said about him in this passage.

Verse 7: 'If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well.'

Verse 9: 'Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.'

Verse 10: 'I am in the Father and the Father is in me.'

Verse 12: 'I am going to my Father.'

Verse 13: 'The Son brings glory to the Father.'

Each of these important sayings point to the fact that Jesus is one with the Father, as God. He is in a class on his own; divine and in a unique relationship with God the Father. No wonder he can say that he is the way, the truth and the life, no one can come to the Father except through him. He is, as our Creed says, 'God from God, light from light, true God from true God.'

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This is a mystery beyond our capacity to understand, but not beyond our capacity to accept. This passage is opening the door into a mystery of God just a little and allows us a glimpse of the mystery of God; just enough to see why these words are true and have to be true if Jesus is the only way to the Father. John 1:18 says: 'No one has ever seen God, but God the One and only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.'

3: What we have to do about these words

We can't ignore them. We can't pretend that they are not true. We should not put off accepting them, if we haven't already done so, not if we want to be sure that we are going to be with God.

The question is, what *are* we going to do about them? This is an offer so generous and so big that nothing else we will ever hear can compare with it. To hesitate or haggle, to even think that we can weigh up the pros and cons and then, provided God's offer still stands, consider it again, would show just how undeserving we are in the first place.

No; let us embrace God's love with a grateful heart and experience just how wonderful this *life* actually is.

The answer to the question what must we do, is found in verse one of our reading; 'Do not let your heart be troubled, Trust in God, trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms ... I am going 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.'

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That is a beautiful invitation and it is all yours if you put your trust in Jesus, who is the way, the truth and the life.