

The Way and The Truth and The Life John 14:1-14

Our passage this morning is part of a great discourse and body of teaching that Jesus shared with the disciples in the upper room. The end of his earthly ministry approaching, the cross looming on the horizon, Jesus gathered his disciples around him and to help them understand his life and work, his approaching death and resurrection.

In the midst of his teaching he said these words, "I am the way and the truth and the life." This morning we'll focus on those words, pull them apart, and see what blessings they may have for us today.

Jesus begins by saying, "**I am the way.**" When God created us, he didn't put us in a set of revolving doors. Even though life may at times seem to be just going in circles, even though there are those who say that life is one cycle after another and that everything that comes around goes around, and even though there are theories about life that say that life is one reincarnation after another, Jesus doesn't say that.

God created us with a purpose. Life has a goal. We are created to travel through life toward an end. And the way to that end, our text teaches us today, is through Jesus.

We don't find the way by wandering. We don't stumble across the way by gosh and by golly. It's not enough to live life by just breathing. The safest, most secure, most dependable way through life is by Christ. That's why Jesus says, "I am the way."

If we want to find our way to the place God has created for us, we must follow Christ. For Jesus leads us to God. The apostle Philip learned that. After Thomas had questioned Jesus on where he was going, Philip came to Jesus and said, "Lord, show us the Father and we will be satisfied." Show us God, Philip asked. Help us understand who God is and that will be enough for us to understand where you are leading.

And to that request, Jesus responded by saying, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and still you do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." Imagine that! When Jesus says, "I am the way," he's telling us that he is the way to know God.

Second, we are not only travelers through life but also learners, and for that reason, Jesus said, "**I am the truth.**" We are created for the truth, and seeking and living the truth is what we're called to do.

It's ironic that, while more books have been written about Jesus than about any other person who ever lived, Jesus never wrote a book. He didn't sit down and write out the truth or anything like that. As far as I can recall, there's only one instance in the gospels when Jesus wrote anything and that was in the dust at his feet - and we have no record of what he wrote.

But that's okay. Because instead of writing about the truth, Jesus lived it. His life was a witness to the truth. And the truth of his life is seen through the eyes of the blind man who now sees; through the leper who returned to give thanks, and the dancing feet of the lame made well, and the dead now raised to life. For Jesus is truth in the flesh — truth incarnate — truth that could say, "If anyone sees me, they see the Father."

When we look at Jesus, we see the truth about God. And we learn that God is love. It is God's nature to love, to show mercy, to forgive and accept the outcast, to welcome home the prodigal. In Christ, we see the very nature of God whose love for us is unearned, unwarranted, and most unexpected.

When we look at Jesus, we also see the truth about ourselves. Maybe that's why it's so hard to look at Jesus sometimes. Because when we look at Jesus, we see ourselves — the ugliness of our lives, the sinfulness of our thoughts and deeds, the blemishes caused by selfishness and pride, our failure to love. When Jesus says, "I am the truth," he confronts us with our failures to forgive, our refusals to show mercy, and our self-righteousness pride that puts others down.

Lastly, Jesus not only say, "I am the way and the truth" but also, "**I am the life.**" And that's crucial. For without Jesus, there is no life in us. Left to our own, judged by our own thoughts and deeds, there's no hope for us. And, in fact, that, too, is the message of scripture, isn't it? Paul puts it this way: "All have sinned and fallen short of God's glory." And "The wages of sin is death." Without Jesus there is no life.

These words remind us that Jesus is our life. Rather than get bogged down in a discussion on the exclusivity of Christianity and the exclusive nature of these words; rather than engage in the old argument about who is and who is not saved, these words are meant for us. These words are Jesus' invitation to come to him, to receive in him the gift of life that God created for us.

In his book, *The Magic of Believing*, Charles Allen says just that. As a newspaper reporter, Allen covered a lot of stories and as he covered those stories and met a lot of people, he began to ask himself what the tangible difference between people really was. In hospitals he saw some people die while others got well. He watched some football teams win while others lost. He studied the lives of great men and women in all lines of human endeavor.

And after years of study, he wrote this book in which he said, "Gradually, I discovered that there is a golden thread that runs through Jesus' words that makes them work for those who sincerely accept and apply them. And this golden thread can be named in a single word: faith."

It is faith that brings God's blessings to life for us. It is faith that puts us on the path that leads to God. It is faith that enables us to see the truth about our lives and to embrace the truth about God. It is faith that brings God's gift of life to us.

Faith comes from trusting in Jesus' word, following his example, and living with God. And with all deference to Charles Allen, it is not magic nor is it a secret. Because Jesus tells us plainly, "I am the way and the truth and the life."

Throughout John's gospel this has been the theme: in Jesus, we have life. That's how John's Gospel starts, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... and in him was life and the life was the light of men." And at the end of his gospel, John says that same thing: "These things are written that you may have life in his name."

That's God's promise to us. In Jesus, we have the way and the truth and the life that God creates us to be. In Jesus, we find the blessing that God has in store for us. In Jesus, we find the power for living and the essence of life itself.

That's why he tells us. "I am the way and the truth and the life." In Jesus' name. Amen.