

Shepherds' Conference
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Cf. The Institute for Church Leadership (@ tms.edu)

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The Way, the Truth, and the Life
John 14:6

The words of Jn. 14:6 have to be among the most hated in our pluralistic and modernistic post-Christian world. But this the milieu in which we live today. In some ways this is not new: Pilate asked, “what is truth?” and then immediately left the presence of the One who embodied the truth. He had no tolerance for the truth.

Many evangelical leaders have come to believe and teach the same doctrines (of the RC church regarding the exclusivity of Christ). Many have capitulated to the pressure of our time.

Others have become particular (they believe the essential nature of Christ's work) inclusivists (the believe that some may come to faith different pathways apart from knowing Christ, e.g., Clark Pinnock). Christ's saving work is what allows others to be saved through other means and mediators. Deepak Chopra says Jn. 14:6 is nothing more than Jesus achieving God consciousness.

Salvation demands that we must believe that Jesus is equal to no one; He is something other than all men! All pathways *do* lead to God — but some to appear at the judgment seat of Christ! The Buddhist and Hindu and moralist will all get to the presence of God, but all for his judgment.

If we do not stand by faith, we will not stand at all. We must stand by faith or we will face damnation.

These words were spoken by Christ on the night prior to His going to the cross; on that night there was an announcement of His death, that one would deny Him, and that at a critical time on the night, the entire group would deny Him. How tense must the atmosphere have been? The assurance that Christ gave them (14:1) was in *Him* and in Him alone.

Jesus' statement in 14:6 is a response to Thomas in 14:5 — “how do we know the way?;” this entire passage is a series of answers from Jesus to the disciples. This answer is one of self-identity. Listen to Christ's expressions of self-identity through His “I am” statements:

- ✓ 6:35 — bread
- ✓ 8:12 — light
- ✓ 10:9 — gate
- ✓ 10:11 — good shepherd
- ✓ 14:6 — way, truth, and life
- ✓ 11:25-26 — resurrection and life
- ✓ 15:1 — true vine

Christ spoke of Himself as the self-expression of God. The Rabbi could not speak that way; they thought authority was in the Torah; for Christ the authority was not in the Torah, but in Him!

“You have heard it said, but I say to you...” He was the Lord of the Torah and He was the giver of the Law He came to fulfill.

Jesus didn’t just say, “I show you the way and the truth and the life,” but “I *am* the way...” Only Jesus could make such a claim. This one single phrase tells us who He is, what He came for, and how to attain spiritual life. Here are the four *real* spiritual laws. He leaves out any other spiritual teacher, before or after Him.

1. I am the Way

Satan offers to man different avenues to please God — philosophy, morality, religions, good effort,... We are fighting the different belief systems that are combating the single truth system of God.

Christ told us to follow Him because He is the way. He is not only taking us, but He will never leave nor forsake us. He is the way — the linkage between two different points: man to God, darkness to light, slavery to freedom, an orphan to son, death to life. He is *the way*. In Acts, six times believers were called part of *The Way*. People reject that Christ is the only way because in our fallen condition, rebellion is our nature (and crucifixion of the Son is our cure).

(See Boice’s commentary on John for a number of different pathways that man attempts to follow to avoid following Christ.)

There is only one thing worse than being lost without God, and that is being lost without God and thinking you are saved.

2. I am the Truth

Adam fell when he embraced a lie and ceased to believe the truth. It was that simple. The mess we find ourselves in today is the result of Adam’s exchange of the truth for a lie. Idolatry is the corruption of the truth (1:25). Every idol of the heart is related to a lie that the mind has embraced. Man has become a slave to his own value system. We do not see things the way they are; we see them the way we are. But Christ is the One who allows us to focus and see the truth and lies for what they both are.

Christ is the truth that allows us to see the rest of the picture. Christ summarized His entire mission in one simple phrase: “I came to testify to the truth” (18:37). He was born for one reason — to testify to the truth. Knowing the truth is paramount because it affects the entire spectrum of human existence.

Christ came to speak the truth and to embody the truth! “Teach me Your way...I will walk in Your truth.” The psalmist put these two truths together.

3. I am the Life

Adam heard the message of God, “Do not eat,” and he ate. The second Adam came and said, “Eat,” and man did not. The first Adam ate and died; the second Adam said “Eat,” and gave life.

The second Adam gives life through His death.

4. No One Comes to the Father Except Through Me

If that single statement was offensive then what would it be like today? There is no other means of salvation.

The world hates it when Jesus says that Jesus is the truth; that makes Him exclusive in every point in time. Hindus are willing to take Jesus as one more teacher because error always has room for truth, but truth has no room for error.

In a pluralistic society, it is a necessity to establish the way. In a postmodern society, it is essential to proclaim as the only source of life. It is the pulling away from Christ that is bringing the demise of our culture.

We either go to Heaven with Him or to Hell without Him and that is the brutal truth. Therefore, we must persuade men that He is the truth that will set men free from the bondage of sin and that He is life in whom we live and move and have our being.