

Asking For A Friend Message Series

OUTLINE: Do All Religions Lead to the Same God? Salvation; Merit or mercy?

John 14:1-7 *"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. 2My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3And 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. 4You know the way to the place where I am going."*5Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"6Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

Faith is no more valid that the object in which it is placed no matter how sincere or how intense their faith is.

Jesus made the claim that he is the way, the truth and the life – He is the only way to God the Father. Acts 4: 12 "Salvation is found in no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved. "

1. Some of the different world religions

a. **Hinduism** –started in 1400BC - worship millions of gods. Goal is to reach moksha which is to escape the endless cycle of reincarnations (samsara). There are 3 ways to do this – the way of knowledge, devotion or works.

b. **Buddhism** started 525BC by Siddhartha Gautama – called himself the Buddha or enlightened one. Said that life is suffering and to escape it and to reach Nirvana one has to follow the 8-fold path.

c. **Islam** – founded by Muhammed in 625 AD. Who received visions and wrote them down in the Koran which Islam's holy book. They must follow the 5 pillars of Islam to obey Allah and they believe that at the end of their life if their good works outweigh their bad deeds they will go to heaven.

d. **Judaism** – the oldest world religion foundational to Christianity and Islam. They believe the Old Testament of the Bible but that the first 5 books, the Torah, are the most authoritative –they emphasize repentance and obedience to the laws of God.

Religious R_____: the idea that it doesn't matter what religion you adhere to they all lead to the same god anyway. One similarity between these world religions is that they are works religions - they all must *do* something in order to achieve their goal.

2. The uniqueness of Christianity – what sets Christianity apart?

Other religions say, " _D_____" and Christianity says, " _D_____".

a. Jesus said, I am the _W____ – he doesn't just point to the way – he is the W____ to the Father.

b. Jesus says, I am the T_____ – he doesn't say that he points to the truth but that He is T_____ – He claims to be God. John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word and Word was with God and the Word was God, He was with God in the beginning. Vs14 and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. 'Word' in Greek is *logos* – which means 'the reason for life'. Jesus is the Word – the reason for life.

c. Jesus says, He is the L_____ No one comes to the Father except through me. Jesus said that he came so that we may have life, life to the full. John 10:10

3. How we can respond to the claims of Jesus. What action does Jesus inspire in us?

- a. We can't stay L_____ towards Jesus; either you see him for who He really is – that He is God or you reject him. You can't stay somewhere in the middle.
- b. Even though Jesus claims are exclusive they are the most I_____ exclusivity.
- c. We must tell others the Good News of who Jesus is and what he has done for them. We must remain humble, we cannot be arrogant– it's like one beggar telling another beggar where the food is. 1 Peter 3:15 *But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.*

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Soul Food Day 1

Jesus Reveals Himself to Nathaniel

Scripture John 1:43-51

“Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, ‘Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!’ Nathanael said to him, ‘How do you know me?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.’ Nathanael answered him, ‘Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!’”

Among the most striking realities of the modern West is the deep feeling of alienation that people experience.

Because of technology, we are more connected to one another than ever before. Yet at the same time, we seem more disconnected from one another than we ever have been. Many of us do not know our neighbors. We experience an emotional separation between each other as individuals but also between us and our society, our occupations, and our purpose.

Scripture explains why this sense of alienation exists, telling us that it is rooted in our separation and estrangement from our Creator. Having broken God's law in Adam, sinners find themselves hiding from God and blaming one another for their predicament (Gen. 3:1–13). Our alienation on the human level can be remedied only by reconciliation between us and God, so it is understandable that the Old Testament contains many accounts of joy and celebration when people found access to the presence of God. For example, several psalms extol the beauty and joy that people found when they went up to worship God in the Jerusalem temple (Ps. 26:8; 27:4). Consider also the joy that Jacob expressed when he met the Lord in the wilderness and had his vision of a ladder (Gen. 28:10–22). This ladder, on which angels ascended and descended, connected the earth to heaven, providing a means of access to God's presence.

Jesus references this story in His meeting with Nathanael, as recorded in John 1:43–51. Nathanael is certainly correct that Jesus' knowledge of his location before meeting him was amazing, but Jesus says that the greater sign will be when Nathanael sees angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man (vv. 48–51). Our Lord's message is clear—He alone is the means of access to God's presence. He is Jacob's ladder.

That Jesus is the only way to heaven is not popular in our pluralistic and relativistic society, but we profess that He alone can reconcile us to our Creator not on our authority but on the authority of Christ.

We must never compromise on the fact that Jesus alone is the way, the truth, and the life (14:6)

Human beings try to ascend to heaven in various ways, always relying on their own merit for entry into eternal life. But there is no other way to God than through Jesus. We cannot enter heaven on our own merit; neither will Muhammad, Buddha, Krishna, or any other figure take us there.

If we do not tell other people that Jesus is the only way to God, we do not truly love them.

Application

- What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
- What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel

comforted, convicted & challenged?

- What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?
- Now talk to Jesus...

Adapted from: <https://tabletalkmagazine.com/daily-study/2017/05/jesus-reveals-himself-nathanel/>

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Soul Food Day 2

Whoever Has the Son

Scripture: 1 John 5:11–12 *“Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life”*

It is clear from reading of the Gospels that Jesus said and did many things that seemed scandalous to those in His culture.

His willingness to dine with known sinners offended many who did not have a right view of their own depravity (Matt. 9:10–13). Even His disciples found it hard to receive His teaching that He must die and rise again (Mark 8:31–33).

Perhaps His most scandalous statement of all is recorded in the gospel according to John. Jesus’ statement that He is “the way, the truth, and the life” and that “no one comes to the Father” except through Him (14:6) instantly offends any who will not submit to His lordship. To those who think their own goodness and righteousness is the way to salvation, this statement instantly demands total allegiance — not to one’s own effort but to the life and teaching of the Christ. In today’s pluralistic and relativistic culture, these words of our Savior are the least likely to be embraced out of any that came from His mouth.

In today’s passage, John brings his section on the testimony concerning the real incarnation of Jesus to a close with a reminder of what comes to us when we believe in the biblical Christ. To those who have the Son, to those who believe in His name, God has given eternal life, and all those who do not have the Son of God do not have life (vv. 11–12).

Today there are many who think they have life, but in denying the biblical testimony about Jesus they reveal they do not have it at all. All those who will receive the testimony of God recorded in sacred Scripture, all those who will

trust in Jesus alone, all those who will place their destiny in the hands of the Son, will never perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

Being eternal, the life God offers to us in His Son cannot be lost. All those who believe will never be separated from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:38–39). We will not have a full experience of this life until the age to come. Yet even now it is ours, enabling us to live with hope in this present darkness.

Our sovereign God has chosen to grant eternal life only to those who will receive His Son. We are likely to have no problem affirming this teaching, but how many of us neglect sharing the Gospel with lost family, friends, and neighbors and thereby in practice deny that life comes only in His name?

If you do not know any non-Christians, meet one and endeavor to share the Gospel with him/her.

Application

- What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
- What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted & challenged?
- What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?
- Now talk to Jesus...

Adapted from: <https://tabletalkmagazine.com/daily-study/2005/11/whoever-has-the-son/>

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Soul Food Day 3

The Way, the Truth, the Life

Scripture: John 14:6 *“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”*

There is only one way to God the Father and that is through Jesus Christ

The “I am” saying of Jesus in today’s passage certainly ranks among the most well-known statements of our Lord. Before we look at the statement’s meaning, however, it is worth noting that it appears in what has been called Jesus’ “Farewell Discourse.” Jesus delivered it on the eve of the greatest crisis His disciples would face—His crucifixion. This crisis would pass, but Jesus would also ascend to heaven, departing from them bodily. Christ had to prepare them for the dark days that lay ahead, and He did not do so with a call for them to “man up” or to “just get over it.” Instead, He gave them a theology lesson with key practical ramifications.

As part of this theology lesson, Jesus asserted, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). The truth that Jesus is the way to God echoes His claim to be the Door of the Sheep in John 10:7–9. There is only one God and He has only one kingdom with only one entrance—Jesus Christ. Only those who rest in Christ alone for salvation will enter heaven. This message was controversial and offensive to the pluralistic pagan culture of the first-century Roman Empire, and it is perhaps even more so today. If we shrink back from declaring it, however, we are sinning against our neighbors, for what could be a worse transgression against them than to know the only way to eternal

life and yet not tell them about it? Moreover, Jesus is not only the sole avenue to life eternal, but He is the source and guarantor of life itself.

If Jesus' claim to be the Way and the Life were false, it would hardly be a comfort to us or worth hearing. Thus, Jesus' revelation of Himself in John 14:6 as the Truth serves to give us confidence in our Lord. He is the source and standard of truth, the One whose revelation in Scripture and in nature forms a sure foundation on which to stand. Since Jesus is the Truth, we are not engaging in wish fulfillment when we believe in Him. Instead, we are receiving divine truth. He is fully trustworthy, and because of this we can trust every word of Scripture, for Jesus affirms that God Himself inspired the prophets and Apostles (Matt. 4:4; 19:3–6).

The Scriptures are truth. We know this because the Truth—Jesus Christ—has confirmed them.

Application

- What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
- What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted & challenged?
- What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?
- Now talk to Jesus...

Adapted from: <https://tabletalkmagazine.com/daily-study/2016/02/way-truth-life/>

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Soul Food Day 4

The Infinite Gospel

Scripture: John 21:25 *“Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.”*

There is no doubt that Jesus is God!

Today's passage records the concluding comments on the life and ministry of Jesus in the Gospel of John. John notes that Jesus did many other things that he did not include in his narrative (see also 20:30–31). In fact, if anyone were to write them down, even the whole world could not contain the number of books it would require to provide such an account (21:25).

How could John write this statement? After all, Jesus' earthly ministry—His time teaching throughout Palestine and doing miracles—lasted approximately three years. Furthermore, He lived only about thirty-three years before going to the cross. Surely, a record could have been made of everything He said and did in His life and ministry, since it was a relatively short period. Certainly, the world could contain the number of books it would require, for it was not an earthly life and ministry of infinite length.

Yet, while Jesus' earthly life and ministry were not of infinite length, they were of infinite significance. How could we ever begin to examine and apply all of who Jesus is as the Son of Man (3:1–15); the One with life in Himself (5:26); the Bread of Life (6:35); the Living Water (7:38); the Light of the world (8:12); the Good Shepherd (10:11); the Resurrection and the Life (11:25); the Savior of the world (12:47); the Way, the Truth, and the Life (14:6); the Giver of the Holy Spirit (v. 16); the True Vine (15:1); the Great Intercessor (chap. 17); and the King of the Jews

(19:19)? Furthermore, Jesus is the Word of God, the Son of the Father—the Creator Himself incarnate (1:1–18; 8:58). He has always been and always will be, so to record every act and teaching of our Lord would mean including everything He has done, is doing, and will do from eternity past to eternity future.

John Calvin comments that while more could have been written about Jesus, “the summary which the Evangelists have committed to writing, is sufficient both for regulating faith and for obtaining salvation.” We have enough now to know and trust our Savior. And we who trust in Him will dwell with Him forever, learning more and more from Him throughout eternity.

Whoever believes in God’s only begotten Son will not perish but will have eternal life (John 3:16).

Dr. R.C. Sproul comments on today’s passage in his commentary on John, “The record [of Jesus’ life] that we have is enough to sate our appetites and call us back to this testimony again and again and again.” Our duty as Christ’s disciples is to return to His Word regularly to learn from Him and to increase our affection for Him. Let us continue to study John’s gospel—and all of Scripture—for the rest of our lives.

Application

- What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
- What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel

comforted, convicted & challenged?

- What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?
- Now talk to Jesus...

Adapted from: <https://tabletalkmagazine.com/daily-study/2018/12/the-infinite-gospel/>

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Soul Food Day 5

Don’t Be So Open-minded

Scripture: John 14:6 *Jesus said I am the way , the Truth and The life and no one comes to the Father except through me.*

Our enemy’s supreme deception is in his attempt to convince us that he doesn’t exist.

Toward that end, he has launched his assault against us with every weapon in his carefully fashioned arsenal. Perhaps his greatest success is in persuading us that being open-minded is a good thing. For it is precisely when we accept the notion that open-mindedness is a Christian virtue that we fall into the same devilish trap by which our first parents were ensnared.

Once our minds are open to open-mindedness, all ideas, no matter how absurd, can come and go as they please — with our sanction. We thus become headless and brainless philosophers who just want to get along. One such philosopher and self-proclaimed theologian has written: “So I believe we have radically to rethink our

understanding of the place of Christianity in the global religious picture. And we have to face the fact that it is one path amongst others, and then reform our belief-system to be compatible with this. This is the big new challenge that theologians and church leaders have yet to face. We have to become consciously what are called religious pluralists.” This is the mantra of religious pluralists: Liberate your mind, lose your faith, and feel the love.

Although many professed evangelicals have become precarious evanjellyfish, I would like to think that most have not yet succumbed to the most blatant sort of religious pluralism. Nevertheless, being the narrow-minded biblical fundamentalist that I am, I am decidedly closed-minded to anything that is not biblical, and I concur with John Calvin: “Wherefore all theology, when separated from Christ, is not only vain and confused, but is also mad, deceitful, and spurious; for, though the philosophers sometimes utter excellent sayings, yet they have nothing but what is short-lived, and even mixed up with wicked and erroneous sentiments.” As the closed-minded, Christ-minded faithful we must join arms against the satanic pluralism of our day, whether it is decreed from the Vatican or broadcast from Mecca.

We live and breathe for Christ alone and proclaim that there is only one way to God. Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6).

Application

- What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
- What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted & challenged?
- What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?

- Now talk to Jesus...

Adapted from: <https://tabletalkmagazine.com/article/2008/06/dont-be-so-open-minded/>

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houseChurch material:

John 14:1-7 *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. 2My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3And 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. 4You know the way to the place where I am going.”*

5Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

6Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

1. Have different readers read the Bible passage from 2 or more different translations.

2. Reflect & meditate between each reading

4. Application

1. What did you hear during the reading? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?

2. What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said?

How do you feel comforted, convicted & challenged from the reading?

3. What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?

4. Share any of the above discoveries with your houseChurch. Ask each other, "What is your nugget?"

Discussion questions

1. Who do you know who adheres to another religion ? What do you know about that religion?

2. What are the main differences between other religions and Christianity?

3. What do you understand about Jesus' claim that he is the Way, the Truth and the Life? What difference does that make in your life?

4. Discuss this statement: If we do not tell other people that Jesus is the only way to God, we do not truly love them.

5. Discuss these statements from Rick Warren :

What do you do with the truth once you've discovered it? Four things:

1. Believe the truth!

2. Do the truth. Truth is not just an intellectual exercise. It's something you obey.

3. Stand for the truth. The Bible tells us our responsibility is to never oppose the truth but to stand for it at all times.

4. Spread the truth.