

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS
Commentary by Michael Sigler
May 27, 2012

The Way, the Truth, and the Life

Read John 14:1-14

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

“Without the Way, there is no going. Without the Truth, there is no knowing. Without the Life, there is no living.” So wrote the medieval devotional writer, Thomas a Kempis. It was his way of paraphrasing the immortal words of Jesus from John 14:6.

In this great verse, we are confronted with both the universality and the exclusivity of Jesus. Yes, the claims of Christ are narrow in that Jesus clearly claims to be the only way to the Father. But the claims of Christ are also graciously universal, in that Jesus offers salvation to anyone and everyone who will receive it through faith in Him.

For the believer, John 14:6 offers a map for the Christian journey:

(1) As “the way,” Jesus himself is our path to the Father. The Christian way is less about a religion than it is about a *relationship* with God through Christ. We are called, then, to follow the person of Jesus Christ, as we walk daily with Christ through the presence of His Spirit. (2) As “the truth,” Jesus himself is *truth personified*. Christian discipleship involves pursuing a relationship with Jesus, who is the truth. To know Christ is to know truth! (3) As “the life,” Jesus connects us *now* to the life of God, so that—through Christ—we have life abundant and eternal.

Beyond verse 6, this passage (John 14:1-14), offers us some amazing promises:

In John 14:12, we find *the promise of “greater works.”* Jesus said, “Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.” Living in the power of the Holy Spirit and in connection with other believers, we are Christ’s hands and feet—His body. We are part of Christ’s work that takes the gospel of His kingdom to the whole world!

John 14:13-14 offers *the promise of answered prayer:* “I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.”

William Barclay offers some insight into understanding and appropriating this great promise: "Note carefully what Jesus said. He did *not* say that all our prayers would be granted. He said that our prayers *made in His name* would be granted....When we pray, we must always ask: Can I honestly pray this *in the name of Jesus*? The prayer which in the end says, Thy will be done, is always answered. But the prayer which is based on *self* cannot expect to be heard, because it is prayer in the name of self and not in the name of Jesus" (from Barclay's *The Daily Study Bible*).

Finally, in John 14:1-3, Jesus gives us *the promise of life after death*: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also."

A number of years ago, Charles Fuller announced that he would be speaking the following Sunday on "Heaven." During that week, Fuller received a letter from an elderly man who was very ill and who listened to Fuller's sermons on the radio. The following is part of his letter:

Next Sunday you are to talk about heaven. I am interested in that land, because I have held a clear title to a bit of property there for over 55 years. I did not buy it. It was given to me without money and without price. But the Donor purchased it for me at tremendous sacrifice. I am not holding it for speculation since the title is not transferable. It is not a vacant lot.

For more than half a century I have been sending materials out of which the greatest Architect and Builder of the universe has been building a home for me which will never need to be remodeled or repaired because it will suit me perfectly, individually, and will never grow old.

Termites can never undermine its foundations for they rest on the Rock of Ages. Fire cannot destroy it. Floods cannot wash it away. No locks or bolts will ever be placed upon its doors, for no vicious person can ever enter that land where my dwelling stands, now almost completed and almost ready for me to enter in and abide in peace eternally, without fear of being ejected.

There is a valley of deep shadow between the place where I live in California and that to which I shall journey in a very short time. I cannot reach my home in that City of Gold without passing through this dark valley of shadows. But I am not afraid because the best Friend I ever had went through the same valley long, long ago and drove away all its gloom. He has stuck by me through thick and thin, since we first became acquainted 55 years ago, and I hold His promise in printed form never to forsake me or leave me alone.

He will be with me as I walk through the valley of shadows, and I will not lose my way when He is with me.

I hope to hear your sermon on heaven next Sunday from my home in Los Angeles, but I have no assurance that I will be able to do so. My ticket to heaven has no date marked for the journey—no return coupon—and no permit for baggage. Yes, I am all ready to go and I may not be here while you are talking next Sunday evening, but I will meet you there someday!

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