

The Gospel of John (84) The Departure and Return of Jesus (2)

Let us return to the passage that we began to consider last Lord's Day—John 14:1-11. In these verses our Lord Jesus was speaking to His eleven remaining disciples (Judas had departed to do his deed). Jesus spoke regarding His departure from them and His certain, future return for them. And so, on the very evening of His arrest, on the last occasion that Jesus would have with His apostles before His cross, Jesus informed them of what was in store for Him and for them. But in speaking with them, Jesus' desire was not merely to inform them, but He would comfort them and assure them that all that He was about to experience was for their benefit.

“Tis usual for living friends to comfort those who are dying; but here the dying Master is comforting His surviving servants.” (Ralph Robinson – 1614-1655)

Actually, in these first 11 verses, but also in the passages that follow after, the Lord Jesus gave “many ingredients” to His “cup of comfort” that He gave to His disciples.¹ Here are the assertions made by **Ralph Robinson**:

1. Jesus stated that His departure would be for their benefit. He said, “In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you” (14:2).
2. Jesus stated that He would return for them so that they would be together again, and that forever. He then said, “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (14:3).
3. The place that Jesus was going from them -- His Father's house, heaven -- was known to them as a happy prospect. Jesus said to them, “And where I go you know, and the way you know” (14:4)
4. The love that Jesus had for them would be as great after His departure as it was before He left them. He assured them that He would grant them anything and everything that was needful. Jesus said, “And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it” (14:13, 14). “Though He should be out of their sight, yet He would not be out of their hearing.”²
5. Jesus would send the Helper—the Holy Spirit-- who would dwell with them in His absence. We read in 14:16f and 26 these words:

“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— ¹⁷the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

²⁶“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”

¹ These were listed in Ralph Robinson, **Christ, All in All** (London, 1660), pp. 367f.

² Ibid.

6. Jesus assured them of peace in their conscience, which would “sweeten every bitter condition.” In John 14:27 these words of Jesus are recorded: “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Although very soon Jesus would be suffering unto death, He seemed to be more concerned for the comfort and well-being of His disciples, than He had concern for Himself. But that is who Jesus is and what He is like toward His own.

Let us again read the first 11 verses of John 14.

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴And where I go you know, and the way you know.”

⁵Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?”

⁶Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

⁷“If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.”

⁸Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.”

⁹Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. ¹¹Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

The outline that we are employing to address this passage contains three divisions. There is (1) first, *the promise of a place where Jesus was going* (14:1-4), (2) secondly, *Jesus is the only way to God the Father* (14:5-6), and (3) thirdly *Jesus as the revelation of God the Father* (14:7-11). We addressed the first division last week. Today we will address the second. However, let me first say a few words regarding John 14:4, which we did not address in detail last week.

After the Lord Jesus had announced to His disciples that He would soon be leaving them but that He would return for them, Jesus stated with respect to His departure in **verse 4**, “*And where I go you know, and the way you know.*” The disciples of Jesus were not completely ignorant of the place to which Jesus was going and how they could follow after Him to that place. Jesus affirmed to them, “You know where I am going and how to get there.” The English Standard Version (ESV) translates this idea more clearly. Jesus said, “And you know the way to where I am going.” Throughout our Lord’s ministry in which His disciples observed and heard Him, in addition to the private conversations that Jesus had with His disciples, He made known to them “the way” to follow that would lead them unto their heavenly destination.

Jesus is asserting that they know how to follow Him. He has been showing them the way in the whole body of His teaching. If they follow that way they will come where He is.³

Our Lord’s words in this verse seem rather puzzling when we consider the verses that follow. It would seem that after Jesus said that they know, Thomas indicated they did not know “the way.” Consider verse 5 which reads, “Thomas said to Him, ‘Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?’” **Donald Carson** (b. 1947) made this point regarding our Lord’s assertion in verse 4 and the response of Thomas in verse 5:

³ Leon Morris, **The Gospel According to John** (William B. Eerdmans, 1971), p. 640.

Although Jesus tells His disciples, *You know the way to the place where I am going*, the next verse demonstrates that, at some level, they know nothing of the sort. John's point is not that Jesus has made some terrible error in assessing His disciples, but that precisely because they know Him they *do* know the way to the place He has just prescribed. Once again it is by reading on and then coming back and re-reading the text that we find Jesus' anticipation of His clear, impending statement that He Himself is the way (v. 6).⁴

Do you understand what Carson was saying? He says that when Jesus declared in verse 4, ***And where I go you know, and the way you know***, it was as though Jesus were saying something like this: "Although you may not realize it, you already know where I am going and you already know the way to follow me there, although you may not be aware that you know."

We may now look to the next section of our passage, in which we read that...

II. Jesus is the only way to God the Father (14:5-6)

It was after our Lord's initial words that Thomas spoke up, honestly and forthrightly, stating his and the others' ignorance of these matters. For although the Lord had already imparted to them this information through His teaching and example, they had not understood fully the implications and relevance of His words. We read in **verse 5**, "***Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?'***"

Several of the twelve disciples are portrayed by the Gospel writers with certain characteristics. It is well known that Peter is shown to be the rather forward, impetuous of the lot. John Himself was the most beloved disciple of the Lord. Judas was a thief. What of Thomas? **Donald Carson** (b. 1947) wrote of him:

Thomas appears in the Fourth Gospel as a loyal, even a courageous, disciple, but one who is liberally endowed with misapprehensions and doubts. His question sounds as if he interpreted Jesus' words in the most crassly natural way: he wants an unambiguous destination, for without such a destination how can one meaningfully speak of the route there? Dodd (IFG, p. 412, n. 1) goes beyond the evidence when he argues that the sequence runs like this: Jesus: 'You know the way; you do not need to know where it leads.' Thomas: 'If we do not know the destination, how can we know the way?' In fact, Jesus has spelled out the destination (vs. 2-3) and advised them that they also know the way (v. 4). Thomas replies, in effect, that he (and the other disciples) have not really come to grips with what He has said about the destination, so how could Jesus' further insistence that they know the way bear coherent meaning?⁵

It is clear that Thomas spoke up on behalf of all of the disciples for he said, "***we do not know.***" Peter had expressed similar ignorance in John 13:36, when He asked Jesus, "Lord, where are You going?" We see from Thomas's reaction that Jesus' statement in verse 4 was designed to elicit the thinking and foster the contemplation of His disciples about these matters. The result was one of the golden texts of Scripture that beautifully encapsulates the heart of the gospel.

We read Jesus' response to Thomas in **verse 6**. "***Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'***" The Lord Jesus had set the stage for this declaration, as one once stated:

The disciple's lack of understanding, as so often, provides opportunity for Jesus to clarify the revelation. The saying is commonly recognized as ranking with John 3:16 as an outstanding expression of the

⁴ Donald Carson, **The Gospel According to John** (William B. Eerdmans. 1991), p. 490.

⁵ Ibid, pp. 490f.

Gospel. “It forms a classical summary of the Johannine doctrine of salvation that is based entirely on Jesus Christ.”⁶

Our Lord’s response directed to Thomas, but in the hearing and benefit for all of His disciples, was His assertion of three descriptions of Himself. Each one of these three statements is preceded with the definite article (“the”) in the Greek text. Jesus first said to Thomas, “I am *the way*.” He then declared secondly, “I am *the truth*.” And then third, Jesus said to Thomas, “I am *the life*.” The grammar suggests that these three statements are three equal and separate claims that Jesus made regarding Himself. He then stated the fact that He was the only Mediator between fallen man and God, when He declared, “*No one comes to the Father except through Me*.” Let us consider each of our Lord’s three declarations of Himself, and then we will examine his concluding assertion that He is exclusively the means of knowing and relating to God the Father.

A. Jesus declared, “*I am the way*.”

Now we already said that each of these three declarations of Jesus are preceded with the definite article. This makes each of these three depictions of Jesus have equal force with one another. However, the first statement, “I am the way”, may be seen as having some priority because of the repetition of the word in the passage. The “way” is mentioned in three of the verses in our passage:

- (1) Verse 4 records, “And where I go you know, and *the way* you know.”
- (2) Verse 5 reads, “Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know *the way*?”
- (3) Verse 6 declares, “Jesus said to him, “I am *the way*, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

This may give some weight to the first of the three expressions.

But some expositors go farther by claiming that all three statements are not co-equal, but they give greater emphasis to the first statement in which Jesus declared, “I am the way.” They then regard and treat the following two statements as subordinate and supportive of this first statement. This was John Calvin’s understanding, one to whom we should give high regard. Another is the well-known London preacher of the 19th century, **Alexander Maclaren** (1826-1910). Here are his words:

“Jesus saith unto him: I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.” Now it is quite plain, I think, from the whole strain of the context and the purpose of these words that the main idea in them is the first—“I am the way.” And that is made more certain because of the last words of the verse, which, summing up the force of the preceding assertions, dwell only upon the metaphor of the way; “No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.” So that these three great words, the way, the truth, and the life, we are to regard the second and third as explanatory of the first. They are not co-ordinate, but the first is the more general, and the other two show how the first comes to be true. ‘I am the way’ because ‘I am the truth and the life.’⁷

To what did our Lord mean by declaring that He was the way? When we speak of a “way”, we are referring to a course or pathway that leads to a desired destination. To what destination was Jesus referring? In verse 2 Jesus declared these words to His disciples, “In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were

⁶ George R. Beasley-Murray, **John**, 2nd edition, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 36 (Thomas Nelson, 1999), p. 252.

⁷ Alexander Maclaren, **Expositions of Holy Scripture. St. John, Chapters IX to XIV** (Baker Book House, n.d.), p. 285.

not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.” The destination to which Jesus is the way is His Father’s house, where, of course, His Father dwells.

Whither this way leads, is to be gathered from what goes before; *His Father’s house*, v. 2, the place prepared for God’s elect, v. 3, the state of bliss and happiness. Tis heaven itself.

But it is not simply to the place where God the Father dwells⁸, but it is to the Father Himself. Again, Jesus declared in verse 6 that no one can come unto the Father except through Him. Jesus is the way unto the Father.

We have already considered a few words of Ralph Robinson respecting these verses. I gleaned and summarized some more of his comments that I thought might be useful for us. First, in stating that Jesus is the way, he wrote:

“Jesus Christ is not only a way, but He is the way. Jesus Christ is not only the best way, but He is the sole way to heaven. Jesus Christ is in the same sense called “the door” (John 10:7).

Now the question may be asked, *In what respects Christ is called the way to heaven, the dwelling place of God the Father?* This may be answered in several ways. Christ is called the way to heaven in that He acquired us for and unto heaven. Jesus Christ purchased us, His people, in order to bring us to God the Father in heaven. We read in Revelation 5 that the redeemed of heaven sing of their redemption by Jesus Christ. We read, “And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation’” (Rev. 5:9).

But Christ may also be called the way to heaven and the presence of God by way of manifestation and demonstration. Jesus Christ showed us the way to heaven. Through Christ people are taught how to obtain salvation. Through His life of righteousness, His suffering and death in His crucifixion, and through His glorious resurrection He showed us the way in which He secured our way to heaven.

Christ may also be called the way to heaven in that He prepares us His people through this life for our certain, future entrance into the presence of God. Jesus Christ makes His people suitable for heaven. He secures for them pardon of their sins. He enables their adoption into the family of God. He has made provision for the final judgment that we will not be condemned in sin because we will stand before Him in the righteousness of Jesus Christ having been pardoned of all of our sins.

Christ is the way to our Father in heaven by His example to us, by His Word that instructs us and directs us, and by His Spirit that helps us, comforts us, and empowers us in our journey unto Mt. Zion. We follow Him as we look to Him and stay close to Him.

Jesus Christ is the way to heaven into the presence of God our Father through His own person who represents us and stands in our stead. All that God has bestowed upon us has been in Christ Jesus. Our election is in Christ (Eph. 1:4), our heavenly calling (vocation) was in Christ (Phil. 3:14). Our justification, sanctification, and redemption were in Christ (1 Cor. 1:30). And our certain and future perseverance is in Christ Jesus.

None shall be saved but such as continue unto the end; our perseverance is not the cause of our salvation no more than our grace; *we are saved by the grace of God*, not by and for our own grace; yet is both grace and perseverance necessary unto salvation. Now as our grace is from Christ Jesus, so is our perseverance in grace. Tis by continual influences from Him, that grace which is in its own nature a persisting creature doth continue. Tis by virtue of our union with Christ which is an inseparable union, that we do persevere in grace (John 15:4). Because our union with the vine cannot be dissolved,

⁸ We know of course, that God is an infinite spirit and that His fulness is in every place. He is omnipresent. And so, when we speak of God “dwelling” in heaven in His “house”, we are referring to the manifestation of His presence that He is pleased to reveal to and enjoy by His people

therefore cannot grace totally perish. Jesus Christ doth continually communicate influences of grace by His Spirit, and therefore doth grace abide forever.⁹

Jesus Christ is our way unto the Father. His way is a certain way, a new way, a safe way, a comfortable way, a plain way, a holy way, and a very costly way. Christ is the way unto the Father, having been chosen by the Father to come into this world, save us from our sin, and to bring us to heaven by Him.

What should be the response of those who believe our Lord's own words that He is the way unto God His Father in heaven? What should one do who has not fully closed with Christ in coming to Him as Lord and Savior? It has been asserted that you must...

1. Labor to see your need of Christ.
2. Labor to be convinced of Christ's suitableness to your soul.
3. Be convinced of Christ's willingness to bestow Himself upon you.
4. Stand in the way where Christ comes. Be in the place of sound, biblical preaching.
5. Cry unto Him to take you unto Himself.
6. Get all that have an interest in Christ to join in crying out with you and for you.
7. When Christ takes you by the hand, do not draw back from Him.

What should be the response of those who believe our Lord's own words that He is the way unto God His Father in heaven? Purpose by the grace of God to continue in the way with Him. The way may be hard and difficult for us in that it may be a "narrow way", but leads to eternal life (Matt. 7:14). Rejoice in the way in our journey to our promised and certain destination—heaven, paradise, eternal Sabbath rest. Let us be as the Ethiopian Eunuch, who, after believing on Christ and confessing Him in baptism, "he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:27). Look unto Jesus Christ while in the way (Heb. 12:2). Encourage others to join with you in the way. And while in the way, consider the way of Christ with respect to your own unworthiness, your own propensity to stumbling, even as you face and overcome all opposition to you in this way.

We may now address the second statement, in which...

B. Jesus declared, "*I am the truth.*"

Jesus Christ is the truth. Anything and everything about Jesus Christ is true, because He is truth.

How much useless disputing, how many weary doubts, are saved to those who can put a real faith in Jesus! Everything practical and possible is known by knowing Him. Truth is a very large word, but all that it suggests is amply comprehended in Jesus. In Jesus only do we find the real, the abiding, and that which can never be shaken. How simplified our inquires become the moment we can rest in the all-sufficiency of Jesus! "Where is Jesus?" not "What is true?" becomes the main question then. All that lies outside of His intent and His support is seen to be but as a passing dream. All investigation of the problems of the universe is in vain apart from Him. All phenomenal realities, all human sciences, only find their use as they subordinate to the truth that is in Jesus Christ.¹⁰

How might we better understand this declaration of our Lord, "*I am the truth*"? *First*, we may consider Jesus Christ to be the truth in that *He is the realization of all of the figures and shadows that dimly portrayed Him in the Old Testament*. Christ is the reality of what the Old Testament foretold and foreshadowed. Some have sought to draw away Christians by looking to Old Testament types and shadows rather than to Jesus Christ to whom those things pointed. Paul warned the Christians in the church at Colossae of this spiritual danger. He wrote: "So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a

⁹ Ralph Robinson, **Christ, All in All** (London, 1660), pp. 364.

¹⁰ B. Thomas, **The Pulpit Commentary**, vol. 17, The Gospel of John, edited by H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell (William B. Eerdmans, 1950), p. 261.

festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ” (Col. 2:16f). Jesus Christ is the truth to which those Old Testament figures and practices pointed. And so, Jesus Christ is the true *manna*. Jesus declared in John 6:32, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the *true bread* from heaven.” Jesus is the *true veil* through which we may enter into the very presence of God. Hebrews 10:19 and 20 read, “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh...” And He is the true *High Priest* of which Old Testament high priests prefigured, as the following verse declares: “and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb. 10:22f). All of the Old Testament types and shadows were true, but they all pointed to Jesus Christ, who is *the truth*, the reality to which those things pointed.

Second, Jesus is the truth, as opposed to all error and falsehood. Paul wrote to Christians, “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ” (Col. 2:8). To turn away from Christ, who is the truth, is to turn unto error. Paul expressed it this way to the churches of Galatia:

⁶I marvel that you are turning away so soon *from Him* who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, ⁷which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. (Gal. 1:6-9)

When we come to Jesus Christ for salvation, as we are coming to Him in truth, it should cause us to walk in the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. Again, the apostle Paul wrote to Christians, new in the Lord.

¹⁷This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; ¹⁹who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

²⁰But you have not so learned Christ, ²¹***if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:*** ²²that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph. 4:17-24)

Third, Jesus Christ is the truth to all who trust Him, in that they find Him to be true, that is, truthful and faithful. As truth is opposed to fallacy and deceit, Jesus Christ is true to all who trust in Him. “For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us” (2 Cor. 1:20). Jesus Christ will never fail us. Jesus Christ will never betray us. Jesus Christ will never disappoint us. Jesus Christ is the truth.

There are numerous assurances that He is *the Truth itself*, that is, the adequate and sufficient expression of Divine *thought*... He is the absolute truth (1) about God’s nature; (2) the perfect Exponent of God’s idea of humanity; (3) the Light of the world; (4) the Expression of the reality touching the relations between moral beings and God... He is the Way because He is the whole Truth about God and man and concerning the way to the Father.¹¹

¹¹ B. Thomas, **The Pulpit Commentary**, vol. 17, The Gospel of John, edited by H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell (William B. Eerdmans, 1950), p. 222.

Fourth, Jesus Christ is the Teacher of the truth, for He is the truth. It is His teaching that instructs us and directs us in Him as the way unto the Father. All of His words are true words. He leads no one astray, but leads all who hear Him, believe on Him, and follow Him into paths of righteousness, for His truth is righteousness.

He is truth, as He is God's revelation of Himself to the world. To see Jesus Christ is to see the Father, for Jesus Christ is the clearest and fullest revelation of the Father to us. "He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature" (Heb. 1:3). To look into the face of Jesus is to look into the face of God. "For in him *all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell*, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. (Col. 1:19f).

We learn Divine truth in the ministry, the life, of God's Son. The truth as to God's character we read in the deeds of Immanuel, so gentle, yet so grand and God-like. The truth as to God's purposes of love we learn from Christ's sacrifice, from Christ's cross. The truth concerning our salvation we know when we witness Christ's victory over sin and death. It is the complete picture which portrays the complete original; he who would acquaint himself with the whole truth of God, as far as God related to man, must take into his mind the perfect and glorious representative offered in the gospel. There is no other way in which the truth can be grasped and held by the finite created nature. Know Him who *is* the truth; and then, then only, do you know the truth itself.¹²

Now we will consider the third claim that Jesus made of Himself:

C. Jesus declared, "*I am the life.*"

"The only life worthy of the name is that which Jesus brings, for He is life itself."¹³ Jesus is the source of life. Jesus is the meaning of life. Jesus is the origin of life. Jesus is the purpose of life. Jesus is the blessing of life. Having Jesus is the possession of life. Jesus is the power of life. Jesus is the certainty of life. Jesus is the beauty of life. Jesus is the proof of life. Jesus is the assurance of life. Jesus is God's gift of life. Jesus is God's giver of life. Jesus is the Author and Sustainer of life.

Christ is our life! He the source of our life! He is to be the focus of our life! He is the Lord of our life! He is the love of our life! The point is this: we need Jesus Christ and Him more abundantly, and then we will enjoy the abundant life that He has come to bring to us. If we are rejoicing in Jesus Christ and enjoying the fullness of life that comes with Him, then, we are connected to the life that God the Father gives to His people.

Jesus Christ is our life! We are to see Jesus Christ as the center and meaning of all we are as Christians. The Holy Scriptures use this kind of idea or language in a number of places. Our Lord told His disciples, "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. *Because I live, you will live also*" (John 14:19). Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:8-10, "We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed--always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that *the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.*" Galatians 4:19 reads, "My little children, for whom I labor in birth again *until Christ is formed in you.*" And Paul expressed in Philippians 1:21, "*For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*" The life we live is the life that we have in Jesus Christ.

Edward Klink wrote these words on our Lord's statement, "I am the life":

Jesus is "the life" in that He is the *source* through which Christian existence and participation in God are founded and given their origin. Jesus fulfils this by being the supplier of life and existence, the Creator of all living things—without whom "not one thing came into existence that has been made" (1:3). Jesus is the beginning and was "with God" in the beginning and is God, the second person of the Trinity. Jesus is life itself (1:4), is the One who has life in Himself (5:26), is the One who defines life

¹² Ibid, p. 241.

¹³ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (William B. Eerdmans, 1971), p. 641.

even over death, for Jesus is “the resurrection and the life (11:25). Since Jesus is “the life”, all the dichotomies are broken that have been created between life and death, this life and the life to come, the seen and the unseen.¹⁴

After our Lord made these three assertions regarding Himself, He declared that He was the exclusive way in which human beings may come to know God the Father.

D. Lastly, Jesus declared, “No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

People know or will come to know God as their Creator and their Judge apart from knowing Jesus Christ. But it is impossible for them to know God as Father apart from Jesus Christ. **“No one comes to the Father except through Me.”** A Christless life is a godless life. One might be very religious without Jesus Christ, but one cannot be truly godly without Jesus Christ.

To come to God the Father is the great need and should be the great goal of all humanity. This was the purpose and goal of the Lord Jesus, to bring people to the Father.

Christ explicitly says, that the entire goal of this wonderful way of His is the Father Himself. From the Father He came, to the Father He was moving, not for His own sake only, but also for King Messiah for all His subjects.¹⁵

Jesus Christ is the way to the Father, as **Matthew Henry** (1662-1714) stated:

Christ is *the way, the highway* spoken of (Isa. 35:8). Christ was His own way, for by *His own blood He entered into the holy place* (Heb. 9:12), and He is our way, for we enter by Him. By His doctrine and example He teaches us our duty, by His merit and intercession He procures our happiness, and so He is the way. In Him God and man meet, and are brought together. We could not get to the tree of life in the way of innocency; but Christ is another way to it. By Christ, the way is set up and kept up between heaven and earth; the angels of God ascend and descend; our prayers go to God, and His blessings come to us by Him; this is *the way that leads to rest, the good old way*. The disciples followed Him, and Christ tells them that they followed the road, and, while they continued following Him, they would never be out of their way. (Matthew Henry)

Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father. For the people today in the Western world, this statement is perhaps the most controversial one made this morning. The one who claims that the faith he espouses is the only true faith/religion in the world today, invites an immediate negative and hostile reaction. To claim that our faith in Jesus Christ is the only true faith that exists, is understood to be the belief of the bigot. But this is clearly the message of Holy Scripture and the message of Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus declared, “I am the way, the truth, the life, no one comes unto the Father but by Me.”

Unashameably we declare that no one can come unto the Father but by Jesus Christ, and by Him alone. And it is not through Jesus Christ plus something or some else! One does not come to God the Father through the church, through the pope, through the virgin Mary, through burning candles or venerating saints. Jesus Christ alone is the way to God the Father. All who attempt to come some other or some additional way, Jesus Himself declared to be a “thief and a robber” (John 10:1). That is Jesus Himself teaching.

The statement itself contains the present tense verb translated “comes.” Jesus said, **“No one comes to the Father except through Me.”** This is not simply a promise that one day we will come into the presence of God the Father. Everyone who is coming to Jesus Christ now, in so doing is coming now to God the Father. As we have been coming to Jesus Christ in faith this morning, we have been coming unto the Father. We initially came to the Father when we first believed on Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. We are presently coming to the Father through Jesus Christ. And one day we will come into the presence of God the

¹⁴ Edward W. Klink, III, **John**. Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Zondervan, 2016), p. 619.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Father through Jesus Christ. He is the way, the truth, and the life, through which only those who believe on Him may come into the presence of the Father and be welcomed by Him as His children.

Often times when John 14:6 is expounded, the words of **Thomas a` Kempis**¹⁶ (1380-1441):

Follow thou Me. I am the way and the truth and the life. Without the way there is no going; without the truth there is no knowing; without the life there is no living. I am the way which thou must follow; the truth which thou must believe; the life for which thou must hope. I am the inviolable way; the infallible truth, the never-ending life. I am the straightest way; the sovereign truth; life true, life blessed, life uncreated.

Here are the words of the hymn: ***I`d Rather have Jesus***, May each of us take these words to heart and rehearse them with unshakeable conviction and commitment.

I`d rather have Jesus than silver or gold;
I`d rather be His than have riches untold;
I`d rather have Jesus than houses or lands;
I`d rather be led by His nail-pierced hand.

Refrain:

Than to be the king of a vast domain
Or be held in sin`s dread sway;
I`d rather have Jesus than anything
This world affords today.

I`d rather have Jesus than men`s applause;
I`d rather be faithful to His dear cause;
I`d rather have Jesus than worldwide fame;
I`d rather be true to His holy name.

He`s fairer than lilies of rarest bloom;
He`s sweeter than honey from out the comb;
He`s all that my hungering spirit needs;
I`d rather have Jesus and let Him lead.

“When Christ who is your life appears,
then you also will appear with him in glory. (Col. 3:4)

¹⁶ Although Thomas a` Kempis lived before the Protestant Reformation and was in the Roman Catholic Church, Kempis wrote in devotional words that seemed to reflect a deep, personal faith in Jesus Christ. It is said that he copied the Bible by hand four times during his life. He is most noted for writing the devotional book, *The Imitation of Christ*.