

Sermon Series: “Jesus’ Great ‘I Am’ Statements” –Lord of Life Lutheran Church—5/23/2004

Title: “The Way, the Truth, and the Life”

Text: John 14: 1-6

Intro.: Ills.: a birthday card on the reality of getting older

Theme: Living in a world which challenges every absolute, we come to a Savior who does not just propose but states— *I am the Way, I am the Truth, and I am the Life.*

The danger of living in an “absolute-less” world

- In terms of our moral life (*I am the way*)
 1. The problem with hanging around and with the world too much is that you are not around the Way enough
 1. Picking up their values and condoning and participating in their *life-style sins*
 2. *Now, the effects of the corrupt nature are obvious: illicit sex, perversion, promiscuity, idolatry, drug use, hatred, rivalry, jealousy, angry outbursts, selfish ambition, conflict, factions, envy, drunkenness, wild partying, and similar things. I've told you in the past and I'm telling you again that people who do these kinds of things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (GW) Gal. 5: 19-21*
 3. Justifying questionable entertainment as be nine rather a sin against loving God and loving neighbor
 4. Immersing our kids in all the activity world throws at us and neglecting time to keep them on **way home** (vs1-3)
 2. Jesus, knowing about many off-ramps and only one on-ramp to the Way to life in heaven, warns us to stay focused
 1. **Ills.: wrong exit off and no exit back on**
 2. *“Strive to enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” Mat 7:13-14*
- In terms of our religious life (*I am the truth*)
 3. The world says, “Don’t impose your religious truths on me because everyone has right to make up his own mind.”
 4. Often, Christian parents and families adopt this same philosophy lie as the truth because it is repeated so often
 1. If we aren’t teaching them the truth, someone else is filling them with their lie.
 2. **Ills.: Relative truth**
 5. When we pass on the truth to the next generation, two generations after them will thank us
 1. *Tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. . . so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. Ps 78: 4-7*
 2. The forgiveness, the peace, the future, the resurrection hope, the blessings of an empower/disciplined life in Jesus
- In terms of our eternal life (*I am the life*)
 6. World espouses “**live for today**” because it believes “**nothing is sure tomorrow**”
 7. If we “sow” this absolute-less philosophy of living, we will reap the consequences of it in an empty life tomorrow
 1. Trapped in destructive relationships because we are afraid of saying “no” and appearing straitlaced to others
 2. Depressed because the career path did not produce the “gold ring” that was promised when I jumped into it
 3. Destroyed by cynicism when we find diets, work-outs, cosmetic make-overs not stave off absolute of aging
 8. Without the absolutes of Jesus’ life, there is no reason to anticipate the future/tomorrow
 1. *If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” 1 Cor. 15:32*

Absolute assurance in living in an absolute Savior

- He not only is **THE WAY**; he also **KNOWS THE WAY**
 1. The “only way to the Father” (righteousness, prayer, key to heaven)(*no one comes to the Father except thru me.v6*)

2. He knows the way of our life—even yet to be— like the palm of his hand (*My times are in your hands. Ps. 31: 15*)
- He not only is **THE TRUTH**; he always **WILL BE THE TRUTH**
3. Society's truths and promises change
4. **Ills.: let go after 30 years at Navistar**
5. Jesus won't change the rules of grace and freedom and forgiveness and he'll be around when others/things desert you
6. *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Heb13:8*
- He not only is **THE LIFE**; he **GIVES A LIFE**
7. We don't need to "get a life" because we already *got a life* in Jesus **NOW** that is untouchable (Col. 3: 4)
8. We don't have to fret the loss of present **LITTLE TENT** because we have a **BIG ROOM** waiting in heaven
9. **Ills.: Going up?**

A birthday card on the reality of getting older

Ziggy Card: *Getting Older? Nonsense!* (inside of card) *Let's just say. . . "the future is just a lot closer than it used to be!!"*

Wrong exit off and no exit back on

A number of years ago, I lived in the Detroit area. Right after I had learned to drive, I and my friend decided to go the Detroit Tigers' baseball game. The old stadium located in a very rough part of Detroit was no place to get lost in. Still green at driving and following directional signs at the same time, I confidently drove downtown but was a little fuzzy on which exit to take and not wanting to display my lack of confidence, I took an exit which I was sure would put me off right by the stadium parking. That was not the case. Rather, when I got off the exit, it dumped me into a neighborhood of burned out homes and business, left over from the riots, and gangs of individuals who glared at me and with whom I did not care at that moment to strike up a friendly chat. The problem was that there was an off exit but no immediate on ramp to get me back up on the freeway and out of harms way. For the next half hour, I had to wind my way through the inner city back streets of Detroit, hoping to find a way back up onto the freeway. If only I had asked someone who knew for directions before I ventured into downtown Detroit and got lost in an area where "angels fear to tread."

Relative Truth

Our church rented a theater to watch *The Passion of the Christ* on opening weekend. Afterward we gathered for dinner, discussion, and prayer. I returned home in a somber mood, deeply reflecting upon the sacrifice of Christ. When I opened my mail that night, the first letter was from a local church, inviting me to visit their "special community." They listed the ways they were unique:

- No religious dogma—We encourage the freedom of individual thought and belief. A humanist view of life—Our faith is based on celebrating the inherent worth and dignity of every person.
- Warm, accessible services—Our Sunday services^{1/4} typically include a mix of readings, music, moments of meditation or contemplation, and a sermon^{1/4}.
- Our children's religious education program—We teach our kids to be accepting of differing beliefs and the importance of each person seeking his or her own truth. They study the world's major religions and draw on the core values of each faith tradition^{1/4}.
- So if you're looking for a congregation that cherishes freedom of belief and opinion, with a warm sense of community and fellowship, please visit us!

I had watched the horrific suffering of Jesus and heard him say, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Hours later I opened an invitation to visit a group where truth doesn't matter. The contrast was overwhelming. **Citation: John Beukema, Western Springs, Illinois**

Going Up?

A little boy got on the elevator in the Empire State Building in New York City. He and his daddy started to the top. The boy watched the signs flashing as they went by the floors: 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70. They kept going, and he got nervous. He took his daddy's hand and said, "Daddy, does God know we're coming?" **Citation: Leighton Ford, "Hope for a Great Forever," *Preaching Today*, Tape No. 96.**

John 14:1-6

¹"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ²In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. 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.[NIV]