

## I Am The Way.

Text: John 14:6

Suggested Hymns:

176, 516, 382, 175, 297

1) Who is Jesus Christ?

2) What is belief?

3) The essence of faith

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is John 14:6, *“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

How can I come to God? How can I know Him? How can I live in His favour and share His blessing? In one form or another these anxious questions are on the lips of all people. And these are also the questions which all religions try to answer.

In seeking the answers to these questions the various religions known to man demand prayers, sacrifices, works, and beliefs. But the Christian religion of all known religions suggests an altogether unique answer to the questions which people ask about God.

The Christian religion asserts that the whole secret of God and man is revealed in one person, both God and man, Jesus Christ. Christianity says that whatever a person must know about himself before he can think of God correctly, and whatever a person can know about God, is fully revealed in Jesus Christ.

Christianity is very insistent on the point that without unconditional surrender to Jesus Christ a person can never come to God, or know Him, or enjoy His blessings. The essence of Christianity is therefore belief in a Person — faith in Jesus Christ alone.

Nowhere is this fact more clear than in the declaration of Jesus Himself, *I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through*

**Me.** Certainly that statement is as plain as it could be in advancing Christianity's claim that Jesus is the answer to all the questions that people ask about God.

Three fundamental religious issues confront us in this saying of Jesus, Who is Jesus Christ? What does it mean to believe in Him? And what is the essence of our faith in Him? May the Lord bless our meditation.

### **1. Who Is Jesus Christ?**

*Who is Jesus Christ?* That seems like a very basic question to be putting to a group of people who already profess that they know Him. Indeed, it is a simple question for any Christian congregation, and I am sure that every one of you has an answer waiting on your lips.

You will tell me that Jesus Christ is both true God and true man. And that is right. That is what the great majority of you have been taught about Jesus Christ since you were little children.

The point in asking this question at all is to re-emphasise, in your thinking, the absolutely unique nature of Jesus Christ. It is such an easy matter for us to let the Small Catechism answer roll from our tongue. But there is a danger here that we become so sure of the answers that we actually forget about their meaning. And if we allow our religion to become a mere series of definitions, simply factual knowledge that we retain in our memory through long training, then our religion can be a very deadly thing.

Try, if you can, to reconstruct the intense drama of Jesus' appearance on this earth. Think of it, if you will, of how you would have reacted in you were there? So, using your imagination, suppose that some winter's night about thirty years ago several farmers from the nearby area reported that they saw angels coming down from the sky. The angels announced that at that very instant a baby was being born in a barn. The farmers went to see, and, sure enough, they found the barn and a pleasant young couple with a newborn child.

The couple called the baby's name "Jesus" and said that their child was God Himself and that He would change the lives and eternal destinies of millions of people. Now, if one of the farmers, an eyewitness, had told you what he saw, would you have believed him?

The chances are that you would have dismissed the whole story as a hallucination, and a pretty wild one at that.

Then imagine further that you had grown up with Jesus. You went to school with Him, played games with Him, and exchanged memories with Him. You went your way and learned a trade, and He worked in a small carpenter shop with the man He called His foster father.

Then one day He left His trade and went about the countryside teaching religion. Perhaps you remembered that He had always been a serious young man, not quite like the other boys and young men you knew. Maybe you said to yourself, *"I always thought He talked a lot like a preacher."*

But, of course, you knew that He had never attended any theological training school or graduated from a theological seminary. Well, if all this had taken place in your experience, I wonder what you would have thought? Would you have believed His teachings?

One day Jesus came to the town where you were living. Partly out of curiosity, and partly because He was an old friend, you decided to go and see Him. You knew that Jesus wasn't preaching in any church or auditorium, but it didn't take you long to discover that He was talking to groups of people at the edge of town.

When you came there, Jesus was already engaged in conversation. At that moment He was speaking sharply to some ministers who had come to hear Him, telling them that they were religious imposters and that they were not serving God at all, but only their selfish interests.

After a while Jesus began addressing the other people standing around. He told them that unless they all changed their ways and stopped being so proud, greedy, lustful, and hateful, they had no chance whatsoever of enjoying the blessings of God in this life or in the life to come.

Pretty soon Jesus stopped talking and walked over to a crippled man whom some people had brought on a stretcher. He looked at the man and forgave him his sins, and then He told him to get up and walk. And, lo and behold, the man (and you yourself knew this man had been an invalid for many years) got up and walked away as if he had never been sick a day in his life. If you had seen and

heard all these things, what would you make of your boyhood friend Jesus? Would you have believed what you saw and heard?

I predict that one of two things would have happened to you, and these are the only two things that could have happened. Either you would have walked away in utter disgust and disbelief, or you would have crowded to the front and knelt down and worshiped Jesus.

You see Christ is the Divider of people. Either you would have been among those who made a great noise that Jesus was a dangerous person to have around and He must go, or you would have been among those who gave up everything they had, in order to live with Jesus and learn from Him and serve His purposes. Either you would have believed that Jesus was insane, or you would have believed that Jesus is God.

Therefore it is clear that Christ demands a decision. When you hear these words of Jesus, ***I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me,*** when you hear those words, you have to make up your mind once and for all who it is that speaks them.

There can be no straddling of this issue. It is unequivocal. Jesus says, firstly, ***I am the Way to God,*** NOT ***I think I can help you find out about God.***

Secondly, ***I am the Truth, there is no other truth about God except what I tell you,*** NOT, ***I know something about God that will help to make Him plainer to your experience.***

Thirdly, ***I am the Life, I am God, and if you believe in Me, you will share in God's life of holiness and happiness,*** NOT ***I can help you to live more confidently or peacefully.***

When the full force of these words of Jesus hits home to your consciousness, then you must make a decision about Jesus Christ right away. You must decide whether you are going to accept His claims as true or whether you are going to reject them.

Either Christ is ***“the Way, the Truth, and the Life,”*** either Christ is God, and you want to put all your confidence in Him, or Christ is a mad-man, deserving of death, to be put out of mankind's memory forever.

The question “*Who is Jesus Christ?*” is therefore not an trivial question. Although you have learned to repeat an answer to that question, yet there is an abiding significance to the answer you give. On it depends the future course of your life now and in the eternal future.

You must know whether Jesus Christ is God or not. If He isn’t God and you trust Him, then He has deceived you, and you are lost. If He is God and you don’t believe that He is, then also you are lost.

But if He is God, and you are one of those who has staked your whole existence on the fact that He is, then you are certainly going to share in His promise as Scripture says in John 1:12, <sup>12</sup> ***But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.***

## **2. What Is Belief?**

The second issue with which our text confronts us is, *What does it mean to “believe in” Jesus?* Again, I would not want you to think that this is an unimportant question to be addressing to a group of people who call themselves “*believers in Jesus.*”

It should be apparent from the remarks just made that belief is not just the intellectual understanding of a fact. Certainly you believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true man. You can make up your mind about that by reading the Gospels, which tell the story of life of Jesus on earth. But now that you are convinced that God actually lived on earth two thousand years ago, what does it mean to you?

Belief is trust. It needs to be emphasised that religious belief always includes the element of trust. The fact that you believe in Jesus Christ as God’s own Son in the flesh should mean that you are sure that this truth about Jesus Christ influences your life completely.

It should mean that you are so thoroughly “sold” on Jesus Christ that you are willing to risk your entire life now and any possible future with Him. What He says about anything, you make part of your hopes, your loves, your fears, and in fact your life. What He approves, you approve. What He hates, you hate. What He demands, you perform. What He promises, you are sure is going to be fulfilled. And all these things you do in spite of any personal reservations you may have.

Thus, for example, it may not seem reasonable that Jesus Christ should be both God and man. Your intellect and experience rebel at this suggestion. Yet you have been so impressed with the historical record of Jesus Christ that you cannot but be certain that here is something that transcends both human reason and consciousness.

Or, again, when Jesus says to you that He has come to reunite you with your heavenly Father by living, dying, and rising again from the dead for you, it seems incredible. “*Can it be true,*” you ask yourself “*that someone should be able to take my place before God and make up for my sins?*” You know of absolutely nothing in your experience that verifies this statement. But Christ has promised it, and you know that He would not deceive you.

One final example, when Christ says “*It is more blessed to give than to receive,*” every human thought and intuition tells you that Jesus is wrong. But faith tells you that Christ is not mistaken, and so you begin to put this principle of charity into operation in your life.

Do you understand the point that is being made? Faith is trust in Christ, trust in the fact that He is who He says He is, trust in the words which He speaks, and trust in the promises He makes.

If you do not have that kind of faith in Him, then it will not do you a bit of good to believe that He is the Son of God. Faith causes you to take Christ at His word, to surrender yourself completely to Him, and to give Him charge over your life.

This is what makes you His disciple, not that you believe what anyone imagines about Him, and not that you belong to a church or do any of the things a good church member is expected to do. A Christian is one who trusts Christ with his life, and no one or nothing besides Him.

### **3. The Essence Of Faith**

This leads us to the final issue of our text, *What is the essence of our faith in Christ?* In other words, what do we commit to Christ? We entrust our life to Him, and we trust that He will bring our life to God, just as He says He will in our text, *No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

On Jesus' proclamation that He is the only "**Way, Truth, and Life**" we are ready to pin all our hopes of being united with God and receiving His favour always.

As believers in Christ we are ready to live and ready to die in the confidence that there is no other way in which our sinful lives may be reconciled to God than by the sacrifice of His Son's life. Strange and unreasonable as that may sound, we believe it nevertheless because we trust Christ.

As believers in Christ we are ready to live and to die in the confidence that there is nothing more we can know about God now than what Jesus Christ has revealed to us. To know Christ is to know God. Strange and unreasonable as that assertion may sound, we believe it nevertheless because we trust Christ.

As believers in Christ we are ready to live and to die in the confidence that life is happiest and most secure when it is dedicated wholly to God. Christ has made it possible for us to live that kind of life. He has, in fact, given it to us as a gift. Strange and unreasonable as that teaching may sound, we believe it nevertheless because we trust Christ.

As believers in Christ we are ready to live and to die in the confidence that Jesus alone can bring us to God and keep us with God forever. Only Jesus can do it. We believe it because we trust what He has told us ***No one comes to the Father except through Me.*** Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.