

Life Along The Jesus Way

John 14:6-14

Call: Ps 25/27 Adapted

Scripture: John 14:1-6 (ESV)

I. Intro

Thank you Melody! What a great job for her first time! We do enter back into our studies in the Gospel of John today as we explore what life looks like along the Jesus way because Jesus said I am the way, the truth and the life, the only way to God.

Over the summers, our youth's main trip is River Camp. You may remember the video Becca showed in July. It's an amazing trip because there are so many adventures.

One of these great adventures is a hike to a waterfall called Ukinom Falls. When it was initially described to me, it was described as a place like the Garden of Eden. I agree. It is like the Garden of Eden, as I imagine it.

Here's the thing though – there is only one way to get there. You have to enter the hike from the river and follow the path through a narrow canyon (about a mile), sometimes swimming through the cold creek, sometimes hiking along the edge of cliffs. It is difficult and dangerous in parts.

And, why do we go on a difficult and dangerous hike? Because it's the only way to get to the destination. There is no other way in. You may prefer to go a different way, but you simply can't. There's no other option to get to this Garden of Eden place.

Sometimes I get halfway there, and I sit down and I complain about how hard it is. But, there's no point in complaining. This is the only way. Sometimes my gut tells me that this can't be the way. There must be multiple ways to get to Ukinom. But, I pull out my map and confirm that this most certainly is the only way to Ukinom. If I choose to go a different way, I will never make it to the destination – to Ukinom, the Garden of Eden.

Whether I like it or not makes no difference. The truth is the truth. That's just the way things are. That's the reality of the situation. There is only one way.

Jesus says, *"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me."* Jesus is the only way to the Father. It's certainly an audacious claim. But, it's not an arrogant word, or a triumphalistic word, or an oppressive word, because it's spoken by Jesus, the humble and gentle lover of our souls. This is the man who washes his disciples feet. This is the man who lays down his life on the cross as the good shepherd. And here, he is humbly and gently telling us the way things are. Like the hike to Ukinom, it's simply the reality of the

situation. There is only one way to the destination, and it is through him. This is the truth, a non-negotiable truth, the only truth that will save us. This is simply the way things are.

Let's Pray

Father, we thank you for these words from your Son Jesus about the way things are. And now, we ask that in your mercy and grace, and through your Spirit, would you make them come alive in our hearts and lives as never before. Amen.

So, where are we in the book of John? We are walking through the upper room discourse with those first disciples. Jesus has gathered his disciples in a room somewhere in downtown Jerusalem the night before going to the cross. He wants to share with them the most important points of following him. So, he has a meal with them, his last supper where he washes his disciple's feet. After that, he begins teaching them where he makes this audacious claim to be the way, the truth and the life. He then takes the rest of this discourse to describe what following his way entails. And, he begins by making several wonderful promises. We'll look at a few of them today and at the end of my sermon, we'll have time to hear a testimony.

I invite you into our text today, and we'll begin with the famous verse, John 14:6.

II. Relational Reality (6-11)

6 Jesus said to him [Thomas], "I am the way, and 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. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

8 Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. (ESV)

A. The Confusion of Philip

We see here that Philip is confused. This is normal for those disciples. Throughout this upper room discourse especially, the disciples reveal over and over again that they are without understanding.

Philip asks Jesus to show him the Father. And, here is the text for all you teachers out there. Jesus responds, "Philip, I've been with you for so long, and you still don't understand! In other words, Philip, where have you been for three years?"

B. The Unity of the Father and Son

Indeed, where has Philip been for 3 years? In the prologue, John had told us that Jesus makes the living God known. But, even throughout this Gospel, Jesus has made this point clear:

- In chapter 5, Jesus said, “The Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing” (5:19).
- In chapter 8, Jesus said, “Before Abraham was, I AM” (8:58).
- In chapter 10, Jesus said, “I and the Father are One” (10:30).

Philip, where have you been?

C. The Pinnacle of Theology

Throughout this upper room discourse, we will find references to our triune God over and over again. In fact, it was this discourse which led the early church fathers to solidify the doctrine of the Trinity from which the creeds are formed.

At the center of the universe is an intimate relationship between three persons, Father, Son and Spirit, the trinity. Jesus will get to the Spirit soon. The point is that the living God is personal. That’s the point. God lives in a personal relationship, and therefore can only be known in a personal relationship. The center of reality is an intimate relationship between Father, Son and Spirit. One simply cannot talk about Jesus without talk of the trinity. And, yes, it’s a challenging concept, but it is the only way to make sense of all the facts. As CS Lewis said, “If Christianity was something we were making up, of course we could make it easier. But it is not. We cannot compete in simplicity with people who are inventing religions. How could we? We are dealing with fact. Of course anyone can be simple if they do not have any facts to bother about” (Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 129).

Jesus says, “Trust me Philip. To have seen me is to have seen the Father.” In other words, the Father is just as good as I am. I know that some of us have pain surrounding Father language, but I think Jesus wants to heal us of that pain. And He wants to heal us by teaching us about his good Father. It’s like he’s saying, “I know a different Father than any of you know. He’s my father. And He’s just like me. If you like me, you’re going to like my father. You like my gentleness, it’s the gentleness of the Father. You like my availability, it’s the availability of the Father. You like my acceptance, it’s the acceptance of the Father. You like my compassion, it’s the compassion of the Father. You like my open arms, they’re the open arms of the Father. Philip - To see me is to see the Father. Trust me.

Whereas the way of the modern world is the way of impersonal-ness, the way with Jesus is filled with relationship and personal-ness.

Now after this wonderful truth claim, Jesus moves on to some extraordinary promises for life along His way. These extraordinary promises can be summarized in remarkable works and realized prayer. We begin with the remarkable works verse 12.

III. Remarkable Works (12)

[12](#) *“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. (ESV)*

A. Truly, Truly

Jesus begins with “truly, truly” as he has done throughout this Gospel. When he starts with truly, truly, literally amen, amen in the Greek, we should sit up and take notice. These words mean we can count on them. We can throw our entire weight upon what follows these words.

B. “Because”

Jesus says that those who trust him will do greater works than him. So, what does Jesus mean by that? In the Gospel of John, Jesus has done several astounding works including turning water into wine, healing several people, multiplying fish and loaves, walking on the water and bringing Lazarus back from the dead.

And, now, Jesus says that those who trust in him will do greater works than these? Really? Does he mean we will raise multiple Lazarii from the dead? Or maybe he means that when we raise these multiple Lazarii, they will do backflips when they come out?

How do we make sense of this extraordinary promise?

Well, to begin with, we must notice that this promise is grounded in a “because” clause. Those who believe in Jesus will do greater works ***because*** he’s going to the Father. So, what does this ***because*** clause mean? Answer: Jesus going to the Father will result in a new reality with a new resource.

C. A New Reality

Jesus is going back to the Father. This refers to Jesus’ crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. And, that sequence of events will change the world. That sequence of events changes how the universe goes together. How? Because in that sequence of events, a new reality emerges through what happens to sin, evil and death.

- At the cross, the stronghold of sin is broken, the authority of evil is broken and the grip of death is broken. At the cross, sin, evil and death are defeated, not abolished yet, but defeated. Jesus wins the victory at the cross.
- Then, on Easter morning, a whole new order of reality emerged. A whole new creation came into being. Reality was restructured when Jesus rose from the grave. The enemies of life no longer hold power over those on the Jesus Way.
- Then at Jesus’ ascension, reality is restructured even more. All the powers that seek to destroy us are placed under Jesus’ feet. This is what Paul says in Ephesians when he says that Jesus has been *“raised from the dead and seated at God’s right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet...”* (Eph 1:20-22). All authority has been given to Jesus. He’s on the throne, reigning from on high over this new reality.

So, what does this have to do with greater works? Well, Jesus does his works before the battle, and we participate in his works after the battle. This means all of our foes are defeated foes.

They no longer have the last word on anything. They only have the second to last word. Jesus now has the last word on everything. We see this at every funeral don't we? We look straight at death and see that it has done all that it can do. It can do no more! Jesus will have the last word.

D. A New Resource

But, Jesus' going to the Father doesn't only bring in a new reality, it also brings a new resource. From his throne, Jesus pours out his Spirit on all flesh. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is poured out at Pentecost to enable these greater works.

E. The Greater Works

So, what is this greater work? The greater work is announcing and living the good news of Jesus' greatest work, his victory over sin, evil and death. George Beasley Murray says it best, "The greater works are the actualization of the realities to which the work of Jesus point, namely the bestowal of the blessings and power of the Kingdom of God upon men & women which the death & resurrection of Jesus let loose in the world."

The greater work is announcing and living the blessings and power of the Kingdom of God which Jesus' victory over sin, evil and death let loose in the world.

And this isn't just miracles. It can be, as Bernard shared last week from Hebrews. It can be raising multiple Lazarii. But, it also points to acts of humility, deeds of service and small acts of love. It points to deeds of restoration and forgiveness and reconciliation. It points to being people of the towel, living the Jesus way in everyday life. Ordinary people, empowered by the Spirit, loving one another "just as" he loved us. That's the greater works based upon Jesus' greatest work. What a privilege to participate in God's Work!

In 2006, there was a school shooting at an Amish school in Pennsylvania. I grew up in Amish country, on a farm that the Amish now own. And so this shooting has stuck with me. It was a horrible day, as these days continue to be. A man walked into an Amish school and killed 5 children. And, how did the Amish community respond? They forgave the shooter. And why? Because, in their words, they knew their children were going to heaven and they would join them there someday because of Jesus' victory over death. They were living the power of the Kingdom of God which Jesus' victory over sin, evil and death let loose in the world. They were living in the new reality! That's the kind of remarkable works the Holy Spirit works inside of us as we walk on the Jesus way.

But, there's more. Verses 13-14.

IV. Realized Prayer (13-14)

[13](#) Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. [14](#) If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. (ESV)

A. Hear and Mediate

Not only does Jesus promise remarkable works, he also promises realized prayer. So, what is Jesus promising here?

Well, two things right off the top that we typically miss here:

1. First of all, Jesus is promising to hear our prayers in these verses.
2. And, secondly, he's promising to mediate our prayers. Hebrews tells us that Jesus stands as our mediator, so that we can boldly approach God's throne and cry out for our needs to be met (Heb 4:14-16; 7:25). He hears and mediates our prayers.

B. "In My Name"

Ok – that's the easy part. Now the hard part. What about Jesus' promise, "*Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do?*" Does he really mean "*whatever*"? Is he really promising that I only need to say "in Jesus name" at the end of every prayer, and I'll get whatever I ask for? James Taylor used to sing a song along those lines, "*Just call out my name and you know wherever I am, I'll come running.*" If we simply call out Jesus' name, he'll come running? Well, if that's the case, then I'll take 5 Teslas, a house in Hawaii and tickets to Warriors games, in Jesus' name.

Well, no. That would be to treat prayer as some magical incantation.

So, what does Jesus mean here? CS Lewis says, "If this passage contains a truth, it's a truth for advanced pupils only" (Lewis, Prayer, 25). He struggled with this passage when his wife was dying from cancer.

I think it's helpful to understand what "name" refers to in Scripture. A name, in scripture, is never merely a label. It's a revelation of character. A name in Scripture carries with it the character or reputation of that person. So to pray in Jesus' name is to pray according to his character or reputation. This is what glorifies the Father. It's not much different from the first line of the Lord's Prayer. There we pray, "*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.*" We are praying that the Father would reveal his character and reputation, and that his name would be glorified, honored and valued. Here, we pray according to Jesus' character and reputation and values, which are the same as the Father's, as we just learned.

I think it's also helpful to hear what John writes in one of his letters: "*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him*" (1 John 5:14-15). So, we pray according to his character and according to his will. In fact, in Lewis' exposition on this passage, he repeatedly returns to the prayer Jesus will pray only a few hours from now in the Garden of Gethsemane. "*Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done*" (Lk 22:42). Of course the cup was not removed from him. As Jesus was constrained by his Father's will and purposes, so are we.

C. Just Pray!

What is interesting is that in this upper room discourse alone there are six references to realized prayer (14:13-14, 15:7, 15:16, 16:23, 16:24, 16:26). Then Jesus prays the longest

recorded prayer in the New Testament, chapter 17. Do you think he wants us to pray? I think so. God is a God of love and relationship, and prayer is always an expression of our trusting relationship with him.

So, we share with Jesus everything on our heart, trusting him to answer according to his will. We pray unceasingly, boldly and expectantly. We pray with abandonment! To be on the Jesus way is to be a pray-er.

I am not a great pray-er myself, which is why I pray with a small group every Wednesday morning. I mostly love to listen to them pray. You are all invited to join us or join Melody with her Sunday morning prayer group or any of the other ones happening here. I simply want to encourage you to pray, because this is our language along the Jesus way.

V. Conclusion

So, as we follow Jesus along His way, we recognize that his way is the only way to the Father, for he is the way, the truth and the life. So, along this way, we remember and embrace four things:

1. We trust Jesus and his promises.
2. We embrace the new reality. Sin, evil and death are defeated foes and do not have the last word in my life or anyone else's.
3. We receive the new resource, something we'll talk about more next week. The Spirit is God's great gift to us along the Jesus way.
4. And, we pray. He hears our prayers, he mediates our prayers and he answers our prayers. And, so we pray with abandonment to the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit.

This is what we can expect along the Jesus Way.

VI. Eva's Testimony

And, now we get to hear a testimony. I'm going to invite Eva up here to share. I met Eva in preparation for her baptism last fall. And, when I heard her story, I knew it was a story fitting for Jesus being the only way. Eva please share with us.

<Eva shares>

Amen.

Benediction

Father God,
your Son Jesus Christ
is the way, the truth and the life for all creation;
As we move out into our weeks,
grant us grace
 to walk in His way,
 to rejoice in his truth,
 and to share his risen life;
 This new reality with the new resource, The Holy Spirit.

Grant us the strength to follow you well on your way.

Amen.

Resources

Burge, Gary, *John: The NIV Application Commentary*
Carson, Don, *The Farewell Discourse and Final Prayer of Jesus*
Johnson, Darrell, *Preaching the Gospel According to John* (Regent College Course)
Klink, Edward, *John* (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the NT)
Lewis, C.S., *How to Pray: Reflections and Essays*
Lewis, C.S., *Mere Christianity*
Peterson, Eugene, *The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways That Jesus Is the Way*