

Text: John 14:1-7

Title: It's Personal – I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life

Thesis: Because Jesus is the true meaning of life and reality, we must focus on having a relationship with Him and look toward the next world over the cares of this one.

I. Introduction

II. Preparation for Loss and Loneliness (1-3)

- a. E – In simultaneous response to telling Peter about his impending crisis of faith and preparation for all the disciples to feel alone and afraid, Jesus gives them instructions about calming their hearts. Do not be terrified, do not be dismayed. Instead trust in God (the Father) and Jesus (God the Son). Jesus explains that He is going to make preparation for them to be able to enter the dwelling place of the Father (reference to His impending death and resurrection, which make possible the believer's entry into the presence of God). And reminds them that His trustworthiness would have required Him to tell them differently if this were not the case. He also makes reference to His second advent by promising to return to bring them to where the Father dwells.
- b. A – In times of loneliness, in times of despair, in times of uncertainty, we are to trust in Christ. How? The instruction is a command. "Believe in God, believe also in Me."

III. It's not about Rules, it's about Relationship (4-7)

- a. E – Thomas (always the realist) has mistaken Jesus' metaphor for a physical journey, and desires a map to a destination he is uncertain of. "Jesus' reply is the ultimate foundation for a satisfactory philosophy of life. First, it is personal. He did not claim merely to know the way, the truth, and the life as a formula he could impart to the ignorant; but he actually claimed to be the answer to human problems. Jesus' solution to perplexity is not a recipe; it is a relationship with him. Second, he did not counter Thomas's skepticism with an argument or a quotation drawn from his memory. He responded with an authoritative assertion as the master of life. He is the way to the Father because only he has an intimate knowledge of God unmarred by sin. He is the truth because he has the perfect power of making life one coherent experience irrespective of its ups and downs. He is the life because he was not subject to death but made it subject to him. He did not live with death as the ultimate end of his life; he died to demonstrate the power and continuity of his life. Because he is the way, the truth, and the life, he is the only means of reaching the Father. Jesus was not exhibiting a narrow arrogance. Rather, he was making the only possible deduction from the fact that he, the unique Son, was the sole means of access to the Father.¹"
 - i. Thomas had misinterpreted the metaphor to be a statement of taking a journey. Instead, Jesus was talking about the ultimate relationship of life that humans have with God and that has implications for their eternal

¹ Frank E. Gaebelain, Merrill C. Tenney and Richard N. Longenecker, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 9: John and Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 144.

destiny. When one understands the metaphor from this perspective, “the way” then becomes more akin to “a way of life.”²

- ii. This concept of a way of life was foundational not only to the proclamation of Jesus, Paul, and John but also to Israel and to the teachings of the rabbis. The Hebrew word *halak* (“walk”) can provide insight to this discussion. The law or Torah was not to be understood primarily as a set of rules but as a walk with God. Accordingly, the rabbis designated the strict commands of God as *halakah*.³
- iii. Unfortunately, ideas of Torah, *halakah*, law, command, or instruction can all degenerate into keeping a set of rules or failing to relate directly to one who gave the rules or instructions. In such a case Torah and instruction become ends in themselves. “The way” then fades into an act of human effort so that dynamic relationship with God becomes swallowed up in keeping a set of wooden rules. Following rules is hardly what is intended in John as the “way” to the Father. Accordingly, the “way” in this verse was hardly meant to be understood as a road or pathway on which Thomas could stride or ride to get to the Father’s house.⁴
- b. A – If we really come to terms with who Jesus is, then we know the Father, and we know what is expected of us in this relationship. We must focus on the next world, and its reality. We must not waste time with worry over earthly recognition, over public approval for good deeds, over the latest and greatest promotion or possession. When our focus is on the life following the resurrection, we will be truly following Christ.

IV. Conclusions

² Gerald L. Borchert, vol. 25B, *John 12-21*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 107.

³ Gerald L. Borchert, vol. 25B, *John 12-21*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 107-08.

⁴ Gerald L. Borchert, vol. 25B, *John 12-21*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 108.