

A Way to Actually Go

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[0 : 00] John chapter 14, we read from verse 6, Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me.

Now we know that in saying that he is the truth, Jesus did only obviously ever speak the truth. Being God, he cannot deny himself, because God cannot be anything other than what he is himself.

If God were to tell a lie, he would cease to be God, because God is truth. And if God isn't telling the truth, then he has somehow ceased to be God, we know somebody other than God.

So if Jesus says, no man cometh unto the Father but by me, then he is unequivocally stating that there is no other route, no other road, no other means of travel.

To use the analogy with the children, there is no other ladder except this one, by means of which we may, as it were, climb up to glory. Nor can we climb in our own strength. I am the way, the truth and the life.

[1 : 04] Without me, there is only a dead end. There is nothing. There is no truth. There is only untruth. There is only the lie and the deceit of man's self-sufficiency.

There is only death. If he is the way, the truth and the life, then if we have not Christ, we are only the cul-de-sac of deceit and of death.

I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. But obviously, this is not, in a sense, an end in itself. The way to glory is because glory is our destination.

A way needs must be going somewhere, as we said with the children previously. It has to have a destination. It has to have a purpose.

And all of this work, all of this work, glorious and beautiful as the Lord has made it and pointing to himself, it is not an end in itself. It is designed to be temporary. It is going to pass away.

[2 : 10] And the Lord will, in the fullness of time, make a new heaven and a new earth. So this one has a shelf life, which is in the process of expiring, even as we live each day, even as we speak.

And we ourselves, of course, we know that we only have a set number of days. We don't know what that number is. But each one of us only has a finite number of days, a finite number of years allotted to us.

And each day that passes, we are using up the grains of sand that are running through, as it were, the hourglass. So it is all going to be temporary here.

So we have to, it is incumbent upon us to identify what is the purpose and what is the reason for this, albeit temporary, but wonderful, beautiful theatre in which the Lord has set us.

What's the purpose of it? It is to prepare us and to enable us to get to the ultimate destination, which is never going to be less glorious or less wonderful than what the Lord has already given us.

[3 : 17] The new heaven and the new earth is not going to be inferior to the other. It is going to be better. It is going to be more glorious. It is going to be infinitely infused with the divine.

I am the way to that. That way is going somewhere. It is leading somewhere. And it has a purpose. Now, our Lord himself, obviously, is both holy God and holy man.

And that means that he is in that unique position to be able to bridge the divide between God in his perfect holiness and man in his fallen sinfulness.

Remember how in John chapter 1 and verse 51, Jesus says to Nathanael, Now, the context of that, of course, if we take a couple of verses back, is that when Nathanael is told by Philip that they have found the Messiah, and he says, you know, it's Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Well, he thought it was the son of Joseph. Nathanael, of course, says, can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip said unto him, come and see. He doesn't argue with him. He doesn't say, oh, well, yes, because, and try to get into a discussion.

[4 : 45] He says, well, come and see. See for yourself. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.

Nathanael saith unto him, whence no astound thee? Jesus answered and said unto him, before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the son of God, thou art the king of Israel.

Jesus answered and said unto him, because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. And that's the sense of context in which he says, verily I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.

In other words, you will see it. You will see the glory of which the patriarch Jacob, of course, dreamed in his dream. If you remember a way back in Genesis 28, when he fell asleep with his head on the stone of Bethel as his pillow.

In Genesis 28, we read, he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

[6 : 04] And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac, and so on.

So Jacob has already seen this vision of a means by which the messengers of God, because that's what angel means. It just means messenger, are able to go between heaven and earth and to bring the messages, you know, from men to God, and from God down to men.

And so every time that a prophet like Elijah or Elisha or whatever has a message from God, we must take it the name messenger, an angel seen or unseen has brought him that message.

Because the only way by which any angel can bring any message or any communication can go from heaven to earth or vice versa, is through that ladder, is by that one means.

And Christ himself is the way. He says, you will see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. In other words, if they're not going by that route, then there is no traffic.

[7 : 14] There is no communication between heaven and earth. Now stop and think about that for a moment. That there has been at no time in history, any divine communication, any message to anyone, prophet or priest or holy man of God or mother in Israel or whatever it may be, nobody has had any message from God and nobody's prayers have ascended to God except through the means of Jesus Christ, God's Son.

Now of course, he doesn't appear on the earth until he is conceived and born from the virgin Mary, but he is still engaged in his work of intercession. He is still engaged in being that means by which divine communication takes place between heaven and earth, because only he is both of the earth in the sense of being completely human and of heaven in the sense of being completely divine.

That was his destiny from all eternity. God the Son, who had been God the Son from all eternity, would become human in the fullness of time. And so he is given this means, this access, whereby every single message, every single communication, every time an angel appears to somebody, whether they're appearing to Gideon in the Old Testament or Samson's parents or to Mary, when she's told that she's going to have the child Jesus, none of that happens without the means, the roadway, the route through Christ.

Now stop and think about what that means. Because that means that all those who claim to have had messages from God, but who are going by some other means or claiming some other authority other than Christ, needs must be lying.

That so-called prophets from other religions are false prophets. They are making it up. That those who claim to have had direct access to heaven are lying, are making it up, because it only ever happens through the Lord Jesus Christ.

[9 : 44] And any angel will only appear to somebody or give them a divine message through the mediation of Jesus Christ. Other than that, there is only dead silence.

And I mean dead. Because if he is the way and the truth and the life, and he is not involved in this communication, if it is not through Jesus Christ, our Lord, then there isn't life, there's only death. There isn't truth. There's only deceit and lies. There isn't any way other than Christ. There is only the dead end, hopelessness of this fallen world.

But in Christ, and with Christ, the traffic is two-way. You'll notice that he said, you'll see the angel of God ascending, and he's sending.

It's a constant traffic. The prayers of God's people going up to him, and the messages from the Lord, the answers from the Lord, coming back down from him. So it's all coming through the mediation of Jesus Christ.

[10:49] This ladder to heaven, planted in the lowest parts of the earth, in the sense that there is no misery to which any soul can be sent.

But Christ has already been there and lower. Now, we might think, ah, yes, but Jesus never, for example, he never suffered cancer, as somebody we know or love might have done him. He never went through this particular illness or that particular illness. He never knew the sorrow of maybe a child being lost from one's womb or whatever it may be, because he was a man, so he can't know these things.

Whatever the misery, whatever the suffering, the sorrow, Christ has been in it and through it and lower than that. Because you and I, friends, we have never experienced what hell is like. We have never experienced what it is to be completely bereft of the presence of God. Jesus has. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

[11:56] Quite apart from the agonies that he endured upon the cross, he experienced the endurance of hell. He experienced that complete blotting out of his father's comfortable presence.

He went down so low that it is lower and more painful and more more debilitating, more misery-inducing, more hopeless in that sense than anything, any lost soul has ever experienced in this world.

So whatever the pain, whatever the suffering, sorrow, the misery we may have been enduring or those we have known or loved have endured, Christ has been down lower.

It's not for nothing it says way back in Deuteronomy, you know, the eternal God is thy refuge underneath are the everlasting arms. However low down you go, if you think you've hit rock bottom, then what do you think is the rock underneath you if not that rock that is Christ?

He is down beneath, He is always lower, He has always gone down lower than us. That ladder is planted in the very lowest realms of human experience that there is none who can say Christ is above me but I am lower down than ever He endured.

[13:23] He cannot come down this low, He cannot have any dealings with me, my sin is too great, my misery is too sick, I am suffering too much, He can't know what it's like.

He was a man of solace unacquainted with grief. What He endured on the cross we could go into in detail if you wanted but it would be stomach journey.

The Romans who used crucifixion used it because it was intended to be the most appalling, long drawn out, humiliating experience for the victim.

it was intended to terrorize. It was intended that whoever was being put to death in this way wouldn't just be enduring it for themselves but that if say they were a thief that it was in order to say to all who be thieves this is what you get.

Don't even think about it. If they were a slave in rebellion against their master it was to send a message to all discontented slaves. This is what happens if you rise up against your master.

[14:31] If you are king of the Jews it is to say to the entire Jewish nation this is where you are under our foot.

Don't even think about a kingdom of your own. The message is intended to humiliate and destroy. If they could have made it more long dry than painful they would have done.

Crucifixion was the worst of the worst and Jesus went through it all. So when he says I am the way and the truth and the life he is the truth of all that humanity can endure whatever its misery but he is the way out of it.

That ladder which is planted in the lowest depths reaches to the very greatest heights. Remember what it says of course in Philippians about how the Lord endured and how he emptied himself.

He made himself of no reputation that is he emptied himself out he took upon him the form of a servant that means literally a slave and was made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself that the sense of that is he humbled himself even further and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross that because he has been put down so low we read wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father now why is Christ exalted so high in heaven why is it there is no name more glorious

than his apart from the fact that he is God but also the fact that nobody has been down lower nobody has suffered or endured more than

[16:32] Christ has endured friends if you and I were able to endure an eternity of hell for ourselves for our own sin well that would just be justice anyway but even if we did it would only be for our one lifetime's worth of sin that we were enduring it if we were somehow able to endure it for two people then it would be double its intensity we can't do that we can only ever do one now Christ has endured the intensity of hell for every elect soul that has ever been redeemed you can't begin to imagine the intensity of what he suffered how low he was brought how great the intensity of his suffering and endurance no wonder he is exalted so high because in the great scheme of God's perfection there is absolute justice absolute balance absolute proportionality because of in name as god a little. If you've suffered much, you'll be blessed much. If you have been sinned against greatly, you'll be glorified greatly. If you've endured much for Christ, you'll be given much by way of reward. If you've laboured much for him, you'll be repaid much for him. Everything has its perfect balance in the justice and perfection of God, except that, of course, we receive far, far more by way of his grace than ever we have deserved, because Christ gives us that freely which he himself has earned. We do not deserve anything but God's love, but he blesses and he gives and he makes worthwhile if we are in him. But only he can do that. It is only he who is the way. You see, if somebody has suffered fearful, hardship and pain and so on in this world, but they reject Christ, then there isn't a balancing blessing and glory hereafter. There's only more and worse of the same, because the only way out of that darkness, out of that suffering, out of that misery is Christ. The only way to be redeemed is Christ. The only way for life out of the midst of that living death is Christ. The only way to make sense of it all is Christ. I am the way and the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me. And for some, of course, the way is unacceptable. You know, we are told that we will always learn of the way. We will always be taught the way. Isaiah 30, verse 21, that an ear shall hear a word behind me saying, this is the way. Walk ye in it. When ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left. In other words, we will be guided by the promise of the Lord, but that promise is only through Christ. You know, Hosea tells us at the end of his prophecy in chapter 14, verse 9, who is wise, and he shall understand these things prudent, and he shall know them, for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them, but the transgressors shall fall them in. Now, why do the transgressors fall? Because the way is more crooked for them?

Or the way is more uneven for them? No, there's nothing wrong with the way. The way is always good. The way is always right. The ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in there. The transgressors shall fall there then. Why will they fall? Because those ways are enmity with them. Those ways are abhorrent to them. That which is right and good is abhorrent to those who delight in sin, in evil, in that which is against the Lord. And don't say, oh, well, you're just talking generalities here. This world is full of those who are threatened by the purity and the goodness and the simplicity and the exclusive love of Christ. They want everything to be the same. They want all religions to mean the same, and of course they don't.

They want all prophets to kind of be the same. They want to believe in a God or gods who will treat everybody the same and bring everybody into whatever heaven they want to have. Now, God does treat everybody the same. He gives everybody the opportunity. He says, look, there's only one way to be saved. And it doesn't matter whether you've been brought up in the church or whether you would call yourself a Christian from childhood. If you're not in Christ, you're not going to be on that way. You're not going to be saved. You're not going to be with me.

Whatever your background, whatever your country, whatever your nation, it's Christ alone that saves. It's not how good you are. It's not what church you went to. It's not what nation you belong to. You can't be saved by who your granny was or how godly your uncle or your aunt was or because they did the books with you when you were a child. You can't climb up on somebody else's back. Remember the ladder with the children there? You can climb up one person, one one at a time, but you can't have two or three people all hanging around the ladder or somebody climbing up on your back. Somebody can come up after you. Somebody can go ahead of you. You can be going up one at a time and other people up ahead of you and some people back behind you. But you can't all clamber around lots and lots at the same time on somebody else's climbing, on somebody else's journey. Our country may have been blessed greatly by God's spirit and reformation in the past, but nobody's going to be saved because of the country they belong to. You may have had very godly forebears, but nobody's going to be saved because of who their father or

mother or grandfather was. It's the individual journey we must make ourselves. It is the ladder we must climb ourselves one rung at a time, one day at a time. Nobody leaps up a ladder 25 rungs at a time. There's only one way to do it, rung by rung, step by step, day by day. We'd rather leap ahead. We'd rather press fast forward and just scoot through all the difficult bits of our lives. We can't do that. We'd rather rush forward to the harvest.

But before you get there, you're going to do the ploughing and the breaking up of the field. You're going to clear the stones out. You're going to do the sowing. You're going to do the waiting. You're going to wait for the showers of rain from heaven, for the sunshine to come. You're going to watch while the little green shoots come up. You're going to tend the ground and make sure the weeds don't interfere with the crop. And it's hard work and it's long slog. And we'd all rather have something quick and easy. But it's one step at a time, one day at a time. You can only travel a ladder one rung at a time. And yes, there's some in front and there's some behind. And there's those who have been believers before us, who have made the influence upon us, who have been an influence, who have perhaps been used of the Lord to bring us to Christ. And those that perhaps unbeknown to us, we may be influencing, who come behind us. What a burden of responsibility that is. Whether it be for those in our own individual families, or whether it's those in the family of the Lord's people who become believers after us, and who look at our example and our witness. And we can't say, oh, my example doesn't matter. It doesn't matter how I climb this ladder. It doesn't matter whether I stamp on people's fingers that are coming after me, or nudge up the people who are up ahead of me.

[24 : 21] It doesn't matter if I swing out wide to the side. Yes, it does. You're putting everybody in danger if you do that. And we put everybody in danger when we depart from the ways of the Lord. Every believer that falls and that witnesses a bad confession, that scandalizes their brothers or sisters or causes the world to laugh in derision at these so-called Christians looking at how they behave. They damage and endanger countless others. How many looked at the example of one they may have thought was godly and safe and secure, and then they fall and they think, well, if that's what he or she does, there's no hope for me. And they forget about the faith of Christ and they walk away from the Lord. There's no telling how much damage or danger one individual soul can do if they fall, if they turn away. No man is an island. We all like a pebble dropped in the pond. The ripples reach out much further than you think. There is only one way to go. But the point is, the ladder is going somewhere. It is there for a purpose. It is there to bring us to our journey's conclusion. It is there to bring us to glory. And it is personal. It is individual. And the point is that without Christ, you can't do it at all.

Because without Christ, not so much as one message from one angel in the Bible, not so much as one word from the Lord down 2,000 years and before that, not so much as one prayer has ascended to the throne of grace without the intercession of Christ. All other claims are false. All other prophets outside of Christ are false if they be not used of the Lord to point us to heaven and to glorify him. There is no other way. Jesus says, Jesus, who is God and cannot lie, I am the way. Not in one way and there's lots of other ways and choose the way we're like, I am the way. I am the truth. I am the life. No man come unto the Father but by me. That is the root. That is the destination. The Father, the presence of his glory. That's where you were designed and intended to be. Man's chief end to glorify God and enjoy him forever. You are only ever complete in Christ. We are always incomplete in this world if we are without him. This is the truth of it. Colossians tells us, chapter 2, verse 10, where in him will have all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power. You ever wonder why life feels a little bit emptier than it should? Why does it seem to make sense and have the meaning you thought it should? Is Christ in your life? And if he is, is he head of your life? And is he the way that you are walking? And is he your king and your head and your savior? Only when Christ is in the place that he should occupy. Will your life begin to make sense? Will it begin to become complete? And that completion will be perfected when we reach the destination to which that ladder is leading. I am the way, and no man come from a good father. But thanks.