

**Only One Way**  
**Pastor Ty Blackburn**  
**John 14:4-6**  
**September 21, 2014**

Amen! What a beautiful song. I invite you to turn with me now in your Bibles to John 14. The last few weeks we were looking at the first three verses of this wonderful chapter. Today we move into the next three verses which is 4-6. The title of the message is 'Only One Way'. We see that the question, as we watch the flow of thought in the passage, first of all remember this is part of '*The Farewell Discourse*', what has been called '*The Farewell Discourse*' of Jesus, and His ministry is coming to an end. He speaks these words on the eve of His crucifixion. He knows that the cross is right before Him. He has just sent Judas out in the moments preceding these words. He knows that His arrest is imminent, at hand, and He knows that means His departure from His disciples is also at hand. That things forever will be, until eternity, things are changing in such a dramatic way in their relationship with Him. For three and a half years they have walked with Him every day. They've followed Him, they've heard His voice, they've touched Him, and now He is about to depart from them and so He is giving His farewell discourse, His last words of encouragement to them.

We saw last time, the last few messages, in the first three verses of this chapter, He is concerned about them not being overcome with fear and anxiety. He has been talking about Heaven. He ended up saying, "You know, I'm going to the Father. The reason that you can't follow Me is because I'm going somewhere you can't go. You are not able to go. You don't have the power to go there. I'm going to the Father," and He's going to keep saying that throughout '*The Farewell Discourse*'. "I go to the Father." Now they are slow, and they are not figuring it out exactly, and it is understandable. This was, on their side of it, these events that were about to happen were incomprehensible, impossible to anticipate. Even though Jesus is speaking with perfect clarity, yet in the dullness of their minds they can't follow everything. We see it even in this passage that we're going to look at this morning. They keep asking Him really when you look back on it, rather dumb questions, but Jesus keeps answering them. As He has been talking about where He is going, and they can't go, He is telling them they can't come now. We saw this earlier, "You can't *now* follow Me, but you will come here after." And here in this passage this morning, He is going to talk about how you follow Him to Heaven. The question that these three verses deal with, Verses 4-6 of John 14, is the question: *How do you get to Heaven? How do you truly find God?* And Jesus makes a clear and resounding claim, that He and He alone are the way you get to Heaven. He and He

alone is the way that you find God. There is no equivocation, no uncertainty on the lips of the Savior. He makes an emphatic and clear claim. Look with me at John 14, Verses 1-6.

***John 14:1-6 ~ “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And you know the way where I am going.” 5 Thomas \*said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?” 6 Jesus \*said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.***

Let’s pray together.

*Father, we thank You for the wonder of Your word, for speaking to us in human language, with perfect precision. We thank You for giving the Holy Spirit to illuminate this word in our minds and our hearts, and we ask that You would do that today. That You would make Your word clear to us in this time. We pray that so that You might be glorified by hearts that lift up themselves to You in truer worship. And we pray this in Jesus’ name, Amen.*

In every generation, and in every place that the Gospel goes, there is a consistent and unrelenting temptation brought upon the people of God by the culture, ultimately by the enemy of truth himself, this perpetual, continual temptation to soft-pedal the word of God. And really, when you get right down to it, to edit God’s word according to the taste of the unbelieving world around it. There is this temptation to change our message because of its unpalatable nature. You know, we’re continually counseled from the outside, and then it has a way of working its way into the inside, and you have people on the inside saying, you know, sort of like a *Mary Poppins* approach—*A spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down.* Just dress it up a little bit, change it, modify it, make it palatable. When you read the Scripture carefully, there are exhortations in various places about being wise about not being unnecessarily offensive. A number of proverbs speak to that kind of thing. You know like, *‘Apples of gold, and settings of silver, is a word fitly spoken.’* Think about what you are saying, and when you say it, and how you can best say it. The lips of the wise make knowledge, not attractive, but acceptable. So there is a place for us to think about, and have some sense and sensitivity. You don’t just walk in and just trample upon people. And you find this when you look at the ministry of the apostles, and the ministry of Jesus, that there are times where

they are accommodating and helping someone, they are building bridges to people in the way they communicate. But when push comes to shove, what has to be delivered is a message that once you've built a bridge, and you've got real communication happening, the message itself cannot be altered. And the message itself is exclusive, it is not inclusive. I mean, Jesus made an exclusive claim in a world that wants to be inclusive, and we as Christians today are preaching a message that is exclusive by nature, and therefore is at odds with the world.

I know when I was in college, in seminary, when we were preparing for ministry, then there was a lot of talk about accommodating the message in the way that the 80's and 90's was. "You know don't talk so much about sin, don't talk so much about wrath, don't talk so much about hell. People don't want to hear about the wrath of God." I mean back in the 80's, "We're so sophisticated that, this kind of thing is not really..." It was okay for Jonathon Edwards to preach a sermon, well really it wasn't, people in the 80's didn't think it was all right for him to either, but if it was possibly okay, it might have been okay in the 1740's, but not in the 1980's. Today, then, "You need to talk about the love of God. You need to major on that. You need to try to identify people's felt needs, and connect with them that way, and then maybe you'll get around to explaining the Gospel, and when you do, don't talk about hell, and don't talk about sin. Don't spend so much time about blood." They even get that way, "Don't spend so much time on the cross." Isn't that amazing? But that kind of thing would happen within the church, that that kind of thing would be taught in seminaries preparing people for ministry? It has always been that way. There has always been this temptation to edit the message because of the perceived, or expected response of the recipients of the message. "They aren't going to like it. You need to soft-pedal it."

One of my favorite exchanges from the reformation is Luther's and Erasmus' debate. Desiderius Erasmus was a moderate reformer who went back Catholic, but who at first was trying, was part of the reformation in the initial stages, and then turned back. And Luther, of course, who stood for the Gospel of Justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, led by God to recover the essential way of salvation. Praise the Lord for Martin Luther and what he did in his life, what God did in his life. Well Luther and Erasmus have a debate that goes on over a number of different things, but in the Bondage of the Will they are talking about, a record of his responses to Erasmus, and Erasmus' responses to him over the issue of election, the biblical doctrine of election.

The Bible teaches the Doctrine of Election. It is all over the place. You have Christians being referred to as '*the elect, the chosen of God*', so you have to come to terms with that. God chooses to call us '*the chosen*'. What does that mean? Well, Luther, and the other reformers, saw that when you really interpret the Scripture carefully, what you see is that there is this idea of unconditional election, that God, in His sovereignty, offers salvation to all, but those who end up being saved are those who have been chosen before time without anything based in them, by God's free choice, and that at first glance is offensive. I remember when I first heard that as a Christian that was being taught at the seminary I was going to, or I was thinking about going to. I did find out before I got there. I was like, "Do they really believe that?" because I'd never heard that, because I had been in churches that didn't do a very good job of preaching the Bible, it seemed offensive. "That's not a very good idea. This doesn't make sense. Surely that can't be the way." It didn't seem right to someone who was raised in America to think in individualistic terms that God would do that.

Now, that is a complicated doctrine. Let me just for a second, since I've raised it, if you've not considered that, basically the Bible teaches this: Every single person created by God, God has been good to them, and invited them to Himself. He put His testimony of who He is in our own hearts, Romans 1. He speaks every day, all over creation, and His glory is made known, that the stars are singing to God's praises every day. Psalm 1, the heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament brings forth His praise. Day after day, they pour forth speech. It is not like it is a drip every now and then about who God is. The heavens are pouring it out every day, and then unbelievers, people like we all were before we were saved, look at it and say, "Why wouldn't God be more clear? Why isn't He talking?" And what the Bible shows is that sin has made us so hard, and so blind, so dead to the things of God, that even though God is speaking and inviting, nobody comes. And even though He sent His Son into the world, He came to His own, and His own rejected Him. God gave His Son on the cross for our salvation, and He offers salvation to all, but nobody would come unless God sovereignly chooses some. Now salvation is offered to everyone. We are to preach the Gospel to every single person on the face of the earth, but when somebody comes, you have to understand that God has done a work in their heart. He has made them alive. And if you are saved today, you are saved today because God sovereignly worked in your heart. It's all to the praise of His glory.

I understand this is tough, but just read your Bible. Read Ephesians 1, read Romans 9. Romans 9 is what did it for me. I couldn't get away from it in Romans 9. If you just take the Bible as what it says, this is what it says. And if you accept it, this is

the way, when you accept God's word, even though at first it is unpalatable, when you accept it, it becomes to be precious and beautiful. There is a wonder about it when you walk through into the truth and you humble yourself before the word of God.

Well Luther and Erasmus were debating that issue, and Erasmus was basically saying, "Listen, I accept the Doctrine of Election because it is clear in the text." This is what Erasmus is saying. "But I don't think you should preach it. I don't think you should talk about it. I don't think you should proclaim it." "Why?" Luther says. "Because people aren't going to like that. It is going to make them rage against God. It is going to make them angry at God. So it is better to keep that quiet, you know?" I love what Luther says to Him in response. "Oh Erasmus, oh that you were there when the Spirit of God inspired the apostle Paul to write the ninth chapter of Romans. You could have told God He was being stupid." That is Martin Luther for you. "You could have told Him, 'You haven't thought through all the implications of this Lord. They won't like it.'" When you frame it that way, that's really the way it is. It settles it, doesn't it? If God has said it, that settles it. It doesn't matter whether we like it or not, and the reality is, if you humble yourself before it, you will see that His ways are always good, and always perfect, and always lovely. He always does what is right.

So that is what we have really going on in this same situation throughout history, is that whatever the issue, people want to edit the word of God. "Don't talk about sin. Don't talk about wrath. Don't talk about hell. That was the 80's. Don't talk about the sovereignty of God's salvation in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century." Today it is a whole different little angle, but still the attack on the truth, and editing the truth. Today it has gotten to deal more with, "Don't be so certain in what you say. Don't speak with authority. We don't need preaching today." People in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, they are sophisticated. We live in a pluralistic society, religious pluralism in America. I mean, think about all the religions that are around us now. You've got to be more delicate and sensitive in the church. This is the counsel within evangelicalism. "You need to embrace uncertainty," this is what people say. This is wrong. This is what they say. "You need to embrace uncertainty because now we understand that in a post-modern world, that truth is relative. That we really can't be certain about everything. We can't be certain about anything," post-modernism believes that. "You really can't be certain that you are here." This is really what they think. "You can't be certain that this is made out of wood, or your chair is underneath you. You can't be certain." This is the logical end of their philosophy. So it is not only this idea of uncertainty, but this lack of authority, this truth is subjective, this truth to you is completely relative. Maybe that is truth to you, but that's not truth for me.

So when you present the Gospel what you need to do is say, “Listen, Jesus means everything to me. Why don’t you give Him a try? Maybe He will be everything to you.” Implicitly, “If it’s not truth for you, that’s okay, because we all understand that truth is relative.” This is how the Gospel, this is the kind of things that are being written today. People like Rob Bell, who was a big guru for about 10 or 12 years until he finally showed his hand a little more clearly. Because when you start talking like this, you end up giving away everything. You are on the downgrade, as Spurgeon called it in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In England, he was fighting the battle against the idea, not about certainty, but about the supernatural. They were saying, “If you’re going to really win the world of the late 1800’s, early 1900’s, you’ve got to embrace the idea that supernatural miracles aren’t really a part of what people are into. So deemphasize the supernatural, the miracles of Jesus, the bodily resurrection, not a big deal.” Spurgeon is like, “If you get off the word of God being inerrant then you’ve lost everything. It is just a matter of time.”

And so the same thing is true today. Certainly you shouldn’t be exclusive today. I mean, tolerance, hasn’t tolerance been redefined in our day? Tolerance used to be, this is what tolerance really is, tolerance actually is first of all a biblical value. You don’t find tolerance in Muslim cultures. You don’t find tolerance in Hindu cultures. You don’t find tolerance anywhere except in Christian cultures, and you find it there because God has taught us that we are to be kind to all men. Even though they are lost, and going to hell, we’re to be kind to them. So tolerance biblically is that somebody has the right to be wrong and you can still show kindness to them. They have the right to their opinion, even though it is wrong. But tolerance is not to say that the opinion that I am adhering to is not the only opinion, that I’m right and you’re wrong. I hate to use it that way, I don’t like to say, “I’m right and you’re wrong.” I like to say, “This is right and if you don’t believe this, you are wrong.” That is the truth. I may be at error in some different areas on it, so I’m not going to say this is about me and you. It isn’t about me and you, it is about God and us. When we put it that way, it changes everything. So the issue, this idea of worrying about what the culture wants, we need to understand that culture is always going to be against the truth.

In fact, I love what Spurgeon says in, MacArthur quotes him in his book Truth Wars, an interesting quote at the beginning. And this is really, this is the paradox of being a Christian who loves God, and who loves people because really we can’t be, we can’t get caught up in a worldly sort of ‘us against them’ mindset that gets mad because they are messing up our country, for instance. It used to be a Christian nation, this whole deal. Just lay that aside. It never was really a Christian

nation. I'm sorry, that is just a fact. There has only been one truly, godly nation, and that is the people of God, and the truly Christian nation is the church. Now, America was a whole lot better off, yes, and Christianity did inform it, and an ethic, a Judeo-Christian ethic did inform it. Yes, yes, yes! To the praise and grace of God, common grace of God, but the fact that we're losing it isn't that big of a deal. I mean, I understand, I listen to talk radio occasionally, and it is frustrating, but I have to keep coming back to, "Wait a minute, that is not the big deal." So what if America turns back and away from Obamacare, and becomes more of a republic. That would be nice, but if people still go to hell, what did that accomplish in eternity? We won't be thinking about it. But, if America is to go on into socialism, and become a totalitarian state even, and Christians are to be persecuted, if that results in the greater glory of God, and people coming to Christ, is that not all we ought to want even? I'm not saying we work for that. God doesn't tell you to work for foolishness among men. No, we just hold forth Christ, and since what we talked about last week, we are anticipating Heaven, we don't really have a dog in this fight.

Okay, so, we need to go vote, and I'm going to vote in November, I'm not going to miss that opportunity. I have feelings about that, but in the final analysis, I don't have a dog in the fight. What I'll say, in November, when the election returns are in, "Well, the will of God has been done. Praise His name, give me grace, oh Lord." And it is so freeing. We are the people who can be somewhat more conservative if we are thinking through our Christianity biblically. I think you come out to certainly more conservative viewpoints. You believe abortion is evil because God says it is, but we don't hold it like this. I mean, we hold the truth like that, but we don't hold the culture like that. It is freeing, but there is always an assault on the truth, and Christians can be people who love God, and love people, and who really, we're not in a culture war. We don't want to be in a culture war, if we are really thinking biblically, not a culture war the way it has been defined, like the political institutions, or what we are fighting for. I'm not saying we shouldn't be involved in politics, understand there is a balance, but the war really isn't there. The war really is a war for truth, and when you understand that, then you understand how the paradox of truth and peace comes together. And Spurgeon makes this, it's interesting, this statement. He says, now this is the paradox of the Gospel, listen.

*The church of Christ is continually represented under the figure of an army, yet its captain is the Prince of Peace. Its object is the establishment of peace. Its soldiers are men of peaceful disposition. The spirit of war is at the extremely opposite point to the spirit of the Gospel. Yet, nevertheless, the*

*church on earth has, and until the second coming, will be the church militant, the church armed, the church warring, the church conquering. How can this be? It is in the very order of things that it must be. Truth cannot be in this world without being a warring thing, and we should at once suspect that it were not true if error were friends with it. The spotless purity of truth must always be at war with the blackness of heresy and lies.*

The reason that we are at war is we just proclaim the truth and that makes us the enemy of the world. But we are holding forth the word of life in love and concern for people who are dying, and perishing, and heading toward an eternity of endless agony. And we are holding forth life in love, but to do that we have to understand that we cannot accommodate the spirit of the age. The spirit of the age always is at odds with the word, that's why the church was always, though we are men of peace, we find ourselves at war. And the truth of God is never palatable. I said it is not palatable today, people telling us we need to be uncertain and not speak with authority. We need to stop being exclusive in our message. You know those same things would have aptly been said by the wise, the supposedly wise, in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century as well. It is amazing how like the 1<sup>st</sup> Century culture American culture now is. It has never been more like the 1<sup>st</sup> Century than it is today, in any of our lives. The fact that America was informed by the Judeo-Christian ethic, and the church was so strong in America at different times, and have had moments of revival and spiritual awakening, has salted the culture in an extraordinary way, so that those things are all true, and they are all good. But today, the church today stands in the midst of a culture that is increasingly hostile to it, the true church, and the true Gospel. And when people are telling us we need to stop being so certain, and stop being authoritative, and stop being exclusive in our message, they ought to go back and tell that to Jesus and the apostles, because they lived in a culture in which religious pluralism was the dominant way. Roman culture was all about pluralism. I mean, the Roman practice, when they conquered a country, they had a practice of religious tolerance in that they would allow the conquered peoples to continue worshipping their gods. It was a polytheistic, remember. People worshiped gods in certain areas. You see that in Israel previous to this, the gods of the Philistines, the gods of Egypt, the gods of the Assyrians, the gods of the Babylonians. Well, it was that way in Rome. Rome had its Pantheon, and Greece had its Pantheon. They were almost identical, right? But you had this multifaceted religious landscape, and what the Romans would do is they'd conquer a country and say, "You can keep worshipping your god, but you must also add to it the worship of the Roman gods, because we're so superstitious in our religion that we feel like if we conquer a people and don't make you worship the Roman gods, our

gods might get mad at us.” So when bad things happened, they blamed the people who would not worship their gods.

So the only unacceptable thing for somebody in the 1<sup>st</sup> century was to be exclusive to worship only one god. That was offensive. Now, the Jews had been given kind of an out in that, because they’d been so difficult for the Romans to deal with. The Romans gave them basically an out. “You guys can just worship your God. We’re not going to mess with you all.” And early in the church, the Christians benefitted from that for a few decades, because they kind of got lumped in. Christians are just a sect of Jews, but then the Jews started pointing out, saying, “No, the Christians are different from us,” backing away from them, saying, “Don’t protect them anymore.” So the Jews were the ones who pointed out the Christians, and the Christians then were told, “Sacrifice to the Romans gods, or die,” and that’s why they died.

Now, in that culture, I think you could take people like Brian McLaren and Rob Bell and they’d be saying, “Hey, soft-pedal things. You’ve got to make the message palatable. Don’t speak an exclusive message into an inclusive world.” But the 1<sup>st</sup> century was an inclusive world, and Jesus spoke a very exclusive message.

Now I want to look at the claim. We’re going to begin unpacking it today and look at it next week as well. But I want us to look at four points about the claim that Jesus makes. Really what we have here is a clear and resounding claim that He is the way to God, the only way to God, and I want to look at four things about this claim that need to be evident in our own ministries of the word when we share with someone. The first is:

#### 1) Note the Authority of His Claim:

Note the authority of the claim that Jesus makes. When you look at the whole New Testament, all of the apostles, their ministries were characterized by authority. Authority is when you’re saying, “Listen, I’m speaking something, and it’s not just you and me talking about it, as in this is my opinion. No, I’m speaking for someone else with their authority.” The preaching of the Gospel, I read from 1 Corinthians 1 earlier, the foolishness of the message preached. Remember Paul said that? That’s what saves is the foolishness of the message preached. The Greek verb for preaching was a herald, to proclaim something. Now, think about what a herald does. Back in those days, what did a herald do? He basically just delivered the message he was given. He didn’t edit it. Do you think a herald would edit the message and be alive very long in those days? “You edited my message?” No, you

deliver the message, and you deliver it with the authority of the king. That's the word for preaching.

The word for evangelize, gospel, is to make an authoritative proclamation. The ἀγγελία (aggelia, ang-el-ee'-ah) is the authoritative message, and the word itself, messenger, angel, is our transliteration of ἄγγελος (aggelos, ang'-el-os), messenger. The messenger is someone sent with a message. He doesn't edit the message as he's walking to deliver it. "Hey, I don't think they're going to like this part, so let's take that part out." No, he delivers the message. So the proclamation of the Gospel is the faithful proclamation of the message God has given.

Then the word apostle itself means one *sent from* with authority. Jesus sends the apostles into the world and they don't speak as men with their own authority. They say, "Listen, He sent us, and we proclaim," like Paul said, "not ourselves, but Christ Jesus." You see in Jesus the genesis of the authority of the proclamation of the Gospel when He says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am the way, and the truth, and the life." I am, we've seen in John's Gospel, is clear claim to deity. Jesus is claiming to be the great I am of the Old Testament. The I am of the Old Testament, the root word of Jehovah or Yahweh was basically a form of the Hebrew word I am. I mean, the actual word I am, a form of that is Yahweh.

So when He says, "My name is Yahweh. Call Me Yahweh," He's saying, "Call Me *I am*," and He makes this emphatically clear in Exodus 3:14. When Moses says to the Lord, speaking to Him in the burning bush, remember, "When I go to them and tell them that You've sent me, what's Your Name? Who do I tell them? What do I tell them Your Name is when I go?" He says, "You say that *I am that I am* has sent you. My Name is I am."

And did you hear it in the passage Ted read earlier before the service? In Isaiah 42, "I am the Lord." You have that kind of statement all over the Old Testament. "I am the Lord. I am the I am." So in John's Gospel, over and over and over again, He says, "I am." He says it seven different times with a predicate like here. "I am something. I am the bread of life. I am the Light of the world. I am the door. I am the Good Shepherd. I am the resurrection and the life." And here, the sixth one, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." He's saying, "I am God and I am your bread. I am your God. I am your Light. I am God. I am the door." Here He's coming back to the same theme. "I'm the door. I'm the way in. I am God. I am the Shepherd." He's speaking with divine authority. That's the authority of the claim.

## 2) The Clarity of the Claim:

I am is egō eimi (ἐγὼ εἰμί) in the Greek. It really means, “I Myself am,” because *eimi* the verb actually has the pronoun *I* in it. Eimi means *I am*. When you put egō in front of it, the pronoun I, it has the force of *I Myself am*. Egō eimi is the way it is throughout John’s Gospel, more than 20 times, egō eimi, I am. I am the bread of life. I Myself am the bread of life. I Myself am the way, and the truth, and the life.” It makes this abundantly clear. Jesus Himself is the way. It’s not that He’s part of the way. He IS the way. In fact, that’s why He said to them, “You know the way,” in Verse 4. In fact, in the Greek, the flow is that it doesn’t say it in this order: “And you know the way I’m going.” It actually says in Verse 4, “And where I am going, you know the way.” I should be talking about Heaven. “I’m going to the Father’s house and I’m going to prepare a place for you. It’s going to be wonderful, and where I’m going, you know the way.”

Then Thomas voices what the rest of them are thinking. “We don’t know where You’re going. How can we know the way?” I mean, was Jesus wrong when He said, “You know the way”? No, He wasn’t wrong. He’s never wrong. He said, “You guys haven’t yet figured out where I’m going? I’ve been telling you where I’m going, and you don’t understand that yet, but you do know the way.” Thomas says, “How can we know the way?” “You know Me. Since you know Me, you know the way. You just think you don’t know the way, but you do know the way, because if you know Me, you know the way. I Myself am the way. If you have a relationship with Me, you have already laid hold of the way. You are on the way, and you are going to get there.” That’s what He’s saying. It’s clarity. “I am. I Myself am.”

He also says it positively and negatively. This statement is exclusive, it’s made with authority, it’s made with clarity. He says, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” That’s saying it positively. What’s the way to Heaven? “I’m the way. I Myself am the way.” But then He says it negatively at the end of the verse. In case we didn’t get the point, He says, “Listen, I am the way to God, I am the way to Heaven,” positively, and then He says, “Nobody gets there apart from Me.” That’s saying it negatively. When you say something positively and negatively, you’re leaving no room for misunderstanding. There is no lack of clarity. People want to act like God’s word isn’t clear.

This whole deal I mentioned earlier, modern attempts to embrace uncertainty. It’s very deceptive how Satan comes in. This thing being batted around called the hermeneutics of humility, a number of different guys talk about this. Brian McLaren is one of them. The hermeneutics of humility, basically the idea is these

are guys that claim to be Christians, that really I have to understand—this is the hermeneutics of humility, that I have to understand that I could be wrong about everything that I believe, and I'm humble enough to say, "I really don't know what God says here in this passage." It has a ring almost of, "Wow, that seems humble at first," but do you know what that really is? That is incredibly arrogant, prideful, and it's a disguise for what it really is, which is unbelief. It's not humility, because it would be like me saying, if I work for somebody and he gives me instruction, and says, "I want you to go tell Bill to stop working on this project, and to start working on this other project," and I go to see Bill and say, "Hey, Bill, how are you doing? I hope you have a good day," and I leave. He goes to see Bill, and says, "Bill, didn't Ty tell you that you're supposed to stop working on that project and start working on this project?" Bill says, "No, he didn't say anything about it."

My boss is going to come to me and say, "Hey Ty, I gave you an instruction to go tell Bill to stop working on this project and start working on this project. Why didn't you do it?" "Well, I couldn't really be certain that I understood what you meant, and if I were to go to Bill and say, 'Bill, he said stop this and start that,' I would have had to be certain, and I can't have that level of certainty, because communication is just too convoluted." You know what would happen? I'd just get fired, wouldn't I? Because you can't live in the foolishness of the post-modern world. It doesn't make sense. It doesn't work in real life. They don't even believe it themselves.

I love that illustration of Al Mohler. I know I've told this before. It's just such a great story, though. Al Mohler, when he took over the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary when he was made President and there were a lot of Liberals there, I mean, it was almost all Liberals, a hundred professors, and most of them at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky in 1993, most of them did not believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ. Most of the professors at Southern Baptist Seminary in the early 90s were going to hell, and they were training the ministers at that seminary. Mohler is hired by the convention to go in and fix things.

What he did is he went back and he said, "Look, here's the doctrinal statement of the church, The Abstract of Principles." He said that, "The rule is that ever since you've been working here, you've signed a statement every year saying you agree with The Abstract of Principles, and so I want to ask you right now, do you agree with The Abstract of Principles?" "Yes, I do." "Well, let me ask you a question. When it says that Jesus Christ rose on the third day, the language of that means that Jesus Christ physically, bodily rose on the third day. Do you believe that?" "No,

of course I don't." "Well, why not?" "Because language, you can interpret it. You have your interpretation and I have my interpretation." Mohler said, "That's clearly what it says. It says you must believe in the bodily resurrection." "Well, that's just your interpretation." Al Mohler said, "You're fired." The guy said, "I have a contract that says as a tenured professor, I cannot be fired without a vote of the faculty." Mohler said, "That's just your interpretation."

Now, the reality is Mohler went on to say that he went back and he did what he had to do to actually honor the contract, but you see, they can't even live in the world they make up, and then they want to invite us to live in that foolish world, and in doing so, deny the Gospel and lose the power of the Gospel, because if you are not certain of what you believe, you have no business talking. You don't become relevant by being uncertain. You become utterly irrelevant, just one more voice in the cacophony of fools trying to figure out where to go in this dark world. And we would all be part of that cacophony of fools if Jesus had not worked in our hearts and given us by His Spirit, through His word, revealed the truth to us. But once He's made it known to you, you're not to say, "I'm not sure about that." Jesus didn't talk like that, the apostles didn't talk like that, and they lived in a world that would have embraced that kind of thing.

Think about it. To show you this, remember Jesus' conversation with Pilate? We're going to see it in John 18. He's talking to Pilate, and Pilate is asking Him questions, and Jesus said, "I came into this world..." Pilate basically said, "You're the King of the Jews?" Jesus finally said, "It's as you say, but My Kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my subjects would be fighting for me." They go on, and He says, "Listen, I came into the world to testify to the truth." That's what Jesus says. "I came into the world to testify to the truth." Pilate says, "What is truth?" like a good post-modern philosopher today. That was what was going on in Greco-Roman society. It was just like today. What did they need? Did they need less certainty? They needed heralds to go out and proclaim the authoritative message that Jesus Christ alone saves from sin. That's what they needed, and that is what they got, praise God, and that's what changed the world.

The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness doesn't like it, but the darkness cannot overcome it. It can't stand up to the Light, so you just lift up and proclaim the Name of Jesus. Now you start a conversation and you're gentle, and you're careful, and you're sensitive to somebody. You don't just walk into the coffee shop and stand up on a table, and start preaching. You start a conversation. But when it comes to the idea of, "Listen, God says that you and I are sinners, and we are headed for hell apart from His saving grace," then, "That's just your opinion."

“No, it’s not just my opinion. My opinion means nothing. Your opinion means nothing. It’s what the word of God says.” When you stand on that, that is really humility, to say, “I don’t know, you don’t know, but God does.” This foolish hermeneutics humility that they are spouting about is prideful, willful, unbelief. We looked at the clarity of the claim, the authority of the claim, and now the exclusivity of the claim.

### 3) The Exclusivity of the Claim:

He says, “I am the way.” Jesus didn’t say, “I am a way.” He said, “I am the way.” It echoes what He said in Verse 4, “You know the way.” He says, “...the way, and the truth, and the life.” The clear article, the definite article “the” there is that’s *the* way, *the* truth, *the* life. That means there’s only one way, there’s only one truth, there’s only one life. The last clause made it emphatic. “No one comes to the Father but through Me.” It’s a claim of authority, it’s a claim of clarity, it’s a claim of exclusivity, and then there’s a wonderful consistency of this claim.

### 4) The Consistency of the Claim:

The wonderful consistency of this claim, that there would only be one way to God, is what the Bible has said from the very beginning. One of the things I love about the Scripture is that the more that you study it and you honestly take it on its terms, and when you come to the word, in a sense you read God’s word on your knees spiritually, and you’re ready to learn, and you take it in for what it says, and you let it trouble you, and you don’t reject it, and you submit to it, then what happens is you start to see how glorious and grand the whole plan of God’s salvation is, and you see that it’s always been this way. There are things in the Old Testament that only make sense once you sit before, and you contemplate it, and you look at Calvary.

One of the things you see is this idea that there’s only one way, and that way is Jesus. There’s only one place to meet God, and it’s at the feet of Jesus Christ. So every other proposed way is a false way. Jesus is the only way. That’s what He’s saying clearly here. That’s what the Bible has always been saying. You know the Old Testament tabernacle, the tent that they were given in Exodus, the tent of meeting, it’s called dozens and dozens of times in the Pentateuch—the tent of meeting, they went to the tent of meeting. The tent of meeting was the tabernacle. It was a tent where the Holy of Holies was inside. The Holy Place was also inside, and then they would offer sacrifices outside, carry the blood inside to the Holy

Place, and then once a year into the Holy of Holies behind the veil, and this was the place, the tent of meeting.

Well, the Hebrew word for tent of meeting means tent, but the meeting thing is a little bit difficult to translate. It actually really comes from a verb which means *appointed*. It's the appointed tent. That's what it says. It's the appointed tent. So when you were in the tent of meeting, it's really the appointed tent. It's the appointed place as God sovereignly appointed place for what? It's where man meets God. Now, there was only one tabernacle, and then that tabernacle later was replaced by one place, the temple. It was the only place you could go to meet God, and it made it very difficult for the people of Israel. I mean, it was difficult.

I was watching some videos online recently of the of topography Israel, really helpful things on one of these online Bible atlas things, and the geography and topography of Israel is really something. I've not been there. I want to go, but on the east side of Jerusalem, you basically have a 4,000 foot drop to the Dead Sea that happens in the span of just a few miles. So if you're coming from the east side and you're at the Dead Sea, to try get to Israel, you're mountain climbing. And really from every other area, it's tough to get there. There are all kinds of barriers. If you're coming from the east, you've got to go up north above it and come down this way. This is the normal way people got there.

Well, God put His place of meeting in Jerusalem, and He calls it Zion, the place of glory. Why did He make it so hard to get there? Why only one place? Why not franchises? That is exactly the problem 1 and 2 Kings deals with. Read 1 and 2 Kings. If you haven't read that, read it in the next few weeks, and look at all the times it talks about the high places. The kings would allow people to set up high places. Those were worship places. You could go make a sacrifice at this high, mountainous place over here, rather than go all the way to Jerusalem. That was a long way. God didn't like the high places. He was very angry about the high places. Why is God so hard on that kind of thing?

It seems unreasonable at first glance, doesn't it? I mean, somebody's got to take a 4-day journey and basically go up 2,700 feet from the coast on this 100-mile journey to get to Jerusalem, and he's an old man. That's where you've got to go. There's one place to meet God. The sin of Jeroboam in the Old Testament, he wanted to make other places, and so he made two other temples, one in Dan and one in Bethel, places that you could worship, and all throughout 1 and 2 Kings it talks about the sin of Jeroboam. God hated Jeroboam. In fact, He hated him so

much, He destroyed his whole family. Several generations later, He raised up a guy who went and killed him, and killed every one of his children. This is the king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Why? Because he had the audacity to make a place of worship other than Jerusalem.

At first glance, Jeroboam was trying to keep his kingdom together, the Northern Kingdom. He was worried that if they went down to the south where the Southern Kingdom of Israel was, Jerusalem was in the south, they might get separated from him and the Northern Kingdom would lose its cohesiveness. He had a kind of a rationale about it. God hated that, because he was attacking one of the fundamental planks of the Gospel. There is only one place to meet God. And see, when you understand John 14:6, doesn't it make sense out of all that stuff in 1 and 2 Kings? It makes sense out of it, because we are such fools. "A franchise? Great. Let's worship God however we want to."

This is what people are doing. This is how people are approaching God today, the smorgasbord approach. It's whatever you like. Take a little bit of Buddhism, and mix it with a little bit of Christianity, and a little bit of Hinduism, and a little bit of whatever, and seek God. God from Heaven is saying, "There is one way to seek Me. There is only one way to seek Me, and it is through the appointed place, and the appointed place is Jesus Christ." That's why John 1:14 is so beautiful. When John says that in the beginning was the Word, in John 1:1-3, in the beginning was the Word, he's talking about Jesus.

***John 1:1 ~ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.***

In John 1:14, he says:

***John 1:14 ~ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us,...***

Literally it's translated more accurately, "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us." The Word, God, becomes flesh and pitches His tent among us. Now the tent of meeting is a Person, Jesus Christ. There it is, but He's making clear, "Listen, I will save anyone who comes to Me. I invite all men to be saved, but you must come on My terms, to My place. If you try to go any other way than Jesus Christ, if you try to go any other way to God, than Jesus' perfect ministry—He lived a perfect life of righteousness. God becomes flesh, He lives as a Man, He lives in complete obedience to the law of God, He keeps all of God's law every moment of every day for more than 30 years, a perfect record of righteousness. Then He offers Himself at Calvary as a sacrifice for sin. He's the Lamb of God

who takes away the sins of the world. God sends our sins imputed by God, to God's Son, the sin-bearer. He bears our sins in His body on the cross. He hangs and dies in agony, suffering our punishment, the sins of everyone who would ever believe. He utters those wonderful words, "It is finished!" That's the victory cry. It is paid in full before He dies. "I've taken care of all the sins of those who will ever believe. I've vanquished them. They're gone." The veil is torn from top to bottom in the temple. Can you imagine the priest going in the next day into the Holy Place, and there the Holy of Holies is open before them? It was torn from top to bottom, because God has made the way open for sinners to come into the presence of God, but you can't get there without the flesh that was torn, and the veil that was torn was Jesus' body.

There's one way, but if you will repent of your sins and believe God's authoritative, certain, perfect message, then you will be saved, and you won't be whistling in the dark some kind of hope faith, that's a hope against hope. True biblical hope is certainty, expectation. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, not that, "I'm hoping." No, you're assured. That's the glory of the Gospel, and that's the message that we need to celebrate, and we need to share. That's the message that the world, though they don't understand it, they're dying to hear it.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer...

*Father, we thank You for the glory of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We thank You for the clarity. We thank You for giving us a message that is from Heaven. We're not relying upon cleverly devised tales, but we have an authoritative word from Genesis to Revelation which was vindicated and lifted up by Jesus Himself, the Word in flesh. Help us to be people of firmer faith, greater confidence, greater joy, and help us to hold fast to the Word of life with love, conviction, and tenderness. We pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.*

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