

An Exclusive Faith (John 14:1–11)
By Pastor Jeff Alexander (4/24/2022)

Introduction

1. Jesus affirmed that He, and by implication, He *alone*, was the way, the truth, and the life. He then reinforced this statement of exclusivity with the assertion that “*no one comes to the Father except through me.*”

The simple fact is that exclusivity is the foundation of all religion—every religion claims it is the only one. Nevertheless, we live in a world that rejects any claim of uniqueness. This leads to misguided arguments that all ideas should be treated as equally true, even if these ideas contradict other ideas.

The notion that love demands acceptance and equal standing actually destroys the uniqueness of any religion. This makes the claims of Jesus very offensive. That is also one reason so many Christians, even conservative, are reluctant to speak out as obedient witnesses for Jesus.

2. Tolerance demands coexistence, which comes in two forms:
 - a. The politically correct version of coexistence is actually based on *submission* to the view that there is no absolute truth. Thus, no religion has the right to claim to be exclusive. The axiom reads, “There are many roads to heaven.” This kind of toleration leads to intolerance and persecution of all who deny this claim.
 - b. The biblically correct version argues that coexistence is based on *freedom*. Every religion should have the freedom to exist and propagate. All claims to exclusive standing must also be accompanied with the responsibility to support those claims with truth. Sadly, most religions use force, either psychological or physical oppression, to grow and maintain their standing.
3. Three principles govern exclusivity. First is the principle of *reason*. God gave us the ability to think things out. Are the claims of Jesus reasonable? Second is the principle of *revelation*. God has given us the revelation of Himself in Scripture. What does the Scripture teach about the claims of Jesus? Third is the principle of *reality*. God is truth because He is God. Scripture is truth because it is the written revelation of God. Jesus is truth because He is the living revelation of God. We investigate this principle in this message.

I. The Uniqueness of the Christ

1. Jesus, in charging His disciples to trust Him (v. 1), pointed back to what He had revealed in Chapter 12. The hour He would be glorified had come, not by His elevation to the throne of David, but by His losing His life (12:23, 24).
 - a. Jesus exhorted His hearers with the *principle* of death to self. Loving one’s life is to lose it. If you chose to die to self and serve the King, you will actually preserve your life in eternal life, and, following Jesus, you will be with Him forever and honored by the Father.
 - b. Jesus was troubled (12:27) so that His own would not be troubled (14:1). Thus, “*Jesus cried out and said, ‘whoever believes [trusts] in me, believes [trusts] not in me [only] but in him [the Father] who sent me’*” (12:44). He repeats the charge in 14:1: “*Trust in God; trust also in me.*”
2. This charge was based on Jesus’ being the light of the world (12:45). At that time, He was simply reiterating His pronouncement in 8:12.
 - a. John established this truth in His prologue (1:4, 5). Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of (Isaiah 42:6, 7; 49:6, 7).

- b. Jesus is described as “*the true light, which gives light to everyone, [as He] was coming into the world*” (John 1:9). Although He was the Creator of the world and Founder of the nation of Israel, when He came to them, they did not *receive* Him. But a remnant within the nation did *receive* Him.

The language here has been misconstrued by modern readers to mean that some accepted Jesus into their hearts as personal Savior. However, *receiving* does not mean accepting Jesus in order to be saved. *Receiving Him* actually refers to the official and open reception of Him as Lord and King.

To suggest that John means accepting Jesus for salvation, one must believe salvation requires the sinner to initiate the transaction, which is to mix faith and works. If one must say “yes” to God before God can save him, he is putting God at his bidding.

II. The Demonstration of His Uniqueness

1. Of Jesus’ seven “I am” sayings in John, the first is “*I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst*” (6:35, repeated in 48). The others are, “*I am the light of the world,*” 8:12; 9:5; “*I am the door*” 10:7, 9; “*I am the good shepherd,*” 10:11, 14; “*I am the resurrection,*” 11:25; “*I am the way,*” 14:6; and “*I am the true vine*” 15:1. Apart from these, there are other important “I am” statements of Jesus (6:20; 8:24, 28, 58; 18:5). Particularly note John 8:24, 25. All these “I am” statements are a clear allusion to God’s identification as “I AM,” the name by which He was revealed to Israel in Exodus 3:14.
2. The important “I am” of Christ’s statement in verse 14 is given in response to Thomas’s question, “*How can we know the way?*” How typical is Thomas’s understanding and expectation of his relationship with Christ. The whole of Christ’s teaching focused on the fact that *He* is our salvation.
3. Jesus informed Thomas that He was the way to the Father. He was not going to show them the way; He was the way. No one could come to the Father except by Him. He followed this statement with another word that, in itself, makes no sense if one sees Jesus as simply a guide to point the way to God: “*If you had known me, you would have known my Father also.*” The Greek term translated “to know” is used of intimate relationships. Knowing Jesus in the intimate union of faith would have provided the disciples with full understanding of Jesus’ relationship to the Father and their’s as well. When Philip requested, “*Show us the Father,*” Jesus simply doubled down: “*Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.*”

Finally, Jesus *is* the way to the Father. The two terms, *truth* and *life*, that follow are subordinate. *Truth* is a descriptive of God’s divine nature. Jesus is the truth—the revelation of God (1:18). Jesus is also the *life* of God who came to grant life to His own (5:24, 26).

Jesus did not come merely to show the way because He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life of God manifested in human flesh. Through Him God is restoring a people to union and oneness with Him as they live out His life in them (Ephesians 4:4–6). Jesus was sent to bring about this restoration by bringing His people to the Father and into the true union that results (v. 20; Galatians 3:26; Colossians 3:3, 4)

Lessons

1. Does Christ live in you? Is the life you live Christ living in you? Can you say with Paul, “*I have been crucified with Christ*” (Galatians 2:20)?
2. Is our union in Christ evidenced in our relationships with others, particularly brothers and sisters in Christ? The church should be a testimony to the world that all believers live in the unity of Christ’s life (I Corinthians 1:10–13).