

Jesus The Only Way

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Our Scripture reading this morning is John 14. The Gospel according to John, chapter 14.

1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. 4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. 5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? 6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. 7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. 8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? 10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. 12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. 13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. 15 If ye love me, keep my commandments. 16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. 18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. 19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. 20 At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. 21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will

manifest myself to him. 22 Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? 23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. 24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. 25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. 26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. 27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. 28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. 29 And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. 30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. 31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

We read that far in God's word.

On the basis of this portion of Scripture as well as on the basis of many other parts of God's word, we have the teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism and Lord's Day 11. So we consider this morning Lord's Day 11, God the Son. Page 8 in the back of your Psalters, Lord's Day 11.

Q. 29. Why is the Son of God called Jesus, that is a Savior?

A. Because He saveth us, and delivereth us from our sins; and likewise, because we ought not to seek, neither can find salvation in any other.

Q. 30. Do such then believe in Jesus the only Savior, who seek their salvation and welfare of saints, of themselves, or anywhere else?

A. They do not; for though they boast of Him in words, yet in deeds they deny Jesus the only deliverer and Savior; for one of these two things must be true, that either Jesus is not a complete Savior; or that they, who by a true faith receive this Savior, must find all things in Him necessary to their salvation.

Children, young people, people of God, the sermon this morning is not a difficult sermon to understand. Read the theme, "Jesus The Only Savior," and you should know exactly what this word of God is about. It's about Jesus, a familiar name to you. Jehovah salvation, the only way, that is the only way of salvation; the one way that you are going

to go to heave; the only way that you will not go to hell; the only way that you can believe in Jesus; the only way of any part of salvation. Jesus is the only way.

This is an easy sermon to understand. It's a sermon that you know well. Lord's Day 11 is a familiar Lord's Day and a truth that is repeated a lot. It's something that we tend to forget. Yes, we forget the most familiar truths because we see it, deem it more familiar, it's often the case that we tend to block it out in our minds as we listen in church on Sunday morning. It's something that we already know, "I don't need to hear it again," we think and then we leave here acting as though Jesus is really not the only way of salvation, perhaps not intellectually but with attitudes of pride which show something very different than confessing Jesus as the only way of my salvation. Satan doesn't want us to listen, children. Satan doesn't want us to listen to the fact, to the preaching, to the word of God that Jesus is the only way. He wants us to say, "We already know it," and leave here thinking that we do but acting as though we do not. So I call you in the name of Jesus, by his power, focus and listen. Listen and take heed to the word of God that Jesus is the only way.

The name Jesus is what the Heidelberg Catechism and Lord's Day 11 is focusing on. Remember that the Heidelberg Catechism is explaining the Apostles' Creed, that confession that every Christian must confess if he says he is a believer. And along with the Apostles' Creed, the Heidelberg Catechism is describing some of the most important names of our Savior. Later on we'll see the name Christ, a title of our Savior. We'll see the name the Son of God and Lord. But now Lord's Day 11 focuses on just one name, the name Jesus. This is the personal name of Jesus. This is the name that Jesus' parents gave to him and the name that all his friends and all the people around him growing up called him. It's a name, a simple name, a short name, a name familiar to us but it's a name with deep meaning and we seek to remind ourselves this morning what this name means, and then see how the man with this name is the only way of salvation.

We see in Lord's Day 11, then, the text under the theme "Jesus The Only Way," first, who he is; second, how to deny him; and third, how to believe him. Jesus the only way: who he is; second, how to deny him; and third, how to believe him.

The name Jesus tells us a lot about who he is. The name itself is God's way of revealing to us who Jesus is and what he came to do. When our parents gave us names, they did not intend, when our fathers, when our mothers gave us names, they didn't intend that those names, our names, reveal to other people exactly who we are. The names that we have are special and parents chose our names, they liked how it sounded, they perhaps even chose your name with good intentions because they wanted you to have a name with a good meaning behind it, and even at times the meanings of these names that you have, that we have, match up with our personality according to God's providence, but when our parents gave us these names, they did not intend that our names actually revealed to everyone else who we are and what we're going to do in our lives because our parents didn't know. Our parents, when we were born, didn't know exactly who we were but had to wait and see who God had made us to be. But Jesus' name is different. When Jesus got

his name, God intended in giving to Jesus this name that it showed to everyone else who he is and what his calling in life was.

In Matthew 1 we read of the angel of the Lord appearing to Joseph and before Jesus was born, the angel of the Lord told Joseph that he was to name the babe in Mary's womb with a name, with a personal name, Jesus. Matthew 1:21, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." God wanted this child to be named Jesus, not because God liked the sound of the name, not because God knew someone else who had the same name and liked that person, not because he merely fancied the meaning of Jesus, that name, but because he wanted the name of that child to be a revelation to show to Mary, to Joseph, to us, to the world, who Jesus is and what he actually came to do. Jesus means Jehovah salvation or Jehovah the Savior. Not only that he's from Jehovah our Savior, not only that he loved Jehovah our Savior, but he is Jehovah the Savior.

There are three revelations, there are three truths that stand out from the name Jesus. First, Jesus was and is the eternal God. He is the eternal God. This child born of Mary, the child who grew up to be a man, the child who lived a short life, relatively short, only about 33 years, this child, this man who died on the cross and rose again from the dead was not a mere human being but he was the eternal God.

Jesus is Jehovah. That's what the first two letters, J-e, stand for. Jehovah, the "I am that I am." That's the name that God told Moses to bring to Pharaoh and tell Pharaoh and to the people of Israel, "This is who has sent me." That's what Moses had to say. Jehovah is God's name and now God's name is given to Jesus. He's Jehovah, the "I am that I am," with God's name and that name, Jehovah, particularly refers to God's eternality, that he has always existed, that there never was a time when he wasn't there and there never will be a time that he won't be. Jehovah means "I am that I am," not I was, not I will be, but I am, one who has always been and always will be. He has no beginning and no end. Oh, he was born as a man. His human nature had a start, had a beginning in Mary's womb, but Jesus as the Son of God, as the second person of the Trinity, is the eternal God himself, the "I am that I am."

And again and again in Jesus' ministry, he would draw out that fact that his name revealed, that he was Jehovah, the eternal God, and he would often do that by speaking of himself as the "I am." John 8:58, "Before Abraham was," Jesus said to the Pharisees, "before he was, I am." And many times he used figures, you remember, of a vine, of bread. He would say, "I am the bread of life. I am the vine and you are the branches." And here in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth and the life," confessing about himself that he was Jehovah, the I am, the eternal God.

Second, his name reveals his work. Not only who he is as the eternal God but, second, his work as the Savior. The letters s-u-s after J-e refer to that, that he is the God of salvation, the one who came to save and he is Savior in every way. He is Savior from spiritual harm. He is Savior from physical harm. He is Savior from sin, from God's wrath, from death, from Satan, from sickness, from pain, from sorrow. He is Savior from depression.

He is Savior from yourself. He is Savior from persecution, from anger, from demons. He is Savior in every way. He is God, the saving God, but the focus of his work on this earth, the main reason, the most important reason that Jesus came to this earth, his calling in life, was to save from sin. From sin, that's why God interpreted the name of Jesus this way, "for he shall save his people from their sins." Jesus would do other miracles in his life. He would save people from physical harm, from blindness, from the palsy, from leprosy and other diseases, but he didn't come mainly to do that, he came to save from sin. Sin is the main problem of mankind. Sin is really what brings poverty and brings those diseases. Sin brings dangers. Sin brings war. Sin brings depression. Sin brings bondage to Satan. If not your own sin, the sins of others and the sin of Adam. Sin, sin's guilt, sin's power is what Jesus came to save us from. That was the focus of his work and the priority in his life.

The name Jehovah reveals that Jesus is the eternal God, first of all; second, that Jesus is the Savior especially from sin; and third, that Jesus saves a certain people. It reveals whom Jesus saves. Not everyone but his elect people. That was God's interpretation of Jesus' name again to Joseph, "for he shall save his people," that is, the people that belong to Jesus, the eternal God, the one that he owned, the one that he loved from eternity. Jehovah, that name of God that Jesus has within his name, is a name of the covenant God. When you look through Scripture, you look at all the times that Jehovah, that name is used in the Bible, very frequently when it is used, it refers to God expressing his covenant love, his friendship with his people. And this Jehovah God had always had a love for his people. He is the "I am that I am," that's what Jehovah means, who has not only existed from eternity but as he existed from eternity, he has always loved a certain covenant people, only his elect, and he continues to love them and only them. Jesus, then, came as that covenant God who has always loved a particular people, to save them and them alone. All of them so that none would be lost and no one else so that the rest would be damned.

Who is this Jesus? His name reveals that he is the eternal God, Jehovah himself; that he is a Savior from sin; and is a Savior of his elect people. This Jesus is the only way of salvation. The exclusive Savior. The only way whereby anyone can be saved. He said so himself time and time again in his ministry. In Matthew 14 or John 14:6 that we read, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." The word "way" stands out in this text as the main focus. It's placed first in Jesus' sentence. "I am the way." The way, that is, that you will receive all the blessings of salvation from the Father. That's all he says and, "no man cometh unto the Father but by me." All the blessings of salvation may only be received from God the Father. He is the source. He is the fountain. As our doxology says, "From God from whom all blessings flow."

And how do we get to the Father to receive these blessings? How to get into a relationship with him? How do we come in contact with him? How do we receive any blessing of salvation from this Father? Jesus says, "I am the way, the only way." How is there peace between you, the sinner, and the holy God of wrath who hates sin? Jesus is the way. How can you be a son and a daughter of God himself? Jesus is the way. How can you receive forgiveness for the most horrific of sins that you have committed in your

life, embarrassed about? Jesus is the way. How can you receive the favor of God and know the favor of God in spite of the affliction that you face right now? Jesus is the way. How do you know that God the Father hears your prayers in his favor and receives them with pleasure? Jesus is the way. How can you have comfort in life and in death? Jesus is the way. How can you enjoy communion with God now though you might feel so far away from him? Jesus is the way. How are you able to come to the Father with your soul as soon as you die? Jesus is the way. How can you stand on judgment day before him and not be condemned before the righteous Judge? Jesus is the way. How can you with your soul and your body enjoy the new heavens and new earth one day and not be consumed in his fiery wrath in hell? Jesus is the way.

He's the only way, the only way to receive any blessing of salvation. He didn't say, Jesus didn't say, John 14:6, "I am a way, one of the options out there." He didn't even say, "I am a best way, a good way, better than everyone else." No, he said, "I am the way, the only way." There is no other way. No man has the right to the Father to receive salvation blessings, no one is able to come to the Father to get those salvation blessings and no one even wants to come to the Father for those blessings. Jesus must earn the right, give the ability, transform the will. He's the only way in every way.

Knowing this, no one may seek salvation in some other way. That's what the Catechism says, "Because He saveth us, and delivereth us from our sins; and likewise, because we ought not to seek," we ought not, we may not seek, "salvation in any other." If you or I try to find one bit of salvation somewhere else besides Jesus, then what we're really doing is pushing him aside. We're rejecting him. We're making an offense against him. We're saying, "I don't need you for this part. I'll find this part of salvation somewhere else."

And that's offensive, offensive to the Lord who saves us, and it's offensive for two reasons. First, it's offensive because we're claiming, as we do that we're claiming that Jesus failed. He may have done this for me, he may have died on the cross for my salvation, he may have done this for me, he may have given me the ability to enter heaven, but the other aspects of salvation, he didn't finish. He didn't accomplish totally. He failed. He didn't do enough in the end. If we seek salvation in anything else for one little bit, we offend Christ because we claim he has failed. We imply that.

The second is arrogance. It's a proud attack against Christ. If we seek to find salvation in any other we're saying, "Christ, you're wrong." Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth and the life, the only way to the Father," and we say, "No, I can find some other way." That's pure arrogance, it's pride. "I know better," we say and often those who say that they know better also find salvation not just in someone else but in self. "I am the way," we say of ourselves for some part of salvation at least. Totally depraved self says that, "I did something," and that's offensive to the Lord. Arrogance and claiming that Jesus failed. No part of salvation can be sought in anyone else. We may not. It's an offensive attack against Jesus, our Savior.

Not only is it not allowed, not only is it forbidden but it's impossible. It's impossible to find salvation in anyone else. "We ought not seek," answer 29, "neither can find salvation

in any other." Men may imagine, men may think about some other way, they think, they fell like they've found another Savior but it's an illusion. It's a lie of the devil. It's a framing of something in our minds that isn't there. There is no other way. Jesus is the only way. Don't be afraid to confess that truth, people of God. There are many who will look at you and claim that you're being proud, you're being proud in saying that Jesus is the only way, that my Jesus that I serve is the only way of salvation. That's not pride. That's proclaiming the truth that Jesus himself proclaimed and that God says is true. Unashamed of it, we must say that. We must confess it.

Jesus is the only way for every part of salvation and there are many ways that this is denied today, some obvious ways and some less obvious ways. One obvious way is the way of pagan unbelievers of today. The Hindu, for example, sees Jesus as just another god. The Hindu religion is very popular, perhaps not in America yet but its ideas have influenced our culture, not just out East but our culture in America. The Hindu philosophy is really not much different from the way many Americans think today. The Hindus believe that all gods, all gods lead to the same god. God is in every god that you serve: Allah, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, and it does not matter, it really does not matter who you serve because in the end, you serve the same god. This lie of Satan, this pluralism, is a rejection of Jesus as the only Savior. Jesus says, "I am the way, the only way." Those who say there are many other ways receive a curse from God. They imagine other Saviors and they go down the way of destruction.

The Muslim religion is another popular religion of today. They, too, deny that Jesus is the only Savior. They do believe in Jesus and they will claim to your face that, "We believe in Jesus too, and in some way he's the Savior," but to them Jesus is merely a prophet. A good prophet, someone who taught many good things and with his example we can live like him, a Savior perhaps in that way, but like in every other pagan religion, the Muslim religion teaches that I, you, are the savior. Allah or any other god must be appeased by my works, my doing. I am the savior in the end. That brings me the favor of God.

There are other forms of denying Jesus as Savior. Many cults like the Jehovah's Witness and the Mormons, who say they believe in Jesus, who may even look like they believe in Jesus with their moral lifestyles, who may even sound like they believe in Jesus with their many similar doctrines that they will describe to you, but as the Catechism says, "they boast of Him in words, yet in deeds they deny Jesus the only deliverer and Savior." They use Jesus' name, they use the term "salvation" and even the term "grace" and they use many other doctrinal terms, sentences, words that we would use and it sounds like they believe the same thing, but the terms, the words that they use, they don't mean the same thing as we do. Jesus is a Savior, they say, but they don't mean Jesus as Jehovah salvation, the eternal God, the one who came to save his people from their sins. They don't mean that. He's just another man. He's just another person that we follow who died, perhaps, but only to give us an example. In the end, these cults, these different religions that seem to claim that Jesus is the only Savior, in the end, they too, like all pagan religions, point to self. Self salvation, "I am savior. I am the way that I am saved."

Besides the cults and the pagan religions, there are other less obvious ways of denying Jesus as the only Savior. The Roman Catholic Church, and there are many in our community, do not believe that Jesus is the only Savior as much as they may look like it. They boast of him in words, yet in deed they deny Jesus is the only deliverer. The Jesus they believe is not one who satisfied for sins fully. 2,000 years ago, the Roman Catholics will say, Jesus died on that cross, fully God and fully man, just as we confess, and he died for our sins and salvation is all of grace, the Roman Catholic will say, and yet at the same time, Mass must be celebrated, the sacrifice, a re-sacrifice of Christ in order to be saved. Prayers need to be made to be saved. Confession needs to be made to be saved. Penance and many other things including a time in purgatory before you may be saved. Jesus, therefore, is not the only way. I, myself, still need some merit, some of that salvation.

Not only do they deny Jesus is the only way with their idea of salvation, but they also deny Jesus is the only way with their idea of prayer. One of the blessings, one of the greatest blessings of salvation is prayer. They don't pray only to God through Jesus, but they claim to pray to God through other saints. That's what the Catechism is referring to when it speaks of seeking salvation in the welfare of saints, and the Roman Catholics are known for that. They pray to Mary, to St. John and to other saints more than they pray to Jesus and Jesus says, "I am the way. I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me. No man cometh to the Father to receive any blessings, including the blessing of favorable hearing in prayer." This blessing in salvation, the Roman Catholics believe, is not only by Jesus only but by other saints.

The Arminian also denies that Jesus is the only Savior and there are many churches, community churches, Baptist churches, non-denominational churches, that are in our area that seem to hold to many similar doctrines that we do but in the end you will see, you should see as you study their doctrines, that they do not believe that Jesus is the only way. They claim that the Roman Catholics are wrong. They say that there are no good works that merit salvation. Works are not dependent or salvation is not dependent on your works of men. Jesus is the only way, they will say, but again they boast with their words but in deeds they deny him.

The claim by many attractive churches out there is that by exercising your free will and believing, that is how, that is how you are saved. It's because, it's because of your own free will of believing Jesus that you're saved. Oh, he mostly the way, then. None of your works, they claim. 99.9% the way, but it requires, still, a little movement of the will on your part to be saved. We must be bold. We must speak out against that to our loved ones who join such churches, to those who claim to be Reformed in our camp and still teach this. We must say all of salvation is attributed to Jesus alone. No salvation is of ourselves. Not one percent. For Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by him.

We spent some time in showing how others deny Jesus as the only Savior but now we need to think about ways in which we, too, can deny Jesus as the only Savior and that's perhaps the hardest and the least obvious of ways. We're not perfect. This doesn't come out in our theology, perhaps. It doesn't come out in what we say and what we think, but it

comes out practically in our lives. All of us have evil hearts. All of us have an old man within us and we deny Jesus as the only Savior in some way. We can. We want to be God by nature. That was the appeal of Satan to Adam and Eve in the garden, "You will be as God," and that's the appeal that we all have. We want to be God in some way. We want salvation to be at least a little bit attributed to me. So intellectually, we might boast, the Catechism says, we might boast of him in words. Don't read that phrase in the Catechism self-righteously. We, too, might boast of him in words but in deeds deny Jesus as the only deliverer and Savior.

Spend some time today thinking about that, this Sabbath day think about how we practically can deny Jesus as the only Savior and here are a few ways. How do we find our comfort when we sin? Where do we find our comfort when we make a terrible mistake and we're embarrassed for our sin? We're accused, we're caught and we feel guilty and it's often the case that the comfort that we find, the thing that we think about in our minds, "Other people aren't as good as me. They've done worse things, at least I didn't do that. I didn't go as far. I didn't know about it, that it was wrong. I won't do it again." That's how we get our comfort very frequently in our lives.

Another is well-intended people encourage us. "You're a good kid. It's okay. We know you didn't mean to do it." And not knowingly they push us in that direction of finding comfort in me, but our only comfort that we confess is that, "I belong unto my faithful Savior, Jesus, and he has covered my sin in his blood." That's the way we get our comfort and not in myself.

Think about where we find the strength to fight against it. We know intellectually we must find all our strength in Jesus but often it's this way, with clenched jaws with the greatest zeal that we can muster, with the will-power with talking to ourselves, we will overcome this addiction. All the practical means we can think of, we will fight this bad habit, this bad temper, this sin. But salvation is not by our grit and it's not by our power. Yes, we ought to fight against it but always, always with a conscious dependence on Jesus because he is the only way.

How do we pray? We speak against the Roman Catholics rightly for praying to Mary, how do we pray? I personally find myself praying in this way: I think of prayer as a good luck charm. Or perhaps I'll put it more this way: as a good providence charm. I just need to get it done, fold my hands, close my eyes, and because of that I'll have a good day. It will be alright today. So the idea is that my prayer will do it instead of my prayer being a means to plead with Jesus to help me through the day.

Jesus is the only way. How do we view our right doctrines? How do we view our church membership? How do we view our obedience to God's law? These are good things. We are to be members of a Reformed, a Protestant Reformed church, we are to be obedient to God's law, but how do we think of those things or how do we feel about those things? That they will somehow get me to heaven? When we emit a pride, that's what we're showing in our lives so though we boast of him in words, we deny him with our deeds.

We must believe. We must believe that Jesus is the only way and show it in our lives. We are to believe that he's a complete Savior, that all the blessings of salvation he has fully done for us and is doing in our lives. Nothing is apart from him. Atonement, forgiveness, peace, comfort, a holy life, the ability to pray, entrance into heaven, all the promises, all spiritual strength by a true faith must grasp ahold of Jesus Christ and believe him with all our heart. He's the complete Savior and is the only Savior exclusively. No part of salvation is apart from him.

Believe this, I call you this morning, show it. We ought to be humbled by the fact that our own faith is weak and the only way that you can reaffirm that in your hearts today and the only way that you can leave here able to show in your life that Jesus is the only way of salvation is through Jesus himself. We depend on ourselves, our abilities, we find comfort in ourselves, in our good works, that's our nature. The faith that we can have to fight against that is from Jesus. He says, "I am the way, the truth and the life." He's the only way to hold onto the truth that he is the only Savior. He's the only way with his power that gives you life to believe that he is the only Savior. He works with his word and he works with his Spirit and he is the way so that we confess, "I believe. Help thou my unbelief." Amen.

Let's pray.

Father, we confess with thanksgiving Jesus, only Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. There is no part of salvation, absolutely none without him. We praise thee for sending him for us to dwell in us, and we bow in worship in thy sovereign grace displaying Jesus, Jehovah our Savior. Amen.