

Series # 6

Scripture: John 13:31 - 14:31

Singing: 255:1-3 – (141: 1, 3 after the Law) – 10:1-3 – 399:3-4 – 421:3-4

### **Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life**

Congregation,

Did you ever have the feeling you were on the wrong way?

As you were driving, you simply did not recognize anything familiar?

Instead, all kinds of unfamiliar landmarks came into sight.

You felt more and more unsettled about being right.

Should you turn around?

Where is this going to end?

These same kinds of feelings of uncertainty and doubt were troubling the disciples of Jesus.

The things that were happening in the last few months were so different than what they had hoped for.

Instead of a rising popularity among the people, there was an increasing hostility.

Though the Master calmly and gently continued His ministry, He was speaking about worrisome things.

First, it began with talking about suffering in Jerusalem by the hands of their spiritual leaders.

He said they would even kill Him.

A little later He mentioned even worse details in Matthew 20:18-19.

Terrible things, such as someone would betray Him and He would be condemned to death by their Sanhedrin, the supreme council of the Jews.

After that, He would be delivered to the Romans to be mocked and scourged like a criminal.

And worst of all, He announced that He would be crucified!

Crucified?

Our Master crucified?

There was no death more dishonourable, more shameful, and more gruesome than the Romans cross.

That was a punishment reserved for the very worst of people.

Finally, the most unsettling came when the Master began to share His own soul troubles.

After riding into Jerusalem with the crowds crying “Hosanna,” the Master admitted,

*“Now is My soul troubled”* (John 12:27).

When they were together at the Passover meal, Jesus was deeply troubled in spirit again when He revealed the upsetting truth,

*“Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me”* (John 13:21).

With the Master troubled, no wonder that the disciples were troubled.

They relied on Him to lead them; and what if their Leader was troubled in His heart?

Questions multiplied in the minds of the disciples even more after Jesus said in 13:33,

*“Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come.”*

Going? Where is He is going? And how is it that we cannot come along?

Everything Jesus was saying lately was so different than what they had expected.

At first walking with Jesus was so beautiful.

Each day His teaching on God and salvation along with His many miracles was encouraging.

For surely He must be the Messiah their fathers and grandfathers had told them about.

But now they were not so sure anymore.

Fears and anxiety filled their hearts.

After Peter asked the Master about where He was going, Jesus’ answer was even more unsettling.

*“Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards”* (John 13:36).

Peter’s reply was probably everyone’s question, *“Lord, **why** ... why cannot I follow Thee now? Why can we not stay close to Thee or Thou to us?”*

Their minds were tossed to and fro, confused and troubled.

Where was He going?

Why could they not follow Him now?

When could they follow Him?

And where would He lead them?

It is amid all these troubling questions and fears that Jesus spoke His 6<sup>th</sup> I AM statement, as we can read in John 14:6.

*“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.”*

May God’s Spirit enable us all to hear what the Lord Jesus, as the greatest Prophet, reveals to us in this amazing Gospel passage.

We will consider **Jesus as the Way** in three main thoughts.

1. The destination of the way
2. The details the way
3. The use of the way

First, let us consider the destination which Jesus reveals in verses 2-4 about where He was going.

This teaching on the Father’s house was new and unfamiliar to them.

What did He mean with the Father's house with many mansions?

Why could they not follow Him?

They imagined all kinds of things about Him being King in His kingdom and their participation in it.

Their definition of the Messiah's coming included honour, prestige, and earthly advantages.

The recent triumphant entry into Jerusalem was amazing! Yes, that fit their expectations.

How exciting that He would lead them all in routing out the Romans from Israel!

How lovely the prospect that the old glory of the kingdom and city of David would be restored!

And, that they would all be part of it as Jesus' inner circle men.

But listen, the Master is speaking again.

With a gentle and compassionate voice, He spoke to their troubled hearts.

*"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God..."*

Yes, they did believe in God. The God of their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The Jehovah God who appeared to Moses.

Yes, they did believe in Him.

Daily they confessed Him in the words of Deuteronomy 6:4, *"Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD."*

*"Ye believe in God, believe **also** in Me."*

Let not your trust in Me waver.

Trust Me to lead you even though the way seems so different, so contrary to your expectations.

Contrary to our expectations...?

Yes, everything the disciples had expected was turning out completely different.

Isn't that always the way in the life of grace?

Is there any of God's children who can testify,

*"Everything the Lord taught me and how He led is exactly as I thought it would be?"*

Will not all God's children experience what the ancient prophet Isaiah proclaimed already years before,

*"And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known"*  
(Isaiah 42:16).

Abram expected to find Canaan a land able to sustain his many animals.

Instead, he walked into a devastating famine.

Then he expected to receive a son with his wife Sarah.

Instead, his wife Sarah passed far beyond her child-bearing years before she conceived a child.

Then he looked forward to seeing his Isaac grow up.

Instead, God told him to sacrifice him on Mount Moriah.

From the beginning God promised him the land of Canaan.

Yet, all he possessed when he died was a cemetery plot.

How contrary it had been to all his expectations.

Yet he died in faith, desiring a better country, that is, a heavenly.

Like Abram, the disciples were now experiencing how everything was going contrary to their expectations.

And as the disciples did then, so will every sincere seeker of God today.

We all will learn how blind we are for what is good and necessary.

None of us know by nature what is the real and only way to God's heart and salvation.

It is matter of mystery that needs to be revealed through God's Word and Spirit.

After the words not to be troubled, Jesus answered Peter's earlier question, *"Lord, whither goest Thou?"*

He reveals the destination of where He is going.

*"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.*

*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.*

*And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know."*

He is going to His Father's house.

He will leave them for only a time, for He said He would come again.

The words Jesus spoke were not unfamiliar to the Jewish ears.

In Jewish culture similar words were commonly spoken at a betrothal ceremony, where a man and woman would promise to be faithful to each other until their marriage.

After the discussions between the fathers were concluded, the new bridegroom would say something similar to what Jesus here spoke.

The betrothed bridegroom would go to his father's house and build a living quarter for him and his new wife.

During that time, the couple would not physically meet or even see each other.

So undoubtedly the disciples gathered that the Master would leave for an extended time.

But all this was so contrary to their expectations.

Why was this necessary? How could He in that way be the Messiah for them?

The sweet times they had experienced as they communed together were so special.

Why must it end?

And what would become of them?

Around them was an increasing hostile environment.

Oh, what a multitude of thoughts must have gone through the confused minds of the disciples.

Their bewilderment can be heard in the various questions they fire off at the Master.

Peter already asked one about where He was going.

Thomas confirmed that they did not know where He was going and so how could they know the way?

Philip also added a question, *“Lord, show us the Father, and it suffices us.”*

Later, Judas was the spokesman for the rest in John 14:22, he asked,

*“Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?”*

And in chapter 16:17-18 we read again how confused they remained about Jesus’ sayings,

*“Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us,*

*A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father?*

*They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while: we cannot tell what he saith?”* John 16:17-18

The Lord knows how troubled they were.

Therefore, He seeks to comfort them with the truth about His Father’s house.

*“Little children, let not your heart be troubled. Trust Me.*

*Yes, I am leaving you, but I will come back. I will not stay away.*

*I am going to prepare a place for you in my Father’s house.*

*And when all things are ready, I will come and bring you also into my Father’s house to be together forever.”*

Congregation, the destination of all Jesus’ labours as the Mediator or Saviour is the Father’s house.

His ministry on earth was not to make everyone physically better. It was not to turn Israel into a place of peace and prosperity, health and happiness, or a place of victory over all her enemies.

His purpose was to be the Way to the heart and home of His Father.

Among all the different ways proposed in the religions of men, Jesus declared Himself as the **only** way to that destination.

HE is **the Way** Himself.

He is the *true* way that leads to everlasting life.

Everlasting life: that is how Jesus called the life of communion with the Father in His glorious presence.

The Father’s House is where the Father lives and where He makes Himself known in all His fulness and glory.

The glory of Jesus’ destination is therefore not the house or even the glory of heaven itself.

But the real destination is the Father Himself.

The glory of heaven is not heaven. It is the *God* of heaven. It is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God the Father is the Almighty One. He is the Holy One of Israel.

He is the God of infinite love and beauty.

He is the overflowing fountain of goodness, plenteous in mercy, full of compassion and rich in grace.

The Father ... oh, who can utter all His glory!

But He is also purer of eyes than to behold iniquity.

He is God the Judge Who will uphold justice and righteousness.

No sinner can approach Him or stand or live before Him.

For without holiness no man can abide in His presence.

He is a consuming fire to all that are unholy.

In Revelation 21 it is revealed, *“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.”*

Does this truth trouble your heart? Do you see how unreachable this Father’s house is for you?

For who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who shall stand in His holy place?

Only he that has clean hands, and a pure heart.

Only he that has never thought an impure imagination!

Only he who has not ever loved vanity within his heart!

Only he who has never let a word of untruth come out of his lips (Psalm 24).

If you know yourself even slightly, you know you are not able to stand and abide before this glorious Father.

The reason is that we not only do sin. We *are* sin.

Daily the fountain of iniquity spews forth in evil thoughts, angry thoughts, impatient thoughts.

Oh, how many thoughts pass through our minds in a single day or even a single hour!

How many are vain, frivolous, polluted and polluting!

How many thoughts come into our minds we would not for the world disclose to our best friends!

How few would dare to walk in public if we knew that everyone we meet could read all our thoughts!

How will anyone ever come and dwell before this Holy Father, Who is purer of eyes than to behold iniquity?

Is there any way to appear before Him without being consumed or condemned on account of our sins?

What is the way to the Father’s house then?

Has that cry become yours?

When God’s Spirit is teaching us savingly, He brings every seeker to similar discoveries.

And one of them is that the way to God and the way of peace is never in us or because of our doing.

We learn that the way of self-improvement or human merit is a dead-end road.

The way back to God is only through the satisfaction of the demands of God’s holy law which I have broken.

It is only through the ‘doing-enough’ of perfect obedience that the way to Father’s house is open.

Are you like Thomas, *“Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?”*

Are you sitting here sighing, “Lord, I don’t know it anymore. I do not know how to be saved.

All what I thought was helpful, I have found to be helpless.

All my expectations that, since I was made willing and concerned about my soul, I would soon be converted, have come to nothing.

All the sweet times I had under thy Word in times past, fail to comfort me now as I face the reality of my sin and guilt and separation from Thee.

Lord, how can I know the way unless Thou reveals it to me and leads me in the way?"

Friend, hear the answer of the Lord, *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."*

Let us consider this amazing answer after we pause to worship God in singing of Psalter 399:3-4

After having considered the destination of the way, the Father's house, let us now admire in our second main thought, **The details of this way to the Father.**

Jesus identifies Himself again as Jehovah God, the One Who spoke to Moses in the burning bush.

**I am** the way to God; for *no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.*

Notice that Jesus does not point us to or tell us about the way as we ministers must do.

We are to point to Him. We are to preach Him and lift Him up before your eyes.

We may and must seek to allure you with the glories of the Savior in the light of our sins.

And yet, a preacher cannot save any sinner by his teaching or pointing to the Way.

Friends, if Jesus would only point us the way, there would be no hope for a single lost sinner.

Then He would cast us back on ourselves to find life and light within our own resources.

But that is not the good news He brought.

The good news is what He emphatically declares: ***I AM the Way!***

*"I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life."*

As it were, Jesus declares, "My Gospel is not a *task* you have to fulfill; rather it is a task which I have fulfilled.

It is not a *mission for you* to accomplish; but a Mission I accomplish."

Friends, the Gospel is not a certain spiritual level you need to reach in order to be qualified to be saved.

It is not a certain deep way you have to go through in order to be saved as Paul alludes to in Romans 10:6-8,

*"But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise,*

*Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (That is, to bring Christ down from above).*

*Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead)."*

In other words, it is not by climbing into heaven with great spirituality.

But it is also not in descending into the depths through great humbling.

Instead, it is as Paul continued in Romans 10:8:

*But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart:*

*That is the word of faith, which we preach."*

It is this word of faith Jesus preaches to us right now:

*"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."*

Those of you who seek God, who love God, but feel so far from Him, hear this great news about Him!

Jesus Christ is the way, the only way and your only way to the Father's heart and house.

He came into this world without sin and that was His one of the qualifications to become the Way for us.

Since He was sinless, He could take the place on behalf of others. He could be made sin for others.

He was anointed with the fulness of the Spirit and that again qualified Him to be the suitable Way for us.

He lived His earthly life with a perfect obedience which makes Him a holy Way for us.

Every moment of His life in which He obeyed God, He paved the way for us sinners to return back to the Father's heart.

When He finally laid down His life in perfect obedience to His Father, He finished the laying of the way.

*"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."*

He is the way to the Father because He is perfectly righteous.

On basis of His obedience in life and death, He is the way to reconciliation and acceptance with God.

This is the truth, and the full truth, and the only truth that leads to life.

It is by **Who** He is and through **What** He did, that He is the way back to God.

How hidden was this glory of Jesus for His disciples!

The more Jesus unfolded this truth, the more Judas Iscariot hated Him.

But the more confused also the other disciples became.

They thought of Him as the future king of Israel. They admired Him for His wisdom and power.

Breathlessly, they listened to His wisdom in dealing with all the trick questions of their leaders.

But the heart of His mission was still completely hidden from them.

That He had to lay down His life as a ransom for many, was not even on the horizon of their thinking.

They still thought that salvation was mostly physical, material, and social, instead of spiritual.

Though not unaware of their sins, yet they were still so blind for the necessity of the blood of their Master.

The mystery of the heart of the Gospel in the death of the Son of God was at this point still not clear to them.

Do you recognize this struggle of the disciples in your own life?

After having experienced a change of heart and the drawing of your affections after God,

did you think that with such changes in your life you could be saved and reconciled to God?

Did you find yourself comforted and hopeful when your heart was actually able to weep over your sins?



Did you taste a sweetness in a Word of Scripture and did that cause your heart to rejoice, thinking that this was salvation?

And yet, instead of experiencing progress, you sense darkness, strife, and confusion.

The truths which were sweet before are not as sweet or comforting anymore.

The moments of sweet communion, which are like the kisses of God, did not continue.

Your expectations about being saved are disappointed for instead of getting better, you feel yourself slipping.

What lessons we all have to learn in Jesus' declaration: ***I am the way to God, and the truth about God and the life of God.***

***I am the way of salvation!***

It is as if He says to us,

"To be accepted with the Father is not through your doings or feelings.

It is not through what you do or who you are.

It is through Me and Me only."

Friends, only Jesus can remove the obstacles between God and us.

Only He can open the way we have closed through our rebellion.

His merits in life and His sacrifice in His death on the cross are the only ground of your salvation.

To receive forgiveness of your sins is not through you being sorry, or humbled, or broken about them.

It is only through His priestly sacrifice that He can open the way to the Father's heart and house.

To lead us there, to that only ground of salvation, God will frustrate all our designs and strip us from all our attempts or false grounds on which we hope for salvation.

That way can be as unsettling as it was for the disciples—but necessary for us as it was for them.

Our only hope of salvation needs to become Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Therefore, Jehovah spoke in Isaiah 45:22,

and He is exactly the same Who spoke to the disciples then and to us today,

*"Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."*

Hear Him! All He calls us to do is to look to Him to be freed from all our guilt and fears.

But this act of looking brings us to our final thought which is,

***The use of this way*** that leads to the destination of Father's house and heart.

Jesus Christ is the Way to God's heart and house.

He is the only way to everlasting life in glorious and satisfying communion with God.

Yet no matter how good a road and how beautiful a destination, it will do you no good unless you use it.

The Lord's teaching is not only descriptive.

It is also a call, an invitation, for us to make use of Himself as the way to God.

Never doubt that you are invited to make use of this Way to God.

There is no sign before the entry of this way spelling out what conditions you need to meet in order to be allowed to make use of this way.

Such thinking is the Jewish way to salvation. It where the Jews were mired as Paul pointed out in Romans 10:2-3, *"For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God by according to knowledge.*

*For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted unto the righteousness of God."*

To paraphrase this, Paul said,

"Look at my Jewish brethren. Though they mean well and have zeal, they are on the wrong way.

In their ignorance, they are still paving the way to God with their own works and frames and privileges.

They think that this way is good enough and will enable them to enter into God's presence.

But they are ignorant. They do not realize that the building material of their way is no good.

They do not realize that their merits are count against them and their good works are as filthy rags in God's sight.

In the meantime, they refuse to walk on the Way God has given in their Messiah, in Jesus Christ."

"Oh," you say, "but I am not worthy to enter in this way."

To answer this, let us think about Luke 14:15-24.

In those verses, Jesus spoke a parable about the Gospel in the picture of a great supper.

This 'great supper' is another metaphor about salvation or the way Jesus proclaimed.

But notice how urgently the master sent forth the invitation to come to the supper.

His servants were to go out quickly and bring in the poor, the impaired and the blind.

But then they were sent out again into the highways and hedges.

There the homeless, the outcasts, the lowest of society would be found.

And they were to **compel** them to come in.

Why **compel** them? Why not simply invite them?

Undoubtedly it was because they dared not believe that they were invited to come to this rich table.

They no doubt objected, "But who are we to be part of such an assembly?"

Are you thinking the same?

Are you thinking, "Who am I to make use of this open, living, holy and only way to the Father?

Who am I to come with freedom or boldness into the holiest, the presence of God, by the blood of Jesus?"

I am not good enough. There is nothing in me that is worthy.

I feel ashamed of myself and feel so low, so unworthy.

Who am I to think that I am welcome to make use of this way to return to the Father, the God of heaven and earth?"

Friends, the invitation to make use of the way is not based on your suitableness or beauty of character.

It is based on the glorious character of the Inviter.

God's grace is free and unconditional.

Find the Scripture where He declares that this road is limited only to His elect.

Where does God say you need to be more than a lost and guilty sinner to come to Him?

What does it mean when He reassures us that 'him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out?'

Believe His revelation and His promise.

This way is open for!

As God's ambassadors all God's servants must beseech you like Paul did,

*"We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him"* (2 Corinthians 5:20-21).

Be reminded of Joseph Hart's Gospel line,

Let not conscience make you linger, nor of fitness fondly dream!

All the fitness He requires, is to feel your need for Him.

Finally, what is it then to use this way of Jesus Christ in order to come to the Father?

With 'using the way' nothing else is meant than when I approach God's throne by faith in Jesus Christ.

Using the way is expressed in that small yet vital phrase when we pray, *"For Jesus' sake only, upon whom I put my trust."*

To use this way is what Paul expressed in Philippians 3:8-10, where in paraphrase he confessed,

"Lord, I will no more approach Thee in the way of my works, my merits,

my credentials or of being of tribe of Benjamin or among the best of the Jews.

I now detest this way of approach worse than dung.

My only hope is the way of Jesus Christ and His righteousness.

Oh, I now seek only to be found in Him, to be covered by Him, to be accepted on His behalf.

What I found first so utterly offensive, Thy cross with all the shame,

I now see as my only hope for shameful me."

What was so hidden for Peter, Thomas, Philip and all the others, became so glorious after Pentecost.

Then the Spirit showed them what still was so hidden in John 14.

At last, they understood that the way to the Father's house was not in their sweet experiences,

or in their well-meant sacrifices

or in their faithful following of the Master.

They learned that even Jesus' kisses of love could not save them no matter how sweet they were.

Instead, the return to the Father's house was only through the bitter experiences of the Master's death.

Peter extolled it later, in 1 Peter 3:11, *"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."*

Let our prayer be that God's Spirit would lead us all to see the mystery of the beautiful and hopeful Gospel of the crucified Saviour, the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Will you come to this Way?

Will you use this Way?

Or are you using this Way?

Will you bow your knees if you do not see this new and living Way that is opened to come to God?

Will you labour at His feet in prayer to ask Him to show it to you?

Will you ask Him to lead you away from all other ways no matter how comforting or sweet they are to you?

Will you plead with Him to bring you on this only Way so that with join Peter in his confession,

*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved?*

Amen.