

# Jesus – The Only Way to God?

*Signposts*

By Albert N. Martin

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**Bible Text:** John 14:6

**Preached on:** Sunday, October 10, 1993

## **Trinity Baptist Church**

160 Changebridge Road  
Montville, NJ 07045

**Website:** [www.trinitymontville.org](http://www.trinitymontville.org)

**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/tbcnj](http://www.sermonaudio.com/tbcnj)

Well, will you turn with me, please, to the gospel according to John, that gospel record that we are presently focusing upon in our consecutive reading of the Word of God in our Lord's Day morning services. We go ahead a few chapters and I would ask you to follow as I read in your hearing John chapter 14 verses one through 11.

Our Lord speaking to the 11. Judas is gone out to complete his wretched work of betrayal and our Lord now addressing the inner circle as friends to whom he can disclose the deep secrets and concerns of his hearts speaks and says:

Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me. In my Father's house are many abiding places. If it were not so I would have told you. For I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and will receive you unto myself that where I am there ye may be also and wither I go ye know the way.

Thomas saith unto him, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest. How can we know he way?"

Jesus saith unto him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one cometh unto the Father but by me. If ye had known me ye would have known my Father also. From henceforth ye know him and have seen him."

Philip saith unto him, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us."

Jesus saith unto him, "Have I been so long time with you and thou dost not know me, Philip? He that hat seen me, hath seen the Father. How saist thou, 'Show us the Father?' Believest though not that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I say unto you I speak not from myself, but the Father abiding in me doeth his works. Believe me, that I am in the Father and the Father in me or else believe me for the very works sake."

Now let us, again, seek God's face and ask the blessing of the Spirit of God upon the preaching of the Word as we pray together even as we have sought that blessing in our hymn before the preaching of the Word.

Let us pray.

*Our Father, we would seek to pause and marvel afresh that we should hold in our hands the Spirit inspired, infallible transcript of the very words of our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh God, we thank you that we are not left in the dark concerning the great issues of life, of death and of the world to come. And as we would focus our attention upon a portion of the words of our Savior, we earnestly pray that his own Spirit will be present, taking the things of himself and making them real to us. May the Lord Jesus be seen by the eye of faith, by eyes illuminated through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Oh God, come and own this time of meditation in your Word to bring some out of death into life, to confirm others in the life that is already theirs in Christ further to equip each one of us to be faithful and accurate witnesses of the truth of Christ. Oh, Lord, come and meet with us we plead, bind the powers of darkness. Drive the enemy and all of his influences from this place that every mind and heart will be riveted to the Word and may that Word come with the attendant presence and power of the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven we plead through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Now, I wish to begin this evening a relatively brief series of messages entitled, "Simple Signposts to the Celestial City." Taking the term the celestial city from John Bunyan's term for heaven in his immortal work *The Pilgrim's Progress*, I plan to preach on some of the most simple and clear gospel texts given to us in the Scriptures.

In a book by the southern Theologian and preacher, the great Dabney, in that book on preaching Dabney exhorts the young men under his tutelage not to be reluctant to preach on epitomizing texts, that is, texts which capture in very short compass and in a succinct way the central truths of the Word of God. And in this series entitled, "Simple Signposts to the Celestial City," we are going to be focusing our attention on some of those epitomizing texts, some of those texts in which we have the gospel of the grace of God set before us in a nutshell.

And my aim in doing this is quite straightforward and uncomplicated and it is basically a two fold goal. First and foremost, I want to proclaim by means of these texts, these simple signposts to the celestial city that gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. And I desire to do so with the prayer and I trust some measure of expectation that God will make that preaching of the gospel with these texts as our sphere of reference, the very power of God unto salvation to some who sit among us.

There are certain texts which boys and girls and young men and women and adults should hear preached in their lifetime from any pulpit claiming to be a gospel preaching pulpit. And it is my earnest desire and I trust it will be my increasingly fervent and believing prayer and the prayer of others with me that God will take this series and make it effectual to the salvation of not a few, that there will be many who will point back to

these days and say, “It was during the proclamation of those texts, those simple signposts of the celestial city that God was pleased to bring me out of darkness and into his marvelous light.

And then my second goal is that I want to furnish you, the people of God, with a working acquaintance with some of these most crucial texts which ought to be part and parcel of every mature Christian’s stock in the trade of witnessing to others, the kinds of texts that you ought to be able to sit down and open up to son or daughter or to neighbor and work associate as God gives the opportunity in seeking to set forth the message of life and salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ.

And since Ephesians 4:11-12 indicates that one of the functions of pastors is to equip the saints unto the work of service, it is my goal that in the preaching of these texts you will not only be edified and built up as the people of God, confirmed in your understanding of and confidence in the gospel, but better fitted to communicate that gospel to others.

So without any further words of introduction, I direct your attention to the first of these simple signposts to the celestial city. It is verse six of John chapter 14.

“Jesus saith unto him, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one cometh unto the Father, but by me.’”

In this marvelously simple and yet subtly profound text we have our Lord Jesus Christ telling us in his own words who he is, what he came to do and the weighty implications as they relate to each and every one of us.

Note with me, first of all, in these words of the Lord Jesus what I am calling the amazing personal claims of Jesus Christ. In this text we do not have a prophet pointing forward to Christ and saying amazing things about the coming Messiah. We do not have an inspired apostle looking backward to the coming of Christ in the flesh to his life, death and resurrection and saying things concerning Christ. But we have Christ himself making these most amazing personal claims with respect to himself.

And those claims are with respect to three things. Look at the text.

“Jesus saith unto him, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life.’”

First of all, our Lord Jesus claims to be the way. Now this word “way” is used in a figurative sense. A way is a path or a road leading from one place to another. And in the context Jesus had just spoken of the Father’s house, heaven, the celestial city.

Verse two. “In my Father’s house are many abiding places. 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, that is in the place that I have prepared, you may be also, the place of many abiding places, what John Bunyan calls the celestial city.”

And in this particular personal claim the Lord Jesus Christ is declaring that he is the way. That is, all that the building materials needed to construct a road from earth to heaven for sinful men, all of those materials are to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ himself. He is the way. And in the context he is the way with reference to the question that was asked.

Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going. How can we know the way? If we don’t know where you are going, how can we find the road that gets there?”

Jesus has been speaking of where he is going. He will in a few short days, subsequent to the horrible ordeals of Gethsemane and Gabbatha and Golgotha. He will be laid in Joseph’s tomb. He will come out of the tomb in triumphant resurrection life and, according to Acts chapter one he will go back into the presence of the Father and he says with reference to the one and only path that leads from earth to heaven, “I am the way.”

But then the second aspect of his amazing personal claims is that he claims to be the truth. Here we have no figure of speech. Truth is an accurate statement of reality.

You kids get in a fight with one another in the family room. Mom or dad come in and say, “What is going on in here?”

“Well, she is doing this.”

“He is doing this.”

“She did this.”

And they stop and say, “Wait a minute. Let’s get at the truth.”

And what do mom and dad mean when they say that? They are saying, “Let’s establish reality. Who did what to whom and why and how? Let’s get at the truth.”

Truth is an accurate statement of reality. And therefore when Jesus in this text makes this amazing personal claim not only to be the way, but the truth, he is saying, in the context, with reference to the great issue of man’s ultimate destiny, making one’s way to the many dwelling places prepared by the Lord Jesus, that everything pertaining to how one is fit for those dwelling places, how one obtains a title to those dwelling places, how one can actually arrive at one of those many abiding places, in Jesus Christ is the truth with respect to those great and all important issues of heaven, or its opposite, hell. Of knowing God and dwelling with God, it is the personal claim of Jesus Christ that he is the truth.

So, in a sense, long before Pilate cynically asked the question later on in this gospel in chapter 18 and verse 28, “What is truth?” as though there were no absolute truth, as though truth were a nose of wax to be pushed and shoved and shaped by the whims of some philosopher or someone with his own cause to promote. Jesus has already answered the question.

Truth incarnate stood before him who cynically said, “What is truth?” Or his amazing personal claim is, “I am not only the way, but I am the truth.”

But then, thirdly, his amazing personal claims culminate in this claim. “I am the life, the life.”

Now, the term “life” is not mere existence. We can talk of a fly that was alive until the fly swatter got it and it lay on its back dead. We can speak of an animal that was alive until the hunter bagged it in hunting season. And there we use life in terms of just animate existence.

But in this passage when Jesus said, “I am the life,” he is speaking of life in its rich and highest biblical connotation which means nothing less than realized communion with God himself. Life in terms of Jesus’ definition of it in John chapter 17 where in his high priestly prayer in verse three he says, “This is life eternal that they should know thee, the only true God and him whom thou did send, even Jesus Christ.”

What is life? What is life eternal? What is that life which was forfeited by our first Father and Mother Adam and Eve and can only be realized in and through the person and ministry of Jesus Christ? It is nothing less than life known and experienced in the realm of communion with the living God, the knowledge of God, delight in God. This is the very essence of life.

And the Lord Jesus in John 10 and verse 11 said, “I am come with reference to my sheep that they might have life and that they might obtain life and have it more abundantly.”

Now these are the amazing personal claims of the Lord Jesus. This is not something a prophet said would be true about the one to come, nor an apostle looking back speaking about the one who had come, this is Jesus in the days of his flesh gathered with the 11 in that upper room and making this claim. “I am the way, the truth and the life.”

Now, having looked at these amazing personal claims I want you to note with me two things about those claims that are very, very crucial.

The first is that Christ is these things in himself. Christ is these things in himself.

In the original there is a construction in which this emphasis comes forward very forcefully. If I can put it into a manner of speaking it is not that the Lord Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life,” but he said, “I, even I, am the way, the truth and the life.” There is that construction found quite frequently when our Lord is seeking to underscore a certain dimensions of his own claims or the authority of a statement he is about to make in which there is that emphasis upon I even I.

In other words, “I have not come to create a way. I have not merely come to point to the

truth. I have not merely come to disclose a way of life, but I am in myself the way. I am in myself the truth. I am in myself the life.”

That is bound up in the very linguistic framework within which Jesus makes these amazing personal claims. He is these things in himself and, secondly, note he is these things exclusively.

He does not say, “I even I myself am a way, a truth, a life, a way, one among many. Oh, yes, a way and if you choose me as the way to the Father, to heaven and the knowledge of God, you will find me to be a true way, but I am one way among many.”

Oh, no. He said, “I am the way, the way. Miss me and there is no backup avenue to heaven and to God and to spiritual reality. I am not one way among many. I am the way exclusively. I am the truth exclusively. I am the life exclusively. I am not only these things in myself, but I am these things exclusively.”

These are the amazing personal claims of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And since he made them and his Word is truth, there are some inevitable deductions about you and about me that grow out of those claims.

Do you see what they are?

If Jesus says, “I myself am the way,” then you see the way to heaven is not in us or in any of our fellow men, in any structure, in any institution be it religious, be it sociological, be it educational, whatever it is. If Jesus Christ in himself is the way and exclusively the way, then the way is not in us. Apart from him we are lost without a way. Apart from him we are lost now without a way. Apart from him we will be lost forever without a way. And the graphic, sad, doleful picture of a lost soul given to us in the book of Jude will be true of every one of us unless we find that way. It speaks of lost souls as wandering stars to whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved forever. What a picture.

Think of it. A star that shoots across the vast reaches of the outer edge of some galaxy with no path upon which to ride and it shoots from one place to another to another and to another, a wandering star to the deep, dark impenetrable recesses of space as we know it.

God says that is a picture of what you will be forever if Christ does not become your way. The way is not in ourselves. The way is not in any of our fellow creatures. We are all by nature lost men and women, boys and girls, who desperately need a way to God, even the one who said, “I am that way.”

Furthermore, the second deduction is clear. The truth is not in us. The whole idea that each man has in himself the sufficient raw materials to sit and stroke his chin or to twiddle with her locks and come up with some insights about God and truth and reality and so long as one is sincere all will be well.

My friends, that is damnable nonsense. The truth is not in us. The Scripture that not only tells us that we are all by nature lost tells us that we are all by nature spiritually ignorant and spiritually blind men and women and boys and girls.

Hear the Word of God which says, “There is none righteous, no not one. There is none that understandeth.”

Hear the Scripture that says, “The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them.”

Hear the Scripture that says, “The God of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving.”

Hear the Scripture that speaks of their understanding being darkened, alienated from the life of God.

The truth is not in us. It does not reside in any human being no matter how educated according to the world’s standards. For, again, the Scripture says, “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by its wisdom knew not God.”

If Christ’s amazing claims are valid—and they are—and he is the way and the truth, then the way is not in us. We are lost. The truth is not in us. We are spiritually darkened and ignorant. And the life is not in us. We are spiritually dead.

This is why Paul could write as he does in Ephesians two and say, “You hath he made alive who were dead in through your trespasses and your sins.”

When Jesus speaks of our state and condition he likens it to people entombed in the death of our sin. That is our true condition. The life is not in us. If Christ says, “I, myself am the life,” and he is that in himself and he is that exclusively, then there is no life in us.

Now imagine Robert Schuler, that plastic faced Cheshire cat smiling heretic saying, “Nowhere did Jesus Christ ever call anyone a sinner. That would bruise their positive self image.”

When Jesus sat in that upper room with the 11 of his most intimate friends and said to them, “I am the way, the truth and the life,” he was not flattering them. For he was telling them that in and of themselves the way was not in them. They were lost by nature, that the truth was not in them. They were ignorant and spiritually darkened men by nature. The life was not in them. They were dead men by nature.

My friend, Jesus Christ as the great physician of souls never flatters his patients. He tells them what they really are. And if we would see in this text a simple signpost pointing to the celestial city, we must begin, first of all, by embracing these amazing personal claims that Christ himself makes about himself.

I am the way, the truth and the life and except the inevitable deductions that go out of those claims... It will not do to say, "Oh, yes, he is the way, the truth and the life," unless you are prepared to say, "I therefore, in and of myself, cannot make a way to God. I have no way to God. My fellow men can construct no way to God. There is no truth beginning with me. There is no truth to be concocted by me. There is no truth that will be hammered out upon the anvil of my own intellectual exercises and then become the revelation of the answer to the great issues of life. No, I am spiritually dark and ignorant. And the life is not in me.

Now are you prepared to face those amazing personal claims of Christ with their inevitable deductions?

If not, my friend, do you know the price you will pay? You will be damned for your arrogance. For Christ said, "I am the way. I am the truth. I am the life."

He further said in the close of John's gospel chapter 12, "The words that I speak unto you shall judge you in the last day."

If you go to the day of judgment and Christ has not become your way to God, your truth from God, your life of God, then these very words you have heard tonight will rise up and judge you at the last day.

Christ amazing personal claims.

Then consider with me, secondly, not only the amazing personal claims of Jesus Christ, but secondly the sobering conclusion drawn from these claims by Jesus Christ.

You see, after looking at his claims I said there are certain deductions we are warranted to make. I articulated the deductions. I hope they carried your conscience as I cited at least three texts for each of those deductions to show that they were not notions spun out of my own noggin. But here in the text Jesus Christ himself draws a sobering conclusion from his own claims.

Look at it. No sooner does he say, "I am the way and the truth and the life..." There are the amazing claims, now the sobering deduction, conclusion. "No one cometh unto the Father but by me. No one cometh unto the Father but by me."

Now you see it has often been said in days past and is said right down to the present hour that people have no complaint with Jesus as a good man, a good teacher, but it is the narrowness of his followers, the fanatical claims his followers make that unless you believe as they believe you are lost and damned and will roast in hell.

People say, "That is the offense of Christianity. It is not Christ. The meek, the gentle, the loving tender Jesus went about doing good. He taught us the golden rule. He gave us the Sermon on the Mount. We have got no complaint with Jesus. It is these fanatical, bigoted,



narrow minded followers who go far beyond Jesus and say, ‘Unless you believe as we believe you will roast in hell.’ Our problem is with those characters.”

Well, no, no, my friend. If you have bought into that nonsense, you listen to Jesus. Listen to the meek, lowly, Jesus. This is not something I am saying about him. This is something he says about himself and this is what he says. The sobering conclusion drawn from those amazing personal claims is this. Here it is.

“No man cometh unto the Father but by or through me.”

Note in this conclusion that it is universal in its scope. It says, “No one. No one comes to the Father but through me.” No one of any age in any place of any background, of any race, of any ethnic, social, religious, educational, cultural framework at any time in human history. It matters not. It is universal in its scope. This conclusion it says no one, no one boy, no one girl, no one pre adolescent, male or female, no teenager, male or female, no young adult, male or female, no middle aged, no gray haired, no haired man who is on his way down to his grave, no shaking, tottering, arthritic grand or great grandmother, no one.

This is Jesus’ own conclusion based upon his amazing personal claims. It is universal in its scope. It touches every single one of us in this building. You and you and you and you and the preacher standing in this pulpit. It is universal in its scope.

Now, notice. It is undeniably exclusive in its intent. It is undeniably exclusive in its intent. Look at the language of Jesus.

“No one comes to the Father but through me.”

Now what is he saying? Well, surely he is not saying no one will see the Father as judge in the last day because that would contradict the rest of Scripture and many other statements of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 17:30 says, “God commands all men everywhere to repent.” Why? Because he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world.

Romans 14:12 says, “So then every one of us shall give account himself to God.”

Yes, you will in that sense come to the Father. You will see God in the day of judgment and see his approval. And having his own Son as the appointed judge seated upon his throne when the books are opened. Yes, you will have dealings with God. But what Christ is saying is this. None can come to God as Father and find him a welcoming God, a pardoning God, a receiving God, a gracious God. None can come to the Father and find forgiveness for all of their sins, for all of their iniquities, acceptance and welcome.

“No man or no one cometh unto the Father but through me.”

That is through me as the way to the Father, through me as the truth concerning how sinners can approach the Father, through me as the life who alone can impart that knowledge and saving relationship to the Father.

In other words, Jesus is giving the most explicit, simple affirmation that he is the exclusive mediator between God and man.

He is saying before the apostle said it in 1 Timothy 2:5, “There is one God and one mediator or go between between God and man himself man, Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all.”

One God, one mediator between God and man. And that is the Christ of biblical revelation.

When Jesus said, “No one cometh unto the Father but through me,” who is the me? It is the Christ of biblical revelation. It is the Christ who came to us by way of a virgin conception in the womb of Mary when in the mysterious operations of the Holy Spirit there was conceived in Mary’s womb the man Christ Jesus taking a true humanity to his eternal, undiminished divinity, the Word became flesh. The Word was with God. The Word was God prior to Mary’s womb. After the Word took flesh, he was still God. But now he is enfleshed God. He does not cease to be all that he ever hath been. He begins to be what he never had been, the God man.

And when he said, “No one cometh to the Father but by me,” he was conscious of his identity.

This is why he could speak of, “I came down from heaven.”

None of us talks that way. If we had the most clear sense of our calling in life based upon the Word of God and the providence of God, none of us would be so arrogant to say, “I came down from heaven to be a preacher. I came down from heaven to be a housewife, a mother, a businessman, a doctor.” None of us would say that. It would be blasphemous.

But Jesus again and again said, “I came not to do my will, but the will of him that sent me. I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but to do the will of him that sent me.”

The Son of man is come. All of that language shows his self consciousness of his unique identity.

This stupid notion that Jesus never claimed to be God, it was his overly enthusiastic followers that exceeded the bounds of propriety and elevated him to the status of a God.

My friends, it will not stand up to the test of the simple statements of Scripture. Here in the gospel of John several times he made claims that caused the Jews to be ready to pick

up stones and stone him for blasphemy. He claimed that God was his unique Father. He claimed to be one with the Father.

“I and the Father are one.”

He said, “Before Abraham was, I am.”

So when he says, “No one comes to the Father but by me,” that me is not Jesus made out of the stuff of what you have picked up along the way from popular books and movies about him, whether the robe or the Jesus film or some other nonsense that violates the Second Commandment under the guise of promoting the knowledge of Christ. It is not the Jesus made up of the stuff of Hollywood films and Sunday school stories poorly based upon biblical texts and exegesis in your early days. It is not the Jesus made up of the stuff of philosophers and those who do not believe the Word of God. It is the Jesus, the only Jesus who exists, the Jesus, the Christ, the biblical revelation.

The virgin conceived eternal Word become flesh. It is the Jesus who passed through every stage of normal human development. He grew in wisdom and stature, favor with God and man yet never once sinned, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners who could look his most bitter enemy straight in the eye in spitting distance and say, “Which one of you can convict me of sin?”

Think of that. Would any of you dare say that to anyone who is far beyond spitting distance?

Which of you can convict me of sin?

Would you dare say that to your wife? To your husband? To your son, your daughter, mom or dad? Who of you can point out a sin that I have committed.

He could look his bitterest enemies who had been hawking and hounding him all over the various regions of Palestine looking for something to pounce upon and he dared to hurl the challenge into their moral teeth and say, “Which of you convicts me of sin?”

The sinless one. It is the Christ who knew even as he spoke these words in a few short hours he would be going out as Lamb to the slaughter, voluntarily to lay down his life as a sacrificial offering unto God. The one who said, “I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give my life a ransom for many.”

The idea that the death of Christ was the purchase of the blood of the Son of God to ransom a great multitude of sinners is not a theological concept imposed upon some other reality. No, no, my friend. It is the reality that Jesus himself expresses in his own consciousness.

So when he says, “No one comes to the Father, but by me, the me is the Christ who is the Christ of biblical revelation. And he is making this undeniably, exclusive conclusion.

No one comes to the Father but by me, me in terms of the uniqueness of my person, me in terms of the uniqueness and sufficiency of my work on behalf of sinners. I, the Christ who in a few short hours will cry from my cross not, 'I am finished,' but 'It is finished.'" Literally it stands accomplished.

That is why he could pray as he did in John 17:4, "I have glorified thee on the earth. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

My friends, listen to me, especially young people, hear me now. When you get into that class in high school and later on in college and someone with pseudo intellectual impressions whacks away at the foundations of your Christian faith and tries to say, "Oh, look, I am not trying to make a pagan out of you, but I just want to rid you of some of those narrow minded notions you have picked up along the way in your very rigid, insulated Christian family and in that even more rigid church which formed and shaped much of your thinking in the Sunday school class with its Bible stories and catechism instruction and old hymns that were just stodgy with doctrine and all of the rest and then that kind of dogmatic preaching and all the rest. I just want you to be more well rounded. I don't want you to give up Christ and give up religion and become a bum or a slut or a no good."

And they want to begin to erode your convictions that the only Christ who exists is the Christ who exists in this Bible.

Listen to me, kids. The first temptation that comes, remember this. Give up the Christ of the Bible and you give up salvation. Give up the Christ of the Bible and you have opened the door to hell and to outer darkness.

So he said, "No one comes to the Father now for forgiveness, pardon, acceptance, life, salvation and no one will come to the Father in the last day to receive one of those dwelling places except," Jesus said, "Through me."

Universal in its scope, no one. Undeniably exclusive in its intent, "No one comes to the Father except through me."

Listen to old Bishop Ryle, how the old bishop could hit the nail on the head in some of his comment on gospel portions. Commenting on this very text the old bishop said, "We should mark in these verses how expressly the Lord Jesus shuts out all ways of salvation but himself. He declares, 'No man comes unto the Father, but by me.' It avails nothing that a man is clever, learned, highly gifted, amiable, charitable, kind hearted and zealous about some sort of religion. All this will not save his soul if he does not draw near to God by Christ's atonement and make use of God's own Son as his mediator and Savior. God is so holy that all men are guilty and debtors in his sight. Sin is so sinful that no mortal man can make satisfaction for it. There must be a mediator, a ransom payer, a redeemer between ourselves and God or else we can never be saved. There is only one door, one bridge, one ladder between earth and heaven, the crucified Son of God. Whosoever will enter in by that door may be saved, but to him who refuses to use that door, the Bible

holds out no hope at all. For without the shedding of blood there is no remission. Let us beware if we love life of supposing that mere earnestness will take a man to heaven, though he knows nothing of Christ. This idea is deadly and ruinous error. Sincerity will never wipe away our sins. It is not true that every man will be saved by his own religion no matter what he believes provided he is diligent and sincere. We must not pretend to be wiser than God. Christ has said and Christ will stand to it. 'No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.'"

And having looked at this text under the two headings, first of all, the heading of the amazing personal claims of Jesus Christ, secondly the sobering conclusion drawn from these claims of Christ, now thirdly and finally, I want to give you some searching personal questions based upon Jesus' claims and his own conclusion. I want to address some searching questions to every man, woman, boy or girl who can hear with understanding to use the language of Nehemiah concerning the group that gathered for the reading and exposition of the Word, men and women.

It says, "And all who could hear with understanding." And I ask you children to listen to these questions and you pre adolescent and you teenagers and young and old, men and women. Some searching personal questions.

I want you to envision that we dismiss the whole congregation and set up appointments that they had to go through the next three to four days and each one of us were able to go into the back room where the elders meet for prayer and you were sitting down three feet away and no one else was there not even your husband or wife and I looked you straight in the eye and I asked you these questions in the light of this text. I want you to conceive of yourself as in that setting. I am not here earning my salary, folks. Some of you I still don't think believe that. You have gotten so used to me being in this pulpit and speaking with what appears to be earnestness and sincerity that down underneath you have really go the suspicion, "Oh, Pastor Martin is just doing his thing."

In God's name, please, please in God's name junk that stupid notion.

I am on my way to judgment to answer for the stewardship of preaching to you. And I am asking you with judgment day earnestness and intensity and tenderness, hear these questions. Answer honestly in your heart.

Question one. Have you, not your wife, husband, son, daughter, father, mother, cousin, uncle, aunt, no, have you come to the conviction that your own condition is such that you can have no safe dealings with God apart from Jesus Christ? Have you come to that conviction that you can have no safe dealings with God apart from Jesus Christ?

Why do I say safe dealings with God? Well, you are going to have dealings with God, my friend. You are having them right now. Whether you think of God or not, he thinks of you. He knows your every thought, every idle word. He knows every unclean, dishonest thought. He knows every mean, petulant, selfish, ungodly word that comes out of your mouth. He sees the envy of your heart. He knows our thoughts from afar.

Everyone of us is having dealings with God right now and every one of us will have dealings with God in the day of judgment. But, you see, Hebrews 10:31 says, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

That is not a safe dealing with God to fall into his hands, to have God deal with you in judgment and cast you into hell saying, "Depart from me, I never knew you."

Now my question is this, fellows, girls, men and women, teenagers. Have you come to the conviction in your own heart that you can have no safe dealings with God apart from Jesus Christ?

Every man, woman, boy or girl who has ever lived will one day come to that conviction either in this life hopefully leading to conversion or in the day of judgment, leading to eternal despair. The day of judgment will be God's universal impartation of the conviction to every unsaved man or woman that they could not have safe dealings with him apart from Christ.

Now there the choice stands before you. Face the humbling reality of your sin now and say, "I dare not face him who is a consuming fire without my sins being washed in the blood of Christ, without Christ being to me the way to God, the truth from God and the life of God."

I ask you. Have you come to the conviction that your own condition is such that you can have no safe dealings with God apart from Jesus Christ?

Second question. Have you come to the conviction that only the Christ of the Bible, only the Christ of the Bible can secure your acceptance with the Father? Have you come to that conviction?

If I do not lay hold of and have answering for me the Christ of the Bible, I can have no safe dealings with the Father. Have you come to the conviction that only the Christ of biblical revelation can secure your acceptance with the Father, that your acceptance is not in yourself, it is not in your deeds, it is not in your prayers, it is not in your sighs, it is not in your groans, it is not in your church attendance, it is not in your participation in the sacraments, it is not in rituals and forms? It is outside of yourself in a person and that person is Jesus Christ. And faith is the casting of yourself, I say it reverently, into the arms of Christ that he might present you to the Father.

It is laying hold of Christ as the pierced one, the resurrected one saying, "Lord Jesus, be my mediator with the Father, with the incensed God hood that has righteous anger against my sins. Lord Jesus, be my propitiation, the one who turns away the wrath of the godhead from me because you bore that wrath in the room instead of sinners upon the cross."

Have you come to the conviction that only the Christ of biblical revelation can secure your acceptance with the Father?

Well, then I come to the cruncher, the third and final personal question. Is Jesus Christ right now your way, your truth and your life? Is Jesus Christ right now your way, your truth and your life? Can you say to the best of your knowledge, “Yes, I have turned away from ever hoping to find in all the universe the raw materials that will make a way to God. I believe they are all in Jesus Christ, in the uniqueness of his person and in the perfection of his work. I am convinced he is the way, so convinced that I have placed the whole weight of my soul upon him. I have put the feet of my soul upon him as the way, the only road that leads to the Father. I joyfully acknowledge that he is my way”?

Is he your truth? Have you embraced him as the one who speaks the words of God? Whose truth makes free and liberates from the tyranny of men’s silly notions about life, the meaning of life, death and what lies beyond the grave?

Take all of the theorizing of the most profound, insightful, intellectual philosophers of all the ages and on the most simple issues that a little child asks, “Mommy, what happens when I die? Where do I go?” And take all that the philosophers have said and pile it up and it is nothing more than a dung heap of human ignorance, a dung heap of human ignorance. Christ is the truth. Is he your truth? Do you cling to him with a death grip in terms of his Word?

You say, “Reality is what Jesus says it is. No more, no less. Christ is my truth.”

Is he your truth, your truth about yourself that you are a sinner, your truth about God that he is holy, your truth about the only way that sinners can be made right with a holy God through the blood shedding of the incarnate God, the Lord Jesus, through the triumph of his resurrection, through the impartation of his Spirit? Is he your truth?

And is he your life? Can you say, “I know I have passed, in the language of John, from death unto life?” Do you know what it is to say I once was dead as the Father said of the prodigal, “This my son was dead but now is alive.”

He was dead in terms of communion with his Father, dead in terms of delight in his Father’s presence, in his Father’s ways, in his Father’s rules. But when he came back with the disposition of desire to see his Father’s face and live in his Father’s presence and live under his father’s government, the Father says, “My son was dead and is now alive.”

And so it is true when Christ becomes our life. We love the Father’s face, we love the Father’s fellowship, we love the Father’s rules.

Is Christ your life? Is he your way, your truth and your life?

I conclude by saying to everyone who can say by the grace of God, “Pastor, he is that to me,” listen to the old bishop exhorting Christians who can say that. “Forever let us grasp and hold fast these truths, to use Christ daily as the way, to believe Christ daily as the truth, to live on Christ daily as the life. This is to be a well informed, a thoroughly

furnished and an established Christian. Isn't that precious? You want to be in the truest sense of the word well informed, thoroughly furnished, established as a Christian? Then spiritually believe Christ daily as the truth. Use Christ daily as the way.

“If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive.”

“If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father.”

That is what the old bishop means when he says, “Use him as the way. Go to him as the only mediator. Live on him. Believe on him as the truth, all that he says about you and about life and relationships. Embrace it as the truth and then live on Christ daily as the life.”

How can you obey the words of truth that he gives to husbands and wives and fathers and mother and children to fathers and citizens to state and the massive array of biblical precepts that are to shape and govern us? For he said, “Without me you can do nothing.”

But we are to live upon him as our life.

Paul says, “Christ who is our life.”

And the old bishop says to use Christ daily as the way, to believe Christ daily as the truth, to live on Christ daily as the life.” This is to be a well informed, a thoroughly furnished and an established Christian.

And, oh, if that is your experience, then I ask you my brother and sisters, how can we be silent about him in the presence of the unconverted? Who have no way, who know no truth, who have no life?

There are many ways that we could help our neighbors, surely one would be to say, “You know, a week, two weeks, a month, two months ago I heard a sermon on a simple text that our pastor said was a simple signpost to the celestial city. Could you give me five minute while I just tell you what Jesus said in that text?”

Dear people, we are without excuse. We don't need little packaged presentations. Surely this text is enough to sit down with a friend and explain the good news and why men need such a Savior so perfectly suited to every need of the sinner. May God grant that this first of our simple signposts to the celestial city will be owned of God as a means to bring some of you to embrace him who is the way, the truth and the life, to cause us all who have embraced him to use him daily as the way, to believe him daily as the truth, to feed on him daily as the life. And then out of that living relationship to him to speak of him boldly to others that they may come to know him who is the pearl of great price to us.

Let us pray.



*Our Father, how we thank you for this text of Scripture. We thank you for our Lord Jesus. We thank you that he ever spoke these words about himself and we are bold to plead that he who promised that the Spirit would come and would take of the things of himself and make them real to men that when he was come he would convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment, of sin because they do not believe upon him. Oh, Lord, we ask, do that work in hearts in this place in this hour that some may, indeed, point to this very day as the day of days. And then we plead that we who are your people who have come to know our Lord Jesus as the way, the truth and the life, will more consistently, daily use him as the way, believe him as the truth and feed upon him as our life. And then, oh Lord, make us bold to speak of him to others for all around us we know there are groping, confused, battered men and women, boys and girls who do not know spiritually their left hand from their right. Oh God, give us compassion, we pray and boldness that we may be ready to speak of our glorious Savior. Hear then, our prayer and seal your Word with the blessing of your continued presence by the Spirit we ask through the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.*