

Grace to You :: esp Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time

Heavenly Promises

Scripture: John 14:1–6

Code: 43-72

John, chapter 14, a very familiar portion of Scripture. But don't go to sleep on me because I want to open it up in a way that I trust will be fresh and helpful to you. John, chapter 14. Now just a reminder – and for those of you haven't been with us in past Sundays, maybe this is the setting that you need.

Our Lord had lived His life fully, three years of ministry, and now we find Him in the final week of His life. He will be crucified on Friday in the afternoon. He will be the Sacrificial Lamb who takes away the sin of the world, killed at the very time the Jews were killing sacrificial lambs on the Passover that Friday. We find Him however in this section of John's history of His life in the upper room on Thursday night. This is His last night with His disciples. This is His valedictory address to them. This is where He gives His final words to His own men, the apostles.

It has been an amazing week. He came into the city to a triumphal entry on Monday and they hailed Him as the Messiah, hundreds of thousands of people no doubt. But by Friday, they're going to scream for His blood and He's going to die on the cross. And then, of course, as you know on Sunday, He rises from the dead and launches the great, glorious history of the gospel and salvation.

So we find Him Thursday night with His disciples. They've been with Him for the full three years 24/7. They love Him, they believe in Him, but they are profoundly confused. Their entire sense of what was supposed to happen has disappeared, vanished, faded. Their hopes and ambitions are collapsing, disintegrating around them. Why? Because the Lord continues to tell them He is leaving, He is leaving.

In fact, the account of this last night fills up John 13, 14, 15, and 16, and also encompasses the prayer in John 17. In this lengthy evening, the disturbing reality of the whole evening is that Jesus is leaving; He is leaving. They would be the first to say, "We have forsaken everything to follow You." In fact, they've said that. "We have forsaken everything to follow You, and now You're going to abandon us."

That's actually how the evening started, chapter 13, verse 1, before the Feast of Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come, that He would depart out of this world to the Father having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. He's about to leave and He is pressed by this infinite love for His own to comfort them in His leaving. He repeatedly says He is leaving.

You remember back in chapter 13, verse 31, where our Lord declared that it's time now for the Son of Man to be glorified. So in verse 33 He says, "Little children, I'm with you a little while longer. You will see Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, 'Where I'm going you cannot come. I'm leaving and you can't come.'"

And then down in verse 36 Peter says, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus again said, "Where I go,

you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later.”

Chapter 14 He essentially says the same thing again several times. In verse 12 He says, “Truly I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do will he do; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.” And again He tells them, “I’m leaving to go to the Father.” Down in verse 28 toward the end of that verse He says again, “I go to the Father and I’ve told you before it happens, so when it happens you’ll believe,” verse 29.

This was the elephant in the room through that entire time on that Thursday night; Jesus was leaving. And to add to the confusion of that, and the doubt, and the fear, and the anxiety, and the disturbance, He had even said that among the twelve there was a traitor who was going to betray Him into the hands of His enemies. He had told them He would be arrested, beaten, and murdered, and it was all prophesied in the Old Testament.

And we read that in Isaiah 53. He had even declared at the end of chapter 13 to Peter their leader that Peter would turn out to betray Him by denying Him three times. All of this contributed to the disintegration of their messianic hopes and expectations. They were still in the throes of arguing about which of them is going to be in the most elevated place in the kingdom.

When the Lord had set up His kingdom, His rule that He would obviously set up, that’s what the Messiah was supposed to do according to their theology, they would be in the primary places for elevation. Hopefully, several of them would be able to sit on His right and His left hand; and they were still arguing about that on this very occasion. And now He was talking about, “I’m leaving, I’m leaving; and you’re not going, you’re not going. I go to the Father and you don’t. And one of you is a betrayer, and your leader is going to be a denier.” And He also said, “And you’re all going to scatter. You’re all going to scatter.”

They are shocked. Their disappointment is compounded by the ugliness of their own attitudes. They have been fighting about prominence. None of them was willing to stoop and wash the feet of the others, so the Lord had to do that. That heaped shame on their heads.

This is a very difficult time. This is not how it was supposed to end. They had been vagabond, itinerants, for three years, all with the expectation that when this thing finally culminated it would culminate in glory for the Lord and for them. It didn’t help that as we read in 13:21 the Lord Himself was troubled. Certainly they had picked up on that. And He was more troubled when Satan entered into Judas, and then He dismissed Satan and Judas to go do what they had planned to do.

He is alone, alone like no one has ever been alone. They show absolutely no interest in His suffering. No one offers a word of comfort to Him. No one presses close to Him to express faithful love. They seem to be completely indifferent to what He says is going to happen in His own suffering. They’re self-absorbed, they’re confused, they are frightened, and their messianic expectations are crumbling. They show no real love to Him, but He loves them infinitely. So while they offer no comfort to Him in the anticipation of what He will suffer, He offers immense comfort to them; and it runs through all these chapters.

And then in the final prayer He prays that the Father will bring to pass everything He’s promised, not only for them, but all the promises He made to them He extends to all of us who will ever believe in

Him throughout human history and prays that the Father will fulfill those promises for all of us. It's an incredible passage. He has to comfort them because they're not interested in comforting Him. But that's the gracious, compassionate, merciful, loving heart of God.

The comfort comes, first of all, in chapter 14, verse 1: "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way where I'm going."

Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How do we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

Completely aware of all that He would suffer in a few hours, fully aware of that. Already feeling the coming weight of sin-bearing, already beginning to taste the bitter cup of divine judgment, the cup of death, being forsaken by the Father; He is still completely absorbed in the fears and sorrows of His beloved apostles as if He was not the sufferer at all. This, I think, is the lowest point of His humiliation before the cross.

Obviously, the cross is the ultimate low point of His humiliation. Paul in Philippians 2 says He came all the way down to death, even death on a cross. But was there any lower humiliation of the one who deserves all praise, the God of all comfort in human form was? Was there any lower humiliation than to be on the brink of all this suffering and have no one understand, no one care, no one offer comfort, no one bear His suffering?

This is the low point of humiliation. He is offered no comfort, no mercy from His most intimate friends. Instead of being occupied with what was before him however, He was completely consumed with their sorrow. It is the sorrow of their hearts that prompts Him out of love to say everything He says in these chapters to them and to us. And the opening six verses are really kind of the foundation of comfort. Later on, He will give them "the" Comforter, the Holy Spirit, who will dwell in them. So we are comforted by His promises, and those comforts from His promises are increased in power and impact by the indwelling presence of the Comforter. The theme here then is comfort: "Comfort by trusting Me, by trusting Me."

Now I just want to break it into three little parts, okay. Point Number One: "The plea; His plea," in verse 1. "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me." That's the NAS.

Maybe a better way to read it would be, "Do not let your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in Me." Or even a better way, "Stop letting your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in Me." He's not saying don't begin to be troubled, He's saying, "Stop; stop. No more; no longer."

He knows them. He knows everything that's in a heart of a man. Back in chapter 2 we learned that; He is God after all, omniscient. And their hearts are filled with a medley of emotions as they watch their hopes coming to a crushing end. Their desires are vanishing by His death and His departure, and they can't go. They are bewildered, gloomy, despairing, depressed; and it just seems so far

from Monday.

And everybody in Jerusalem was hailing Him as the Messiah, the Son of God, the King. And then He just all week kept talking about death and departure, and going to the Father. And instead of winning over the people and winning over the leaders, He just alienated the leaders. Every hour of every day it seemed their hostility and anger and murderous intentions were elevated.

It's just not going the direction they wanted it to go. Anxiety, fear, doubt overwhelms them. The idea of Jesus leaving them was absolutely unbearable. How could they reconcile that with their messianic expectations? And since they'd put everything into following Him, what would happen to them?

The attitude of the people who killed Him was going to be the same toward them. And we know the history of if they thought that way they were right because almost all of them died as martyrs eventually. And, again, I remind you, they had left all and they had told Him that, to follow Him, and now He seems to be leaving all of them behind in the middle of hateful enemies who after they've murdered Him are going to want to do nothing but murder them. It was all very strange; very, very strange.

On top of that, they had to deal with their ugly pride and selfishness, and the confusion about a betrayer, and then their leader being a denier. The truth of the matter is His suffering couldn't be alleviated anyway. He had to suffer what He suffered alone, did He not? Nobody entered into His suffering. He had to drink the bitter cup of divine wrath to the bottom by Himself. He had to tread the road to Calvary alone.

They had no ability to feel what He felt; they were men, He's God. They had no power to carry His burden; they could offer nothing. But the reverse is not true because He was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin, so He became a merciful and faithful High Priest. He felt their pain, He felt their sorrow, He felt the agony of their losing Him for awhile, and He sought to provide comfort. This is a wonderful truth. Clearly, there was room in His heart for their sorrows, even when His own were infinite.

Isaiah said: "In all their affliction, He was afflicted. In all their affliction, He was afflicted." And Isaiah said in chapter 50, "And the Lord who anointed Him to comfort those who mourn and bind up the brokenhearted had indeed given to Him the tongue of the learned that He might speak a word in season to them who were weary." He knew their weariness, He knew their sorrow, and He says, "Stop. Stop being troubled."

This is the plea: "You believe in God," I take it as an indicative. "You believe in God," then an imperative, "believe also in Me." So you start with this idea of comfort with God, right, who is called the God, in the Bible, of all comfort. You start there with God all-knowing, all-wise, all-powerful, all-ruling, all-caring, all-sufficient, having all resources, all provision. "You trust God, you believe in God; you don't have any trouble with that, so believe also in Me."

Again, this certainly is a claim to deity isn't that? "You believe in God, so believe in Me." John all the way through his gospel makes the case that Jesus is God, but they are one in nature. That's the whole point of this entire gospel that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, John 20:31. We've gone through that chapter after chapter after chapter, presentations of His deity.

But the book begins by saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

So you believe in God, what's the point of this? Well, the point is simply this: "You believe in God whom you cannot see." You believe in God whom you cannot see. God is invisible. No one can see God. God is a spirit; He is an invisible spirit.

None of them had ever seen God, but they believed in God. He's declaring, "You believe in God." In a sense, He's stating that they are true believers. In a sense, they are sort of old covenant believers, they believe in God. They believe in God and they believe in the revelation of God in the Son of God, and that's why they said, "You're the Christ, the Son of the living God." And that's why they said, "We know that You're the Holy One and You have the words of life."

They had been regenerated by God and become believers in the true God. They believed in God. Probably long before that, they were believers in the God revealed in the Old Testament whom they'd never seen. They needed to remember Psalm 27 perhaps where the psalmist said, "I had fainted," this is David, "under duress," as he often is in the psalms. "I had fainted unless I had believed to see God?" No. "To see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

"I admit," David says often, "that there's enough here to crush me. There's enough here to knock me down and keep me down unless I believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." And then in that same psalm He follows it up immediately in the next verse and says, "Wait for the Lord."

It's like a soliloquy in which he's talking to himself and everyone else: "Wait for the Lord, be strong. Let your heart take courage. Yes, wait for the Lord. He is there; He is not silent; He will come."

In the darkest hour that's how we live, we live like David. We don't live the disciples did. We've never walked and talked with Jesus. We didn't have that three-year experience. So we trust the invisible God; and for us, we trust the invisible Christ; and we live and move in the power of the invisible Holy Spirit. In the darkest hour, we hold to our faith, we trust in God.

The apostles again had already by divine regeneration and illumination recognized that Jesus is the one who has come from God. He is the Holy One of God, the Holy One from heaven. But then they have seen Him, and heard Him, and watched Him do His miracles and His works. They have seen and believed. They did believe in the invisible God, and now they believe also in the visible Christ. But they need to believe in Him when He's gone the same way they believe in the invisible God. Their faith at this point is a kind of Thomas faith.

You remember, Thomas wasn't in the room when the Lord showed up the first time after the resurrection and the disciples said, "We've seen the Lord." And he said, "I will not believe unless I, what? "Unless I see." It's a Thomas kind of faith.

But He was about to be removed from them. So He was saying, "You must believe completely in Me when I'm invisible the way you believe in God who is invisible."

"He is not ever far from you," Deuteronomy 31:6 says. "He's not ever far. You can't see Him, He's

invisible, He's near; and you believe in Him. And now you're going to have to believe in Me though you do not see Me in that same way. Have full trust, confidence in My presence, My power. I will," He says to them later, "never leave you or forsake you. I will come to you."

He says, "The Father and I literally will take up residence with you before you take up residence with Us. I will put my Holy Spirit in you." We all live and move in the worship of one we've never seen.

Peter understood it. I love what he said in 1 Peter 1:8, "Though you have not seen Him, you love Him. And though you do not see Him now but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory. You believe so strongly, you love so strongly, that your life is filled with inexpressible joy and is full of exalting glory. That's how strong you believe in one you've never seen. And though you do not see Him, you love Him, you believe in Him, obtaining," the next verse says, "the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your soul."

Salvation, eternal salvation, comes to those who believe in the Christ they've never seen. "So now you've believed in God, you've never seen Him; you're going to have to believe in Me when you can't see Me. That's how it's going to be for you and for all who follow after you."

And by the way, over in chapter 16, verse 7, He says, "I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away." He's still talking about "go away." "It's to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you." That's the Holy Spirit. "It's going to be better for Me to go."

Listen to this. Do you know what is better than having Jesus Christ with you in your presence? Having the Holy Spirit in you all the time. It's better, and the Father knows what is best. We trust God.

"God is on His throne," the Scripture says, "ruling in the midst of the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth so that no one can stop His hand. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore, we will not fear. Though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake, we stand firm on our faith in the invisible God."

If God is for us, we believe, who can be against us? "You believe in God," He says, "you believe in all His attributes; I am God incarnate, believe in Me. And as you know," as Deuteronomy 31:6 says that, "God is never far and always near. So will I be. In fact, I will be nearer than God has ever been because I will take up residence in you in the fullness of the Comforter Himself, the Holy Spirit who is God."

So the plea then is to trust Him, believe in Him; and that's followed by the promise. You can attach that belief to some specific promises. Here's the first one – and there'll be a lot of them through this section. Here's the first, verse 2: "In My Father's house are many dwelling places. If it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."

And we're all familiar with that, probably memorized it as a kid if you were in Sunday school. It's so wonderful. This is the first promise: "In My Father's house." Well, what is "My Father's house"?

What about My Father's house? What is that?

Well, we know what My Father's house was earlier in the gospel of John. If you go back to John, chapter 2, you will remember that Jesus went into the temple and He made a scourge of cords, in verse 15, and drove all the buyers and sellers of ox and sheep and doves, and the money changers, and drove them all out of the temple with all their animals, and poured the coins out and overturned the tables. And to those who were selling doves He said, "Take away these things. Stop making My Father's house a place of business."

What's He referring to? Temple. "That's My Father's house," in John 2. Here He says in John 14, "In My Father's house are many dwelling places."

Well, what is He talking about? What does He mean by this? Well, He can't mean the temple because He's already pronounced doom on the temple. He's already said that there's not going to be one stone left on another. There's not going to be any dwelling places at all in that Father's house. That's going to be destroyed by the Romans a few decades after this. So what's He talking about?

Turn to Hebrews 9:23. And the writer of Hebrews answers it in a really magnificent way, Hebrews 9:23. Hebrews makes a lot of comparisons between the old and the new. Hebrews 9:23, "Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in heaven to be cleansed."

There are on earth copies of things in heaven, and here is the main one: "But the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself."

Oh, there it is; a holy place made with hands is a copy. It was the Father's house in the sense that it was a copy of the Father's house which is heaven. Christ came and I guess you could say cleansed the Father's house that had been turned, as Luke says, into a den of robbers. He cleansed the Father's house on earth and then He destroyed the copy so that He might gather His people and take them into a place prepared for them that was reality in heaven.

The temple at Jerusalem is called the Father's house, but it's just a copy. God had designed it so it was His. He had laid out the prescription as to its architecture and design, and the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies, and the sacrifices and everything, and it was to symbolize His presence among His people. And there He was to be honored and adored, and there He was to be worshipped by His people.

But that worship had become apostate; it was perverted, it was corrupted. The temple was a criminal enterprise, it was a den of robbers, and He sent His Son at the beginning of His ministry to attack it. And then He sent His Son at the end of His ministry to attack it again. And then He sent the Romans in 70 AD to smash it to bits. And there is now, even today, no longer any earthly copy. So when our Lord Jesus says, "In My Father's house," He's not talking about the copy, He's talking about heaven, heaven.

Sometimes heaven is called a country because of its vastness. Sometimes heaven is called a city because of its inhabitants. Sometimes it's called a kingdom because of its ruler and order.

Sometimes it's called a paradise because of its beauty. Sometimes it's called a house because of its family. It's the Father's house.

In ancient times, fathers had a house and their children were raised in the house. And when they got married, they build an addition on the house, and the father's house kept getting larger and larger and larger and larger and larger as apartments were built for every married child in that family, and the father's house got larger and larger and larger. And the heavenly Father's house is very large and there are many, many dwelling places.

I can make it simple for you. You don't need a map of heaven, there's just one house. You don't need a map of heaven. I heard that as a kid growing up, you know, if you don't live the right kind of life, you're going to end up 30 miles out of town in some low-level track made out of pine boards because that's all you've sent up to heaven to build your mansion. Mansion really confused a lot of people. This is the word for "rooms." You're not going to be down the street, or out of town, or off below the tracks; you're going to be in the Father's house. This is a family and you're going to be in the Father's house, one house with many rooms; many, many rooms.

But Jesus said few there be that find the door. Why do you need many rooms? Well, I'm convinced that a large population of people in heaven will be those who perished before they ever reached the age where they could believe or not believe, and God gathered them into heaven from nations all across the planet. Revelation 21:16 says that the capital city of heaven, not heaven, heaven's infinite. But the capital city alone is 1,500 miles cubed.

Now I don't know how you live in a cubed environment. Gravity's not going to be a factor, we'll put it that way. But an Australian engineer named Thomas calculated that 1,500 miles cubed would be 2.25 million square miles, 2.25 million square miles. Give you a comparison; London's 140 square miles. He estimated it could hold easily a billion people. I mean it's kind of fun to make calculations like that; but remember, the new heavens and the new earth are infinite. We don't always have to be in town. We might be somewhere else.

Now, if you're curious about what it's like, read Revelation 21. I don't need to read it to you. Read it, that's your assignment today; read Revelation 21. You are going there and I know you'd like to know what it's about, what it's like.

Just a summary, it is a diamond, golden diamond city. In the center of this massive, cubed, glorious, transparent, golden diamond is God's glory and the glory of the Lamb blazing through and being refracted into the endless new heaven and new earth. And around the city are jewels, massive jewels that spin out the colors of the rainbow. The city has twelve gates and each one is a single pearl from which the light bounces and adds to the transcendence. It's heaven.

"In My Father's house are many rooms." And then I would like to translate the rest of this verse this way: "If it were not so, do you think I would have told you, 'I go to prepare a place for you'?"

Well, why does He say that? Why didn't He just say, "In My Father's house are many rooms?" Then in verse 3, "I'm going to go and prepare a place for you. I'll come again and receive you to myself that where I am, there you may be also." Why does He put that second statement in verse 2? "If it were not so, do you think I would have told you, 'I go to prepare a place for you'?"

The answer is because they're having a hard time buying anything. Their despair is so profound. He reminds them that He only tells the truth; He only tells the truth. In fact, in a few seconds He will say, "I am the truth. I am going to the Father. It is a necessary separation," as He said in 13:31 and 32, "That I might be glorified at the cross, glorified through the resurrection, and glorified in my exaltation and coronation. It is time for My humiliation to end and for Me to be glorified."

"I am going and you cannot go. But I am going to prepare a place for you, and I will come again to receive you to Myself that where I am, there you may be also. And if it weren't so, do you think I would tell you it were? Of course not. I'm coming back."

Now I believe that when He says in verse 3, "I'm coming back. I'm going to prepare a place for you, I will come again," I think that's eschatological. I think He's talking about His second coming.

Acts 1: "This same Jesus caught up into heaven shall so come in like manner as you've seen Him go. I'll be back." That's eschatological; that's future. In the meantime, of course when any believer dies, absent from the body is present with the Lord. Far better to depart and be with Christ. When a believer dies, immediately they enter into the presence of the Lord.

We have a dramatic picture of that in Acts 7. Stephen, who has just preached a great sermon and infuriated the Jewish crowd in Jerusalem, is about to be stoned to death. They are gnashing their teeth at him in violent rage, this mob. And in verse 55 of Acts 7, he was full of the Holy Spirit; he gazed intently into heaven; he saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. You see Jesus seated in heaven, He's seated at the right hand of God. The passages talk about Him being seated at the right hand of God like Hebrews 1. But now He's standing.

Why is He standing? Verse 56, Stephen says, "I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." Why is He standing? Verse 59, they went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." He was standing to welcome Stephen. He stood up to receive one of His guests, one of His own, one of His family.

Yes, He will come again and rapture the church, 1 Thessalonians 4, 1 Corinthians 15, gather the church to Himself. Yes, the rapture of the church is the next eschatological prophetic event. We don't know when it's going to happen. But in the meantime whenever a believer dies, the picture here is of the Lord standing to receive him. And that's what he says: "I will come again and receive you to Myself that where I am, there you may be also."

What is heaven? It is the place where Christ is and where He receives a believer to Himself. It is where we will all be related to Him in a perfect relationship, personally receiving each believer.

This is an incredible promise. "I'm going away, you're not going now. I'm going away to be glorified, I am going to prepare a room for you in My Father's house, and I'm going to receive you into that room when your time comes. And one day, I'm going to come and gather out believers." Wow, what an amazing promise.

Well, this is so hopeful. The disciples don't want to miss anything. They don't want to miss anything. Jesus says to them then in verse 4, "You know the way where I'm going. You know the

way where I'm going." And Thomas says, "Lord, we don't know where You're going. How do we know the way?" This takes us to the third point, the third point. First, there was the plea, then there was the promise, now there's the provision, the provision.

He says, "You know the way. I go to the Father." He said that back in chapter 7, verse 33. He said it several times in these two chapters 13 and 14: "And you know the way."

How do we know the way? How do we know the way? Well, for one thing, He said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me shall never die." For another thing, He said that in John 11.

In John 10 He said, "I am the door. I am the door to that eternal pasture. I am the door, there is no other door. Anybody else is a thief and a robber. I am the door. I've told you that." But Thomas doesn't want to miss this.

Look, you might be able to miss a few things in theology and still get to heaven, but you can't miss this. This is the question that any legitimate religion must answer, and none can except Christianity. Religion is worthless because it provides no way to heaven. That is "the" question that only Christianity answers: "How do I become reconciled to God and go to heaven?"

Thomas has to get this right. I'm glad he asked because the answer is credibly important. "Lord, we don't know where You're going. How do we know the way?"

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me. I am," this is the sixth "I am" in John's gospel. The seventh one is in the fifteenth chapter – we'll look at that a little later.

He is saying, "I am the only way to God." I told you that in chapter 10 when I told you I was the door. "I am the truth about God." John says in chapter 1, verse 14, He was full of grace and truth. "I am the life of God. In Him was life," John writes, chapter 1, verse 4.

He is life itself, chapter 11. This is the positive statement: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." That's the positive statement. It's followed by a negative, very important negative: "No one comes to the Father but through Me."

Jesus alone revealed God. Jesus alone was God's chosen sacrifice. Jesus alone is God's Savior. Faith in Jesus is the only way of salvation. Jesus said you'll die in your sins earlier in John, and "Where I go, you'll never come because you believe not on Me."

Did you get that? That's why there's a Great Commission, folks. There has to be a Great Commission to take the Word to every creature in the world because there's no other way to saved. That's why the gospels end with those Great Commissions.

Christianity actually became known as "the way" because of its exclusivity. Christianity became known as "the way." Six times in the book of Acts it's called "the way, the way, the way."

It would be good to get that back, wouldn't it, to be known as "the way, the only way, no other way"? And that's what's behind the necessity of going into all the world and preaching the gospel to every creature. This is always the Great Commission mandate. Jesus is the way to God, the truth about God, and the life of God; and no one can come to the Father, to the Father's house, except through Him.

The modern church has created a new wave of heresy related to this foundational truth that people somehow can be saved and welcomed into heaven when they die, or even taken up to heaven when Christ comes who never had a Bible, never heard about the true God, never heard about Jesus Christ. They've even come up with some names for it. They call it "later light" or they call it "natural theology." "Man can reach God by natural reason which can lead him to live a good life. And if he lives a good life, he'll be acceptable to God." That's Roman Catholic theology, Vatican One. And then there's one called "wider mercy." Men can be saved in other religions.

Peter Kreeft in the book *Ecumenical Jihad* has all kinds of different religions sending people to heaven into the Father's house. Some would say if you're monotheistic you're really okay because you've hooked onto the idea of one god.

Larry King said to me one time off television, "I'm going to be okay. A very well-known evangelist told me because I'm Jewish I'm going to be okay." Really? An evangelist told you that?

There's even a view called "transdispensational salvation" which means that people who never heard about Christ will be treated by God as if they lived in another dispensation before Christ ever came. So we can call all the missionaries home, leave them to their natural reason, or leave them to some wider mercy, or leave them to some other dispensation. But the Bible says, "Go preach the gospel to every creature because no one can get to heaven without believing in Christ, no one."

Man's reason is so depraved he suppresses the truth in righteousness. Man's religion is so depraved that he worships demons that are named gods. Man is so depraved in his reason that by wisdom he cannot know God. The natural man can't even understand the things of God. He is so depraved that there's only salvation through Christ and Christ alone, and that by a divine miracle.

So to wrap it up with the powerful words of the apostle Paul, listen to this: "When Christ does come from heaven with His mighty angels and flaming fire," 2 Thessalonians 1, "He will deal out retribution," to who? "Those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction."

It's great to know this; it's more important to understand that that means we've got to get busy with the gospel. Let's bow in prayer.

I pray, Lord, that no one will misunderstand this message. The Father's house has many rooms, and the only way there is through Christ: "No one comes to the Father but by Me." May that motivate us to be faithful in our gospel proclamation.

And, Lord, we're so thankful for the work on the cross. Lift up our spirits in worship and adoration and praise for the mighty work of redemption.

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2018 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<https://www.gty.org/about#copyright>).