



Easter 2025
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Picking the correct lane. Picking the correct lane. There's a little strategy to that as you drive up the I-5, I assume. You've got to pick the best lane, particularly when it's rush hour, that's important. But there is some pressure to that, but it seems to me there's a lot more pressure for me when I step up to the checkout lanes at the grocery store. And we have to pick very carefully, don't we? You not only need to count how many people are in each line. But there may be less people in this line, but you've got to do the math on what's in their cart, right? Like, how much is in their cart? And then if you're me, you've got to spend some time analyzing all the checkers. Just, you know, which ones look like they're just phoning it in today? Which ones look experienced? Do any of these look fast? I don't want any chit-chat up there. I just need an all-business checker up there. And then, of course, I've got to look at the line I'm walking toward thinking this is the right lane to be in. I've got to see if there's anybody in this lane who looks like they're going to dig into their purse and pull out coupons, because that's not the lane you want to be in, because half of them are expired or whatever. There's always trouble with coupons.

A lot of pressure in gambling to pick the right line at the supermarket or on the freeway, but there's one line you don't want to gamble on, and that is which line you're walking in in life. You need to be. Clear about that. As Jesus said, there are really only two lines. There's the right line and the wrong line. You're either in the right lane that when you check out you're going to check out into, as we might put it in Jesus' teaching, the eternal good life or we're going to checkout into something that is eternal loss. I mean, nothing could be more fundamental to the Christian life if we have any reflection of the biblical message, it's just one of two destinies that we're all going to end up in, and it's all about which line you're in, who you're following. If we're following the good shepherd, then we know that at checkout we've got a good future.

Now, some people think it's really hard to pick, but it's not, it really not that complicated. We make it harder than it is, and so much is at stake you better be sure that you are in the correct line. And to do that I want us to look at a passage this morning that makes it as clear as it can be and Jesus is going to appeal to you if you're in the popular line maybe it's time for you to get in the right line and it's all here in John Chapter 14. If you have a Bible I invite you to turn to that, if not it's printed there on the worksheet that was in the bulletin if you had one of those. If not, go on your phone to ESV.org which is the translation we use here. You just type in John Chapter 14:6. These are familiar words to you if you've grown up in church or even just been exposed to Christian culture. It ends with probably the most famous statement here that you'll know in this text. As Jesus said, "I am the way, I'm the truth, I'm the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." That's where we're headed in this passage. And that's what causes so much trouble for us Christians because we go around parroting what our leader said and he says he's the only way. No way to get where you want to go unless you're going with him. And just know that we didn't make this up. Preachers didn't make this up, we didn't just vote on this. This is something Jesus said and it's important that we understand what he's saying because it really has to do with eternity.



Let's take a look at John Chapter 14 verse 1. We'll read verses 1 through 6. Jesus said, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I'm going." And Thomas, thank God for Thomas, "Thomas says to him, 'Lord,'" we don't know anything about what you're talking about. "'Lord, we don't know where you're going,'" and how in the world could we know the way if we don't know what you are talking about? And Jesus said... Good question, Thomas, but here's the answer, "I'm the way, and the truth, and the life. No one's going to come to the Father except through me."

Now, these three things that Jesus calls himself here are very important if we're going to just re-evaluate where we stand with the Creator and as we think about a Christ who says, I'm going in a particular way, which if you read the context of this, this is the Upper Room where they've all had their Last Supper and Judas is ditching out to go betray Jesus and this goes on, Chapters 14, 15, 16. We have all of this discussion about what's happening here in the Upper Room, and they all know this is the end. Jesus is going to give his life on a cross and be crucified. And he's saying things like, well, I'm going to go but then I'm going to come back. I mean, therein is our illusion in this passage, verse 3, to the fact that he has to be a resurrected Christ. He can't be a leader of a movement and say I'm going to go prepare some kind of place for you in some house, some kind of eternal dwelling place, but I'm going to die tomorrow. That's not how this worked. He said, I am going to die tomorrow, but on Sunday I'm going to rise from the dead, and I am going to come back one day. This is an eschatological end of time, one day, we've been waiting now for 2,000 years for this to take place, but one day he says, I'm going to come back, "I'll take you to be with myself, that where I am you may be also."

Let's try and unravel these three things, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." Let's look at those one at a time this morning and just think this through as it relates to all that Jesus is saying. Now let's start with verse 2. "In my Father's house are many rooms." Now, you might have heard that if you grew up with an old translation, the word "mansions," and all that means is a place to live, the place where you're going to dwell. And "In my Father's house," when you think about that you might think about heaven, and if you think about heaven you might be right in terms of where he lives now, but one day the dwelling place of God is going to be among men, Revelation Chapter 21 says. And so he has a place for us that he is going to put us in. It is called often in the gospels his kingdom. He's got a kingdom that is going to be a perfect place. And you're going to have to be done with this life just like he's about to be done with his life on the next day of saying this. And we're going to cross from this life into the next life, which is not our permanent home, it's going to be with God if we are Christians standing in the right line. And then he's going to come and have us dwell on earth, a new earth. A new earth, as Second Peter Chapter 3 says, where "righteousness dwells." An earth where God is reigning and everything is copacetic, everything is the way it ought to be, everything's going to be peaceful, and more than that I just want to bait you with this, it's going to be better than you could ever imagine.



Jot this down if you're a note taker, Psalm Chapter 16 verse 11. It says, "In his presence," speaking here of God of course, "there is fullness of joy." Have you had any joy in your life? Well, it's only been partial, and it's always been fleeting. And if you read the book of Ecclesiastes, it always seems to disappoint, it never reaches the full peak of what we would hope. It's just always got some edge that's corroded, but in the joy that we're going to experience in his presence, "there's fullness of joy," and then I love this, "at his right hand," here it comes, "are pleasures forevermore."

You know, one of the problems of you getting in the line to follow Christ that checks out into the Father's house is that you may think, well, those are the people they're telling me I can't do all the stuff I want to do. They're going to start limiting my pleasure, they're all about self-denial and saying no to sin and the sin seems pretty enticing and pretty pleasurable and I don't want to get in that line. That's the number one reason that people tell me they don't become Christians. I don't want to have to stand in that line and say no to the things I want to do. All I need to tell you here is that everything you really want, everything you really desire, the things that you're trying to experience that you hope will somehow be what you really want, this is the reason Jesus isn't really condemning your desires for pleasure and fulfillment, and reputation, and real estate, and riches. He's all about that, but he says don't store it up here because here it's never going to satisfy. Ecclesiastes 5 says if you start loving the stuff here, you'll never have enough and you will realize it's like drinking salt water. You're never going to be satisfied. He says what you really want are the things I'm going to provide for you when there's no sin, there's no trouble, there is only my unmitigated blessing.

And if you get past this life and you're willing to believe in something that our kids don't much believe in anymore, and that's delayed gratification, and you can stand in line and say no to the things that God says that we should say no to, and we say yes to following Jesus who says, I'm the good shepherd, follow me, I'll lead you to the right place. As a matter of fact, here he says, I'm going to lead you to my Father's house and it's going to be good. He's taught all about the goodness of this all and pleasure and joy and all that you really want. As C.S. Lewis rightly said, I guess in the spirit of Ecclesiastes and King Solomon of the Old Testament, he rightly said a generation ago, you know, there are desires in us that we realize are never going to be fulfilled in this life. And that must mean that God created us for another world. And of course he did. And the world that God is holding out for us is getting queued up in this line and we need to make sure we're in it. And when you are, you know this: that though it's not the permanent home, the moment you pass from this life into the next, Jesus promised you're going to be just fine.

As a matter of fact, you're going to be in a place that, as Paul put it in Philippians Chapter 1, is "far better" than anything you could ever experience in this life. "For me to live is Christ," Paul said, I'll be all about him. I'll follow him. I'll do what he says. I stand in his line. I will deprive myself of whatever he says I should and I'll do whatever he tells me. But to die? Gain. So much better. Do you know what that does? That gives you courage to face the end of this life. Jesus was facing the end of his life here. He's talking at the Last Supper about his own upcoming death. But he's not afraid. He knows where he's going. As a matter of fact, he



wants us to know where we're going. He needs to make sure that you're sure that you are standing in the right lane and you're going to end up in the right place so that you can face your own demise with courage. I know we love youth in our culture. Growing old is a bad thing, but here's the deal. When we grow another year older, we're one step closer to what God says he's going to give us that's far better than anything you've ever experienced.

Number one on your outline, if you're taking notes, he calls himself in verse 6, The Way. Verse 1 tells us we need to trust in God, trust also in him, and he is The Way, so number one, let's "Trust 'The Way' For Courage in Death." The Way, that's Jesus. I want you to never fear death if you are standing in the right line. You ought to fear death if you're standing in the popular line, because the popular line, with all kinds of variations as to what you might want to do or what you might like or what preference you might have, it's always beckoning you to go to the place that's popular, where the culture is going to say everything's good over here. You don't want to be in that narrow-minded, fundamentalist Bible-thumping line where everybody's going to tell you about God and the exclusivity of Christ and how everybody else is wrong, they're the only ones that are right, how prideful, how arrogant. That may be what they say but you need to say, am I really queued up for a place where God says I will give you all the unmitigated blessings that you have been really made to enjoy? And a lot of that is found in God, even though that may be hard for us to stretch our imagination to think, I can't imagine that God would be the fulfillment of what I really want.

Well, it's not only God, it is all with his gifts. He's not going to create for us a gigantic choir loft where everyone's going to sit in there and sing in their choir robes for each other. This is a new earth where everything that your heart truly desires, without any of the corruption of those desires, is going to find its fulfillment in the presence of God. In his presence there's fullness of joy, and in his right hand there are pleasures forevermore. That's as true as it's ever been as our culture continues to deteriorate. We must think, wow, there's got to be something better than this. Oh, and there is. And you need to trust Jesus to get there, because here's what the Bible says about you and me getting there on our own. We can't do it. This is fundamental. We all cannot get there on our own, and some of us think somehow God is just going to put us up in front of him when we die and say, well, you seem better than most people, I guess I'll let you in. That's not how this works. We can never earn this place. We can never say, I've been good enough to go to this place, we can never qualify for this place. Jesus has to come and do it himself.

I need to turn you to a passage. I know it's an Old Testament text and it's steeped in some Old Testament history, but please go with me to the Old Testament book of Isaiah. Let me show you why Jesus came and he's the way and why he says in verse 6, he's the only way. Isaiah Chapter 59, let's go to the middle of this chapter and show you the dilemma that God sees as he looks at this earth and even the best among us are not good enough to ever do anything to save our culture or save the people of humanity. We just can't. Isaiah Chapter 59. Are you with me on this? Take a look at verse 14 and see if this doesn't read like your news feed on your computer. "Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far away." Yeah, we'd like more justice. We'd like real justice. We'd like real righteousness. And truth, that would be good. "For truth has stumbled in the public squares." No, it doesn't stand up there.



It's getting knocked down left and right. "And uprightness cannot enter." It's like it's barred, like you can't do righteous things here. You'll be mocked for it. "Truth is lacking," verse 15, "and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey." Just ponder that phrase. "He who departs from evil," if you say, I'm out of this line that says just do whatever you feel, do whatever feels good, just do what you want, be who you want. If you get out of that line and you say I'm going to forsake that evil that God says is evil, then I'm going to stand in the right line, you "make yourself a prey."

Now that works in the Old Testament times where you see a lot of animals eating other animals. Unless you still watch Animal Kingdom or National Geographic, maybe this is better, it certainly puts a target on your back. How's that for updating the idiom? And Jesus said in Luke 6, if you choose to stand with him and follow the good shepherd, here's what you're going to get, insults, exclusion. People are going to say things about you that aren't true at work, in your family, in your neighborhood. You will be an outcast if you follow me, and Jesus said, if they hated me, they're going to hate you. He says that in the gospel of John. And we need to believe the fact that there's a price to pay to stand with him. But just know that if you are maligned for doing what's right, middle of Isaiah Chapter 59 verse 15, "The Lord saw it, and it displeased him." He's displeased that in our culture we don't really applaud real justice. And "He saw," verse 16, "that there was no man, and he wondered that there was no one to intercede." Where is the person who can stand up and fix this problem? And this is the point of half of the Bible, you can't solve this problem. There is no one who you can follow.

Do you ever notice that in the Bible, the heroes of the Bible are always seen as having feet of clay? You will never find that in Assyrian history. You won't find that in Babylonian history. You won't find that in Egyptian history, but in biblical history, in Israeli history, think about this, you find these people like David and you start to put your hand on your face going, I can't believe it. He's a Peeping Tom. I can't believe it! He's not only an adulterer, he's going to kill this gal's husband by a ruse. This is terrible. Or Noah, blameless in his generation, oh yeah except for he's getting drunk and doing some weird things that we can't even quite understand but it's not good and it's perverse after the flood incident. Or Job, he's blameless in his generation but still we can't get through the book of Job without reading how he's suicidal and cursing the day of his birth and he's so angry at everybody. These are our heroes. Solomon at the peak of Israel's wealth and its prominence, he's there bowing down to other gods because he's built a harem that's leading his heart astray into idolatry.

There's only one hero in the Bible, ultimately, even though we can aspire to reflect the good traits of all the biblical heroes—they're heroes in quotations. The real hero is the one who has never done anything wrong. And there's only one who can say, "I'm the way," because you can't be the way. Keep reading. "There was no man," in the middle of verse 16, "there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him." This is a theme throughout Isaiah. The only way that God is going to provide salvation is for him to do it himself. And he sends his own Son in the weird complexity of the triune God that the Bible reveals that is. This God, "Who was and is and is to come," this triunity of persons who exist in one essence, sends the second person of the Godhead to perform what no man can perform. There's nobody to intercede for human beings. So we can't do it ourselves. We



need a way to get to God. We need a way to be accepted by God, we need a way for my life to be seen as acceptable to get a ticket into this house of God and get a place there. How do I get a place there? I can't get a place there. The best person in our generation can't get a place. The best person in our church can't get a place there. But God says, I'll have to do this myself. And I'll put on righteousness, and I'll uphold it, and verse 17, "I'll put on righteousness like a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on my head; and I put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrap myself in zeal like a cloak." Well, this is a weird juxtaposition of comments. You mean to tell me you're going to be salvation and righteousness for one group of people and you're going to be vengeance and zealous vindication and punishment for the rest? Yes, that's exactly right. There are only two lines. There's one that's going to incur God's judgment and there's one that is going to incur God's salvation. That's it. That's the bifurcation that we have in Scripture. You're either the sheep or the goats, you're either his children or you're not. You're either in the right line, the narrow road, the small gate, the small checkout, or you're in the broad road, the popular one, the one that's easy to get on, and the broad gate "that leads to destruction." That's the way the Bible posits all of this.

I love the way this ends though. Verse 18, "According to their deeds, so he will repay, wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies; to the coastlands he will render repayment." "So," everyone, even in judgment, "they are going to fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun." I just love that. Even the concept of worship from the east and judgment to the west, we're not talking about the West Coast. There's a "like" moment there, you're free to chuckle at that. I thought it was cute since we're living here on the West Coast. This is my sixth sermon here in the last couple of days, so no telling what you're going to hear." This is a serious passage for me to be saying all that. "For he will come like a rushing stream, which the wind of the Lord drives." Everything Jesus said is that all this stuff that's going to happen about taking care of the sheep and the goats, dealing with the popular line or the small line over here, it's all going to happen in a moment. In a moment! It's going to begin in a moment when Christ comes back as he says in our passage in John Chapter 14. He's going to come back and receive us to be with him that wherever he is, we'll be with him. And to the rest of the world, if you read the book of Revelation from Chapter 6 all the way to Chapter 19, here comes the wrath of judgment, the vengeance, the payment, all that stuff that's talked about in verse 18. But for us, "A Redeemer," verse 20, "will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the Lord."

I hope today you might consider getting in a different line than you're in if you find yourself in the popular line and not the unpopular one, that you turn from transgression. Now, I understand what's true about you up there in verse 15 will be true. You'll make yourself a prey, you'll put a target on your back, but you'll have a redeemer who will come to you, someone who will pay the price for you. The way that Jesus is going, by the way, is the way to the cross. That's where he's headed, to be crucified. "As for me," Isaiah 59 verse 21, "this is my covenant," my promise, that's what covenant means, "'with them,' says the Lord. 'My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out the mouth your children's offspring,' says Lord, 'from this time forth and forevermore'" God has always had a remnant of people standing in the small line, the line that no one wants to get in. And they have, I just love this



picture of, they're having children who are following in the line, you're having grandchildren who are rising up and following in that line. It's an amazing, wonderful covenant promise of God, I'll be your redeemer.

And the only way to redeem these people is for the strong arm of the Lord to do it himself. And here's Jesus who comes, born of a virgin in Bethlehem, as he enters into time and space to fulfill all righteousness in how he lives. And then to go to a cross, which he's about to go to, and he's saying, I'm going. I'm the way. This is the way for you to get right with the Father. And "you've got to believe in God and believe, trust also in me." Don't be troubled. You've got a place here and you should be assured of that so that you can have confidence. If you get killed in a car accident today, I want you to be confident you know exactly where you're going. Because one day it won't just be a disembodied spirit in the presence of God, the great Spirit. No, it'll be one day you'll get a resurrected body and put on a new earth where righteousness dwells and all the desires of your life, the true and pure desires of your life that you don't even know. They've never been fully dusted off or sorted out or somehow sifted out some of the things that are less than, but the greatest and the best pleasures and joy and riches and happiness will be given to us in that place. I hope you have courage in death. You will if you trust The Way, he is the way. It certainly requires your penitent trust.

Back to our passage now, a good little foray into Isaiah 59, but go back to John Chapter 14. In John Chapter 14, he says and you know the way that I'm going. Now, if you were very careful about listening to Christ, which we have the advantage of seeing all these four gospels repeating that he's going to be crucified, that he is "The Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." That he's going to be crushed, as it says in Isaiah 53, as a guilt offering. All this that Jesus has told them they should know the way. Now, Thomas isn't always where he needs to be in his thinking. And he says, I don't know! We don't know where you're going. And how can we know The Way? Now, look up at Chapter 13, scroll up to Chapter 13 verse 36, "Simon Peter says, 'Lord, where are you going?' And Jesus answered him, 'Where I'm going you cannot follow me now,'" at least not now, "'but you will follow afterwards.'" And Peter said to him, "if you're talking about death, now you can see, read between the lines here, "'Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you,'" I'm ready to die. If you've told us about being betrayed and rebuked and handed over to the Romans by the Pharisees, the scribes, and all that, just know I'm willing to die for you. But just like Isaiah 59 says, verse 38, we know Peter can't do it. We know that. "Jesus answered, 'Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow until you've denied me three times.'" You're not going to do this. I'm going to this for you. And I'm going on this way and Thomas goes, I don't know what you're talking about.

Now, are there answers to this? There are answers to this. But he doesn't start answering and repeating Chapter 13. Jesus says to him, "I am the way," and here's the second thing, "I am the truth." Hey, you got doubts you don't understand. It's confusing to you. Listen, I'm the source of the answer to you. I'm the answer, and you need to trust in me. And if you trust in me and you find yourself rightly related to me, you'll get the answers, at least all the answers that are answerable. You'll get them. I'm the truth. Stick with me. Sometimes it's not about what you know, it's about who you know. If you have a good IT person, that's helpful. I know a



lot of us think they just turn things off and turn them back on, but sometimes they actually have to do some heavy lifting and start clicking on the mouse and the keyboard then they figure things out. And so you may not know what's going on, but if you know the right person, hopefully he knows what's going on or she knows what's going on and we'll get this thing fixed. That's great. Sometimes I just need to make sure I know the right person to get the right answer.

But this statement that he is the truth is a very interesting one and a helpful one. Let's just put the point up and then let's talk about it a little bit. Number two, you need to trust in the truth, and of course Jesus says he is the truth. Number two, "Trust in the Truth for Clarity In Doubt." And there's not a Christian in the room who hasn't, if they're honest with themselves, said I doubt some of this. I'm not sure. Thomas was known for doubting, wasn't he? When Jesus rose from the dead and all his trusted allies said, hey, hey Thomas, he was here, he is just here. He said, no, no no no, I'm not going to believe unless I see him for myself. If I touch his body, if I can see his scars, put my hand where the spear went, I am not going to believe that he is alive. Now I know we'd like to say, oh Thomas, you should have just believed your colleagues. But Jesus shows up in a great tender act of mercy to say hey, I'll make a special visit here. And he was making all kinds of visits. For over a month, he was making visits to all kinds of people, sometimes to crowds of over 500 people at a time. Jesus showed multiple times over and over that he was resurrected. But he decided out of a great care for Thomas, his doubting apostle, to show up and say here I am. And he responds, if you know the text, he says, "My Lord and my God," You are the king, you are the one I should be trusting. You are the truth. Earlier he'd been saying I don't even know where you're going. Well now I know where you're going, you died. And I didn't know it included you becoming alive, even though you said, if I go the way I'm supposed to go, I'll come back and receive you. I guess life is implied in that after death, but here he said he didn't get that.

All I'm saying is it's fine for you to be an honest Thomas and say there are things I don't understand. Things about Christianity that are hard for me to compute, whether it's the eternality of God, whether it's the triunity of God, whether it's how to reconcile God's sovereignty and our human responsibility and culpability, I understand those are some difficult things. There are difficult things in any discipline. This has some difficult things. But he says trust me, because I am the truth. And as First Corinthians Chapter 1 says, if we trust in Christ, "he becomes to us the wisdom of God." And he says the debaters of the age, the philosophers of the age, the smart people in the ivory towers, they don't have the answers that lead to salvation, but Christ has the answer because he is the way and he's also the truth.

Now, truth is in big trouble these days. Have you noticed that? Especially if we've appended a personal possessive pronoun to the word "truth." That's become very popular in the last 25 years. We start talking now about "my truth," my truth. And you have "your truth" and I have "my truth." Well, that's a silly juxtaposition of words. None of us should ever, ever tolerate someone saying, this is my truth. No, you can say this is my preference that chocolate ice cream is the best ice cream. You can have that preference, but you cannot say it is "your truth." All you're saying is it's true that this is your preference. You can say that. But truth by



definition is a clear, logical statement, an indicative statement about something that represents reality, something that is true. And a generation ago, a great defender of Christianity, a Presbyterian who became a great defender of Christianity, Francis Schaeffer, used to put it this way, you better make sure that you don't qualify truth in religious terms as something that doesn't have the same rules as any other area of life. Because you don't want your doctor or your accountant talking about, well, this is my truth. I don't care what your truth is. Is the tumor cancerous or not? Is this stock crashing or not. Should I sell? Should I invest? We need truth. And what I want to know is something that is objectively true. I don't care what you think about it. I don't care what you feel about it. And in our day it's all about intuition, it's about feelings, and I just have to blame this on the societal decay and the weak-mindedness of people saying, I don't really want to think too hard.

And when it comes to theology, it is the same way, a lot of bumper sticker theology, I don't want to think too hard about it, but you do need to realize just because some of us in culture are lazier than our forefathers, we can't start saying because I feel this instead of thinking it through, I feel it, therefore it is "my truth." It doesn't matter what you feel. As a matter of fact, I got a verse for that, I've got a verse for almost everything. Here's a verse, Proverbs 14:12, "There is a way that seems right to man," you know what that means? I feel that this is the right way, "but its end is the way to death." You stand in the wrong line and you say, well, this is "my truth," Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, the Baha'i faith. You can say whatever you want. You may like the bells and smells or whatever, but, sorry, it doesn't matter. What matters is that you have the truth. And what is the truth? Let's just start with theism and atheism and the little squishy middle that everyone likes to claim, agnosticism. Here's the fact, either there is a God who created us or there isn't. Either we are just the debris of a cosmic explosion a long, long, time ago. Or there's a God that fashioned the cells in the DNA of your body. There's one of the other. And you can sit there and wave a white flag and say, well, I'm agnostic, I just don't know. But it doesn't really remove you from the question. If there is a God, you need to figure that out. You need to come to some conclusion. They say, well, there are some questions about it. If you have doubts, that's fine. Christ says, I can answer your questions. I am the truth. You should believe what I'm telling you. This is a theme throughout the New Testament, Jesus is the truth, and he's telling the truth. And if he says, I'm going to go on this way, which includes my death, my burial, and my resurrection, I'll give you a place in the Father's Kingdom. I'll give you a place in the Father's economy. I will give you a place of acceptance with the perfect God who created you.

So we need to get to the place where we say we cannot treat religious truth claims as something like choosing your favorite ice cream. You have to see it as either the statements are corresponding to some concrete reality or they're not. When I say concrete, I mean that in an abstract sense, that there is a God or that there is a Jesus who lived 2,000 years ago, who lived a perfect life and really never died and was really born of a virgin. And then you need to start asking some philosophical questions about that. I mean, I can understand that people are saying, well, I don't get that because I don't know, I've seen people die, but I've never seen anybody come back from the dead. And I realize that. Then you have to start asking, well if there is a God who made the rules of physics and biology, could that God choose to reverse that or put that on hold for whatever he wants to do to prove that he is God. As a



matter of fact, that's the only reason, really when it comes down to it what we see in the Bible in a very small list of miracles—I know you think miracles are on every page but they're not. God is breaking into time and space to say, I'm going to show you that I am the creator of your life. Jesus is presenting himself that way with every miracle he performed, including the biggest one of all, that he rose from the dead after he was biologically and physically dead for three days in a tomb. That is important that we recognize we cannot feel our way into truth.

The world's elite don't get it. First Corinthians Chapter 1, I mentioned that, but you should read that whole section, verses 18 all the way to the end of the chapter, verse 31. And that beautiful move from you can look in the world for answers, the ultimate answers about the ultimate questions, and you're going to get yourself to the place where you realize it's not going to deal with the real issues. Or you can get to a historical Jew who lived in your place and died in your place and said I am the truth. And that truth, even though it may not be exhaustive, is something that is adequate, adequate for you to know everything about that you need to know for this life and lining up for the next. Second Peter Chapter 1 verse 3, "All things pertaining to life and godliness." He's given us enough instructions to follow the good shepherd and be prepared to step into his presence.

Well, just like the first one, if he's The Way, we need to trust him. If he is The Way, it's also true about the truth. We need to trust in him. "Let your hearts not be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me," because I am the truth. We have to get to that place. If you have questions, great. If it needs investigation, investigate it. Matter of fact, investigate the resurrection. That has caused many of our best defenders of the Christian faith throughout Church history, that has been the cause of their conversion, is saying I'm going to disprove this. Great. Have at it and go for it. And we need to see if it doesn't turn you into another defender of Christianity as it often does.

In John Chapter 14, he says, "I'm the way, I am the truth," and then there's the third one, "I am the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." What we need in this world, which attaches to verse 1 here, is the ability to hang on to this faith, to have the vibrant resolution in our own hearts to hold fast to this, as it says in the book of Hebrews, "firm to the end." And God says, I'll grant you this life. I'll give you life. I will grant you life to be able to have something going on in your life that is going to allow you to find a confidence that will give you courage in death and clarity in doubt, but it'll also give you comfort in difficulty. Let's put that down. Number three, "Trust in Christ. He is the Life." And that life will give you comfort in difficulties. Verse 1 of our passage says, "Let not your hearts be troubled." Well, Jesus just told them in essence in verses 36 and 37 of the previous chapter that he's going to die. And Peter says, I'll die with you, and Jesus says no you won't.

But this is hard as he often said the shepherds are going to be struck down and the sheep are going to scatter. This is going to be a really hard time for the disciples. But he says, you know what? You need to understand you'll have a lot of tribulation but he says, "Take heart; I've overcome the world." Have you looked at that passage in the context lately? It's just two chapters away so let's go there real quick. John Chapter 16 near the end of that chapter



Jesus is talking still in the same context, he's saying these words, "Let your heart not be troubled." This world is a mess, and I know that, and there are going to be a lot of difficulties as people put the target on your back and our culture continues to become hostile. Which, by the way, this particular Easter, 2025, I think has been the most hostile against Christianity I've ever seen. I mean, social media, it's fun to watch weird things with AI on Instagram, and it's, I will admit, I laugh at things that give me a little release of pressure. Every theologian and pastor needs a little time on Instagram watching things that are stupid. (audience laughing) But I will say this, I see more open hostility toward Christianity than I've ever seen. And it is amazing to watch as we continue to find ourselves in a line that more people are throwing bricks at us when it used to be just words. There's increasing vitriol against biblical Christianity.

Verse 32 of John 16, "Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come. We're about to break. And go from here to the Garden of Gethsemane, from the Garden of Gethsemane to a trial, a kangaroo court overnight, Caiaphas' courtyard, then off to Golgotha, the place of the skull to be crucified. So all this is about to happen. "He says, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and you will leave me alone," but of course, I'm never alone-alone, "yet I'm not alone, for the Father is with me. Now, I've said these things to you, that in me you may have peace." Do you understand what he's saying there? He's just said, you're going to be scattered and I'm going to die. I said these things so you'll have peace. That doesn't sound very peaceful. I don't derive peace from that unless, of course, you see the big picture. This is the way and this is the truth. "I'm going to provide a place for you." So that when "I go and prepare a place for you," I give you access to the place of living in the kingdom of the Father, "I'll come again and take you to myself, that where I am you'll be also." That's a good thing. So just know what it involves is the cross between here and the crown. Before you get to the kingdom, there's going to be a hard time on this planet, and in this world, you're going to have tribulation. "In the world you'll have tribulations. But take heart; I've overcome the world." You know what you need to do that? You need the first verse in Chapter 14, right? Have faith in God, trust in God. "Believe in God; believe also in Christ." He is The Way. He's told you the truth.

Now you want the life that brings you peace in the midst of uncertain circumstances. When you look at the world and you find it falling apart or you look at your body and you find it falling apart or you look at your relationship and you find it falling apart or you look at your finances and they're falling apart. Do you want peace in hostile circumstances? Well, then you better have your trust in Christ because Christ is the one who gives you peace and can tell you if you believe me you can take heart even if it's bad news. And the forecast as I often say is not given to scare you, it's given to prepare you. And the Bible says that before Christ is dispatched to come back, it's going to go from bad to worse. So get ready. And in one sense, as you read the discouraging headlines, in some sense, you should take heart and know that God has overcome this world. As it says in First John 5, the thing "that has overcome the world is our faith." We're trusting in the absolute, unwavering, and faithful promises of Christ. He is the way. He is the truth, and he can give you life.



Just like he had life as he sat there snoozing away on a cushion in the hull of a boat in the middle of a storm. And the disciples were freaking out. What's the difference between sleeping and napping and freaking out? Well, he said it, because as they were freaking out and woke him up and they said don't you care if we die? He said, "O, you of little faith." You don't believe me. You don't believe me. I told you that God's got a plan for us, and it's going to culminate in Jerusalem with my betrayal. And that I'm going to be crucified and that I am going to rise again. And you don't believe me so you think you're going to die in a boating accident. What is wrong with you guys? You better believe what God says. And he says in this world you're going to have tribulation, but you better take heart because at the end of this line, when we check out across the threshold of this human life, you're going to step into the presence of God or into outer darkness. You're either going to be in a place where all of your ultimate desires are going to be fulfilled. Once you get your physical body back, there's going to be a whole new experience for you. It's going to be a lot like this earth but without all the sin and corruption, without all the pain, without all of the tears. No death and no dying. Or you're going to "cast into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." There are only two ways to go. And the risen Christ says, trust me, trust me, trust. I have overcome the world.

One last cross-reference, please. First Corinthians 15. To have comfort in difficulty is to know that this whole entire timeline, the chronology of God's plan that is going to end with him coming back to receive us unto himself, that where he is we'll be also. I know it's been delayed. It seems delayed from our perspective, but the apostles thought it would happen in the first century. They said, we've got to have everybody here repent so the "times of refreshing can come from the presence of God." Well, it didn't come in the first century. It didn't in the fifth. It didn't come in 15th. And it hasn't come yet in the 21st. But God says you always ought to be expecting this because one day I will come back. And it speaks here in First Corinthians 15 about the resurrection of Jesus Christ, then it starts to speak of our resurrection in verse 23, now look at verse 24. When he solves the problem of our disembodied spirit in the presence of God and gives us a resurrection body, if in fact you die before he comes back, it says, "Then comes the end when he," Christ, "delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power."

You can put a cross-reference next to that, Isaiah Chapter 59. We just read it. He's going to bring vengeance to his enemies, but he's going to bring salvation and righteousness for us. "For he must reign until he's put all enemies under his feet." And "the last enemy to be destroyed is," not even a person, it's the concept and reality of, "death. For God has put all things in subjection under his feet. But when he says, 'all things are put under subjection,' it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him." In other words the Father's not subjected to the Son obviously. But "when all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him," that's a tongue twister I know, "that God may be all in all." This is when the copacetic reality of all your desires and joys and pleasures are being fulfilled in the place where God dwells, where the dwelling place of God is among men, where Jesus himself is ruling and reigning on a new earth with no sin, no adversary, no tempter, but only what we all desperately desire in the dark corners of our heart and we wish things were different. That's called sin, things not being



the way they ought to be. We have been set in our hearts, God says in Ecclesiastes, eternity. We know something about something that we haven't yet experienced, and it's coming. But you've got to be willing to get in the right line. You've got to be willing to forsake what is unrighteous and follow Christ. And it starts with you trusting in him.

It's great to see all these strollers that are stacked up. Talk about traffic jams, our strollers in the hallway back there. Maybe it's because I've reached the grandpa age that I forget all the pains that go with that part of parenting. But it's a joy for me to see all these young moms in our church having children. I think of that Isaiah 59. Children and grandchildren who have the word of God in their mouth because the Spirit of God is dwelling richly among his people in the covenant promise of him pulling people to himself. But I think about those babies and I think this is just so good to see in a culture that's rebelling against the natural order and doesn't even believe in having children anymore, it's great to see the people of God having those kids. And Jesus talked about that in John 16, the passage we were just in, at least right above that. He says, "When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come." It's called labor. No Amens from the women on that? Okay. "But when she's delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world." And when you see that baby in the arms of that young mom, and you recognize that's a beautiful thing, we start to forget about all the pain and labor.

What's Jesus doing? Just being an obstetrician for us? Why is he giving us that? Here's why, verse 22. The next verse is in John 16. "So also you will have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you." Now, get these statements rightly aligned. He's going to go away to the cross, to the grave, to the Ascension. He's going to go away, and then he's going to come again to receive us unto himself that where he is we'll be also. We're still waiting for that. But he says to the disciples two chapters later, I'm going to go, you will scatter, you will have sorrow watching me be crucified, at least from the shadows. And then I'm going to come back, I'm going to come back three days later. I will see you. I will come back and hang out with you. I will have breakfast on the shores of the Sea of Galilee with you, I will be with you again for 40 days, then he'll ascend. And he says, when I come back and you know that your master is risen, you will have joy and no one will take that joy away from you.

Now, the 11 apostles all died proclaiming this message. Ten of them died as martyrs, and one of them died exiled on an island in the Mediterranean. And they all carried this joy that kept them afloat, the life that God granted them from within, a "peace that surpassed all understanding," because they trusted in the life. And they knew he was the truth. And they knew they were right with the Father, because he was The Way. The way, the truth, the life. You don't get to pick your truth. You need to investigate so you know that you've attached yourself to the truth, the one who is the way, the truth and the life. And "no one's going to come to the Father except through him." I plead with you, if you're in the popular line, it's time for you to skip out. And it's never going to be easy. It's not hard to distinguish the right and wrong. It's hard for you to depart sometimes from thinking the short-term gratification is worth it. It's not worth it. We hang in there for God's promise. We know he is the truth because he's the way.



Let's pray. God, let some people in this room right now reconsider where they stand with you. While everyone likes to think, in our day at least, that there must be some middle ground somewhere, you've made it so clear so many times, you're going to come back and you're going to separate the people the way a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. There will be no confusion in your mind about who's in your line and who's in the wrong line. So may there be some here today who exercise the kind of faith in you that takes their troubled heart away, whether it's the conviction of sin that they know that they do not qualify. They've got to trust in you to qualify. Or maybe they're just using questions and doubts as an excuse to not trust you. God, I pray that they would realize you are the truth and you tell the truth. And you've told the truth, and everything about the future promise is the truth. And God, may we also understand that you want us to get through this life as long as it lasts for us that the kind of peace and joy that springs from the life that you give us, the new life we have in your Son. I pray that tonight, today, people might experience that in a way that they haven't before. They would trust in you fully, repenting of their sins, trusting in your Son, Jesus Christ.

In whose name we pray. Amen.