

A Way or The Way?

Judging Jesus, Pt. 2

JOHN 14:1-11

Allan McCullough
Grace Hill Church
September 17, 2017



I. PRAYER

- i. Would you help us to rest in the news this morning that you are not a God who waits for us to ascent to your level, but you are God who has come down to us to give us new life.

II. INTRODUCTION

a. When I was in High School, I had the privilege of working as a barista at a Starbucks.

- i. I was a Christian at the time and that was something I really didn't hide from people...so it was common for my fellow baristas to ask me about it.
- ii. Well, I remember one time this one girl, Katie, confronted me with some questions that she had about Christianity.
 - She asked me: Allan, is it true that Christians believe that you have to believe in Jesus to get to heaven?
 1. I said: Yes, that is true.
 - Then I remember, she threw at me a string of questions...
 1. "So, if someone was a Jew or a Muslim, they lived a good life, they loved people, but they never believed in Jesus, are you saying that they would not go to heaven??"
 2. "What if the person lived on an island and never had the opportunity to hear about Jesus, are they not going to heaven?"



3. What about me, Allan, I a Jewish, I don't believe in Jesus...am I NOT GOING TO HEAVEN?!?

iii. Well, this morning, this is the question that I want to answer.

- Is it true that Christians claim exclusivity when it comes to how one gets to heaven, or is made right with God, or gains eternal life?

iv. And I want to address this question because there is this prevailing philosophy in the world, and sadly within many churches, that at the end of the day, all religions, all philosophies, all moral pathways lead to some sort of salvation or eternal life.

- Gandhi famously said: *"The various religions are like different roads converging on the same point. What difference does it make if we follow different routes, provided we arrive at the same destination?"*
- The image that is commonly used is that of a mountain.
 1. The goal of the human experience is to climb to the top of this mountain where eternal life is found.
 2. There are many paths to the top of this mountain.
 3. Christianity is a potential path. The other religions. Secular philosophies. As long as you love other people, strive to do more good than bad, then you'll eventually find your way to the top.



III. JUDGING JESUS

a. We are in a sermon series called Judging Jesus.

- i. The aim of this series is to give you the plain truth about what the Bible says about Jesus so you can make an informed judgement on whether you choose to accept him or reject him.
 - We're doing this series because I am convinced that there are many people who have chosen to reject Jesus based on misinformation...
 1. And maybe, just maybe, after hearing what the Bible really says about Jesus, you'll reconsider.
 - I also believe that there are many people who have chosen to accept Jesus based on misinformation or because it was their family tradition...and their entire spiritual and religious experience might get disrupted upon hearing what the Bible really has to say about Jesus.
- ii. **Whether you believe in Jesus or not, if you're going to make a judgement about Jesus, let's make sure that we are accepting or rejecting the God of the Bible and not a misconstrued version of God.**
 - And unfortunately, we have a lot of churches out there today that are preaching and teaching that Jesus is a way to obtain eternal life and not that he is the only, exclusive way.



- My goal this morning is to show you from the Scriptures that to make the judgement that Jesus is simply a way among many to reach salvation, is to fundamentally misunderstand what the Bible has to say about man's condition before God and how that condition is remedied.

b. So, what does the Bible have to say?

IV. JOHN 14:1-6

a. John is one of the four gospels in the Bible.

- i. The gospels recount the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.
- ii. In our text this morning, we are right at the end of the life and ministry of Jesus.
 - And where we pick up in the text, Jesus has just been explaining to his disciples that he would be leaving them soon.
 1. Of course, Jesus was referring to the fact that he was about to be crucified on the cross, buried, resurrected, and will eventually ascend to be in Heaven with God the Father.
 - And Jesus' disciples were distressed by this and wanted to know exactly where Jesus was going and if they could go with them.

b. Read John 14:1-6

- i. Read V.1-3 - Jesus says that he is going to prepare a place for his people with the Father in Heaven.



- We'll talk about this in a second, but essentially, Jesus is saying that he is going to accomplish what needs to be accomplished in order for us to be able to have eternal life with God the Father.
 - So, this is what we have been talking about. This is the top of the mountain, right?
 1. Jesus is going to prepare the way for us to get there.
- ii. **Read V.4-5 – And you know the way! Thomas: No we don't! What is the way? Give us a map! Tell us what we need to do!**
- This is everyone's question, right?
 - What is the way to salvation?
 - What is the way to eternal life?
 - How do I get to the top of the mountain?
- iii. **The CLEAR Answer - Read V.6**
- Jesus claims to be the exclusive way to salvation. The exclusive way to eternal life. The exclusive way to God.

c. And it is this claim to exclusivity that so many people feel is narrow-minded, bigoted, arrogant.

- i. How could someone possibly claim to be the only way to salvation when there are so many different religions and philosophies?
 - Well, what we need to understand is that there is one very fundamental difference between how the Bible tells us how we get to God and how all of these other religions and philosophies say we get to God.
- ii. If you go back to this image of a mountain with all of these different paths that lead to God.



- Many want to say that all of the paths lead to the same destination.
 - Some other philosophies or religions might also claim exclusivity and say that their path is the only path to God.
 - But the one thing that they all have in common is that their focus is on what man must do to get to God!
 1. Their focus is on the steps, the laws, the pillars, the spiritual activity one must do, and the morality one must have to scale the mountain on his or her chosen path until they reach the summit.
 2. Their focus is on the effort of man.
- iii. **But when we look at what the Bible says about how man gets to God, we see something completely different.**
- iv. **Imagine if I decided today to fly over to Nepal to climb Mount Everest. Or I attempt to climb Kilimanjaro or McKinley.**
- I promise you, that when it comes to the current shape that I am in, I would not even last a day.
 1. I have friends that climb these things.
 2. The amount of training that is required is incredible.
 - So, some religions or philosophies might say that for you to scale the mountain, it is going to take a lot of training, spiritual discipline, cleaning up your life to get up the mountain.
 1. You may not be in shape today, but there are things you can do to get into shape to scale the mountain.



- Christianity is completely different, because Christianity does not say that you are simply out of spiritual shape and you need to get your act together. Christianity says that your dead!
 1. That when we rejected God, when we rejected his ways, that we spiritually died.
 2. Ephesians 2:1 - *“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins...”*
 3. In Genesis 3 after the first man and the first woman sinned against God, he said to them: *“you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”*
 - To be spiritually dead means that it is impossible for us to seek God.
 - So, there is as big difference between being able but I just need to get in better spiritual shape and being dead.
- v. **But, for the sake of argument, let’s say that we weren’t spiritually dead and we could get into spiritual shape to earn our way to God.**
- Maybe if we did read our Bibles enough, pray enough, and go to church enough that we could get into the proper shape to scale the mountain to reach eternal life.
 - The Bible tells us that even if that were the case, that God has put into place an impenetrable security force to ensure that no one even gets close to attempting to scale the mountain and get near to him.
 - In Genesis 3 again after the first man and first woman sinned against God in the garden, God banished mankind from the Garden.



1. To use the illustration we've been using, God banished them from the mountain.
- Genesis 3:24 says: *"He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life."*
 1. So, it's not that we're just dead and unable to seek God...it's also that God has made it so that it would be impossible for us to get close.
 2. We're dead and God has fenced the way to eternal life off.
- vi. **So, Christianity says it is impossible for mankind to get to God, no matter how moral they are, no matter how much they know the Bible, no matter how good of a person they are. It is IMPOSSIBLE.**
 - That's very different from the view that all these different paths eventually find their way to God.....
 - And you might be thinking: man, Christianity is sounding really compelling to me right now!

d. But don't forget what we read in John 14:6.

- i. Jesus says: I am the way, the truth, the life. No one gets to the Father except by me.
 - See, Christianity says that it's not what you do to get to God, it what God does to get you to Himself.



- ii. Yes, it's impossible for us to scale the mountain. So, God sends His Son Jesus down the mountain to breathe life into our dead souls, get us past security, and take us to the Father.
- e. **Jesus claims exclusivity because Jesus came and got us. (REPEAT)**

V. TRUTH AND LIFE

a. **So, I want to spend the rest of our time breaking down that statement.**

- i. We see this in v.6. Jesus says that he is the way because he is the truth and the life.
 - The proper way to read v.6 here is that Jesus is the way BECAUSE he is the truth and BECAUSE he is the life.

b. **Jesus claims exclusivity because Jesus came to us and revealed to us the truth (HE IS THE TRUTH).**

- i. And if you continue in our passage this morning, this is what Jesus tells us.
 - Read John 14:7-11
- ii. If we want to know who God is and how we can be reconciled to God, we look to Jesus.
 - Hebrews 1:1-2b – *“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...”*
 - Jesus can claim exclusivity because it is only through Jesus that we know the truth.



iii. Earlier this week, Apple announced the new iPhones.

- What's amazing about when Apple does this is the amount of speculation and leaks that occur as people anticipate these announcements.
- But no one really knows what new features the iPhone is going to have until the actual source of the information, Tim Cook himself, comes out and makes the official announcement.
 1. Apple can claim exclusivity when it comes to information on the new iPhone because Apple is the source of that information.
- Well, Jesus claims exclusivity when it comes to being the only way to the Father because Jesus himself is the source of that truth.
 1. This is not speculation. This is not wishful thinking.
 2. Jesus is the exclusive way to God because Jesus is God and he has come for us.

iv. So, Jesus came to us. And...Jesus got us.

c. Jesus claims exclusivity because Jesus breathes life (HE IS THE LIFE) into us and brings us to the Father.

- i. Not only does Jesus reveal the Father to us but Jesus is who accomplishes what needs to be accomplished for us to get to the Father.



- Like we said earlier, we can't scale the mountain because we are spiritually unable to get the Father.
 1. We're spiritually dead and God has sealed off the entrance.
 - Listen, an honest Christian theology is one that says that man is not strong enough to obtain eternal life.
- ii. **So, what we need is not a roadmap or a list of rules to try and get up the mountain...that's pointless...that's dead religion.**
- What we need is a new life. What we need is an acquittal. What we need is to somehow shed this identity as a sinner who has been banned from God's presence and we need a new life that is now a child of God.
 - And when Jesus comes to get us, that's what he does for us.
 - He offers us his life.
- iii. **It goes like this:**
- 2 Corinthians 5:21
 1. Jesus takes our sinful, banished life.
 2. We get Jesus' righteous life.
 3. So, all of the sudden, all of the work that is needed to scale the mountain has been completed.
 4. We are now citizens of God's kingdom.
 - Galatians 2:20
 1. So, because we now have the life of Jesus, we live in faith that at the end of this life, we will spend eternity with God.



iv. So, Jesus claims exclusivity because he came for us, he breathed life into us, and he takes care of our sin and brings us home.

- Jesus is not a way to eternal life, he is the only way to eternal life.

d. So, if you consider yourself a follower of Jesus.

- i. Do you live your life in the freedom of the truth that Jesus came for you, he breathed life into you, and he has done all that needs to be done for you to be right with God?
- Or do you live your life under constant guilt that you just haven't quite done enough?
 1. You just don't read your Bible enough?
 2. You just don't share your faith enough?
 3. You just don't hold it together enough?
 - See, here is the danger of religion and faith. When we make religion about what we have to do to get to God and its not about what God has done to get us to himself...
 1. ...Religion turns into a factory for guilt, fear, and shame. Because we are completely focused on the effort of man.
 2. We constantly feel guilty for not doing enough or we make others feel guilty for not doing enough.
 3. We fear what is on the other side of death and if we have done enough or can make others fear what is on the other side of death.
 4. We are ashamed of who we are because we know our real inner thoughts and motivations and we can make others feel ashamed for who they are.



- But when we accept the truth that we are not who we ought to be but God is someone who comes to us and breathes life into us...
 1. When you begin to live your everyday life rejecting the fears that God is angry at you and embracing the truth that God has rescued you.
 2. When you begin your prayers with confidence that our Father in heaven is listening because you are his child.
 3. When you rest in the fact that Jesus Christ has covered every bit of your shortcomings and failures – past, present, future...
- Now that is when you can begin to live life abundantly.
 1. That is when you begin to live life joyfully.
- ii. So, Christian, what path are you trying to use to scale the mountain? Let's rest, this morning, in the fact that there is no path to scale but Christ has come down to get you.

e. And if you're here and you are not a follower of Jesus...

- i. I hope you can see why we claim that Jesus is the ONLY way to eternal life.
- ii. Because as Christians, we don't believe that we need to try harder, be moral, chant a few slogans, sing the right songs, or be sure to know a lot of the Bible.
 - We believe that we need rescue.
 - We believe that we have no hope other than Jesus Christ coming down for us to rescue us.



- So, we unapologetically believe that Jesus is the only way and that all other ways claimed by those in the world do not lead to God...because all other ways are dependent on you.
 - We as followers of Jesus are wholly dependent on God.
- iii. **My question to you is: Do you want to begin to live your life abundantly underneath the grace of God?**
- Do you want to accept Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life?
 - Do you want to live always trying to measure up or under the freedom of the gospel?
 - Because all one needs to do to accept Christ as their savior is:
 1. Confess that they are a sinner who has fallen short of God's standard and that there is no possible way they could ever do anything to earn God's favor.
 2. Trust in Jesus. Trust that the death of Jesus paid for your sins and you are now united with the life of Jesus.
 - Will you make that confession this morning?

VI. PRAY

