

John 14: 1-14 *I am the way, the truth and the life* 3rd May 2026

Prayer: Lord lead us in your way, to hear your truth and receive your life this morning as we explore this scripture today. Amen

So many questions in this passage!

Where are you going? How do we get there? Don't you know me? don't you believe?

And as we read the passage, we may have many questions...

Jesus, are you really the only way to the Father?

You say you will do anything that we ask in your name, so why is my husband, wife, sister, brother, child, parent, friend still sick when I have been asking you to heal them in your name? Why is there still suffering in the world? We've been praying for peace in the name of Jesus, why haven't you answered our prayers???

Let's explore this scripture, ask questions and trust God.

I have spoken on this passage at many funerals, usually stopping at verse 7. Jesus is speaking to his disciples to bring them comfort as he prepares them for his coming death. In previous chapters he had been telling his disciples about his death, his betrayal and Peter's denial. After sharing that cheery news, he tells them *do not let your hearts be troubled!!* They needed to hear that, even if they didn't understand.

It's a great verse to those grieving at a funeral, 'do not let your hearts be troubled', to go on and assure them that Jesus has gone ahead to prepare a place for their loved one, if they believed in Jesus. I always take the opportunity to point out that Jesus offers this hope to *all* who believe in him, that when they die, they can go and be with him forever.

What started as a comfort, may now feel a little uncomfortable for those sitting at the funeral who do not believe. What does this mean for me? Like Thomas they may feel they don't know the way. What is Jesus' response to Thomas' question? Jesus clearly answers with *I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me.*

Mmm, that's a tough one for many. Some may have no faith in God at all, and so not think any more of it, but others may think there are many ways to God. Jesus says he is *the way, the truth, the life.* I always pray that God will stir in the hearts of those gathered.

Why? because he is in fact God. He goes on to explain that he is in the Father, as the Father is in him. He says that all the things he has been doing, all the miracles, all his authoritative teaching, are due to the Father living in him. The works that he has been doing are so that people will believe he is in fact God in the flesh. John finishes his gospel saying that the signs/ miracles he wrote about were so that people would believe in Jesus.

Let's take a look at those 3 words Jesus claims to be...the way. What does he mean?

He means that he is the way to having reconciliation with God, it is through his death and resurrection that we can be friends with God, today and forever. It is through believing in him that we become children of God. John says this right in the opening chapter of his gospel. John 1: 11-13; *He (Jesus) came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children not born of natural descent, nor of the human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*

Belief in Jesus is the way to become a child of God. And being the way, we are to follow him, to walk in his way.

What does it mean that he is the *truth*? Again, in the opening chapter of John 1:14 we read; *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and **truth**.*

As we heard last week when we looked at Jesus being the good shepherd, we heard of false teachings and shepherds, Jesus is the one full of truth. He embodies truth, the divine reality of God himself. When Pilate is questioning Jesus, he asks *What is truth?* the answer, Jesus is truth. He cannot lie, we can trust him and his promises, like the one he has just made about going ahead to prepare a place for us. He has gone ahead, and he is the way, and he shows us the way.

Jesus claims also to be *the life*. (the Greek word for this is *zōē*) He declares himself to be the sole source of eternal, spiritual, and divine life. This means He is the sustainer of our very existence, offering believers spiritual resurrection now and everlasting life with God later. He is not merely a guide, but the essential, living connection to God.

The Apostle Paul says in Phillipians 1:21, *For me to live is Christ*. And speaking to the Athenians, Paul says; *"In him we live and move and have our being"* (Acts 17:28). He describes God as the source of all life, existence, and movement. Again, last week in John 10:10 (can anyone remember that verse?) Jesus said that he came that we might have *life, abundant life, life to the full*. He is *the life* and fills those who believe in him with life, his life.

Jesus then goes on to state that whoever believes in him will do even greater things than he has done, because he is going to the Father. In the coming chapters that you will hear in the lead up to Pentecost, Jesus explains that he is going to send his Holy Spirit, his very self, to live in those who believe. He promises power from on high to come upon us as we believe.

This all sounds amazing, doesn't it? But then we start to question, if this is true why aren't all our prayers answered? Jesus finishes this section saying; *I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.*

Sometimes we can clearly see when Jesus has answered our prayers – like the provision and appointment of Marinus and Hannah with BCA at San Remo. And I'm sure Jesus answered my prayer to start the lawn mower after several failed attempts on Friday!

But has anyone ever been disappointed that God hasn't seemed to answer a prayer that you have said in the name of Jesus? I know I have. Why did my 40-yr old nephew have to die of bowel cancer last year leaving behind a young family? Why are people seriously ill in our own congregation?

Why doesn't he just answer our prayers like he says he will?

Firstly, we need to read scripture as a whole, not lifting certain verses out of context. In John 16 Jesus says that in this world there will be trouble. We read of great suffering endured by the early church, as Christians we are not immune to the impact of the brokenness in this world.

Praying in Jesus name, is not like a magical formula. It's certainly not for granting selfish desires or our personal whims. Our prayers must align with his character and will, giving glory to God.

We pray in the Lord's prayer, your kingdom come, your will be done. Jesus put aside his will to do the Father's will when he went to the cross to suffer and die for us.

But then what about those prayers that are clearly God's will. Healing, peace in the world, end to injustice and suffering. Surely those prayers should be answered as we pray in Jesus' name??

This is where faith and trust and patience and perseverance come into play. We are not God, but we can know who God is as we look on Jesus. His character is full of compassion, kindness, love, he does heal, he does bring comfort, he does bring peace and joy and fullness of life. But as I shared last week, that fullness of life may not be about material or even physical flourishing in this life, rather a spiritually rich life filled with peace and joy and love, an intimate relationship with God who will give us strength through trials.

It doesn't however mean we stop praying for an end to suffering and injustice, or for healing. We persevere, like the persistent widow in Luke 18. Our timing is not God's timing. Healing may come in our lifetime, or it might be in eternal life to come.

When we think back over history and how the Church would have engaged in prayer for situations, we can see that some things took time, but change did happen. Think of the movement to end slavery in Britain. So many would have been praying. But not just praying, people like John Newton and others were working hard to see the slave trade abolished.

We too can be part of the process of answering prayer. We are God's hands and feet, what does Paul say in Ephesians 2? *¹⁰For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

We are to fight injustice, feed the hungry, and give comfort to the sick and sorrowing. And he uses medicine and Doctors and all sorts of people and ways to answer prayer.

We are to trust God. I love this book by Pete Greig who started up the 24/7 prayer movement in the UK which is now a worldwide movement. Pete lives the apostles Paul's call for us to pray without ceasing. He has seen countless prayers answered, and yet, in this book *God on Mute, engaging the silence of unanswered prayer*, he tells the story of how his own wife Sammy was diagnosed with a brain tumour and experiencing endless seizures and hospital treatments. There was also endless prayer from people all over the world for God to heal her. And yet God did not instantly heal her; her brain tumour was successfully removed, but she continues to have seizures. Why, why, why?

How heart breaking and confusing and painful for Pete who had seen God answer so many amazing prayers. If you are struggling with issues around unanswered prayer, then I commend this book to you. He has written others on *how to pray* and *how to hear God, simple guides for normal people*.

As I said we don't know, God is God and there will always be an element of mystery, things we can't understand. But we can persevere and trust and know that Jesus is with us and will strengthen us through our trials. And despite the trouble in the world, Jesus goes on to say, 'take heart, for I have overcome the world'. (John 16:33)

It is okay to call out to God in despair (Jesus did in the garden of Gethemane), and the psalms are great for us to use as we cry out. In psalm 31 that we said this morning we read, *Let me not be put to shame, Lord, for I have cried out to you.* He also says, *Since you are my rock and fortress, for the sake of your name, lead and guide me.* He cries out, he trusts in God as his rock, he asks to lead him on his way.

It is also okay to ask questions, you may not always get answers but know that God hears. The disciples were always asking Jesus questions and misunderstanding, Jesus just calls us to trust and follow him.

So, *Do not let your hearts be troubled*. Trust and believe, and follow Jesus who is the way, the truth and the life. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we have peace with God today and for eternity. As the psalmist says, (Ps 30) *suffering may endure for a night but joy comes in the morning*. One day we will be with Jesus and all will be well.

Let's pray: Lord thank you for hearing us when we cry out to you. Help us to persevere in prayer. Thank you for Jesus and that through him we are your children whom you love. Help us to trust and follow you, fill us with your life, your Holy Spirit and give us faith to continue to pray, and use us as your people to be answers to prayer. You are our rock and refuge. So, may our hearts may not be troubled as we place our trust in you. In the mighty name of Jesus we pray, Amen.