

Friday: *He is the “Way” the “Truth” and the “Life”*

Read: John 14:6 ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

<p>Reflect: Our culture convulses in disgust at these words of Jesus. “You’re intolerant!” “That can’t be true!” “What makes you think you’re right?!” Those are only a few reactions to Jesus’ claim to be the only way of access to the Father.</p> <p>Yet as we’ve talked about before, although these words of Jesus sound exclusive, in reality they are very inclusive. This can be seen by the lifestyle Jesus lived. He associated with anyone and everyone – and people liked Him. The most sinful people flocked to Jesus. How much more inclusive can one be?</p> <p>Many people will say there is truth in all religions. There is truth in that statement. Yet the key when looking at religions is not simply whether or not they have some things in common. The key is in how they are different. What do other religions say about Jesus? Was He only a “good man”? Was He a liar because He claimed to be God? Was He really Michael (the archangel) incarnate? Similarities are OK...but differences are crucial.</p>	<p>Respond: Do you struggle with the words of Jesus in John 14:6?</p> <p>For whom are you praying to enter into a covenant relationship with God through Jesus? What else are you doing for them?</p> <p>Who is a non-Christian you can serve today? What will you do?</p> <p>What truth about Jesus is the hardest for you to accept?</p>
<p>Pray: Pray for Prairie View Christian Camp; another mission New Life regularly supports. Ask God to help you have a heart that is burdened for those who are far from Him. Pray for Bob Griffin, Larry Hayes, and Roy Andrews – elders of New Life. Continue to pray for protection from sin and strength during times of testing.</p>	

Saturday: *He is the “Vine”*

Read: John 15:1 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.

<p>Reflect: Right before this statement Jesus tells His disciples He won’t be telling them much more because “the prince of this world” is coming. That prince is Satan. However, notice that Jesus says Satan has “no claim” (has nothing) on Him. In other words, Jesus lays down His own life (cf. Jn10:17-18) and no one (not even Satan) takes it from Him. <u>Then</u> Jesus says Satan comes so the world may learn He loves the Father.</p> <p>Wow, how amazing is that! Satan thought he was winning by having Jesus killed – yet all he did was help to demonstrate Jesus’ love (which was shown through obedience) to the Father. Jesus could have not done the cross if He had wanted...yet He chose obedience.</p> <p>Much the same we have a choice as well. We can do our own thing, or we can be obedient to Jesus and thereby prove our love for Him (cf. Jn14:15). In light of that, if we do not obey we are “cut off” from the true vine. That is not pleasant to think about...yet it is a reality. However, if we remain in Jesus we don’t have to worry about being cut off – but that doesn’t mean things will be easy (again, Jesus is our model – His life was not easy...).</p>	<p>Respond: Have you practiced your 1 and 3-5 minute testimonies you wrote last week?</p> <p>Do you believe God disciplines you? Why or why not?</p> <p>If the “cut off” imagery is bothering you – I suggest you focus on the abide/remain imagery. It’s OK to not like what the Bible says, but we should not ignore it. Plus if we obey, there is nothing to fear.</p>
<p>Pray: Pray for the National Missionary Convention; a mission New Life regularly supports. Pray those being prompted by the Holy Spirit to come to our building tomorrow will come. Pray for Ed Asbury, Keith Krause, and Mike Haag – deacons of New Life. Pray for our worship to be pleasing to God tomorrow (and today).</p>	

He is

May 31 – June 6

You are my strength when I am weak
 You are the treasure that I seek
 You are my all in all
 Seeking You as a precious jewel
 Lord, to give up I’d be a fool
 You are my all in all

Taking my sin, my cross, my shame
 Rising up again I bless Your name
 You are my all in all
 When I fall down You pick me up
 When I am dry You fill my cup
 You are my all in all

Jesus, Lamb of God
 Worthy is Your name
 Jesus, Lamb of God
 Worthy is Your name

Those are thy lyrics of a popular praise song (I suppose) from the late 90’s. There is truth in the lyrics. Yet there is also much more to them as well.

- When we read the Bible it seems the Holy Spirit is what strengthens us.
- What does Jesus’ name being “worthy” mean? Does it mean worthy to bring salvation to people? (Jesus – in its Hebrew form – means YHWH is salvation.)
- Scripture also says that the Kingdom of Heaven is “like” a treasure (Mt13:44), or a pearl for which we are to search (Mt13:45-46). Also, the Holy Spirit is the ultimate “good gift” for which we should ask (Lk11:13).

So what am I saying? Am I saying that song, “You Are My All in All,” is a bad song and we shouldn’t sing it? No, not really. Yet I am illustrating how we shouldn’t simply accept what is touted on radio talk shows, in songs, in movies, and yes – even what I say – blindly. We need to read the Bible and allow it to inform our picture/image of Jesus (and other things).

Please note, I will not intentionally mislead you about Jesus – or anything for that matter. Yet that is not the same as saying I’m infallible. None of us are. So it will be healthy for you to not only listen to what I (and others) say, but also check it out for yourself. If you disagree, don’t only disagree...at least in the case of me – talk to me about it. Oh yeah, and please do it in person or via e-mail (at least to start). Anonymous notes go in the trash.

One last thing – I’m not saying I’m getting anonymous notes (it’s so important not to read into people’s statements what may or may not be there). I’m saying I’m encouraging everyone to talk openly with one another – anonymity is not the way to do it. Families don’t pass anonymous notes. Families sit down and talk (which includes two-way conversations – speaking and listening).

Monday: *He is the “Bread”*

Read: John 6:35³⁵ Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

<p>Reflect: This is the first of Jesus’ “I Am” statements in John. Each of these statements represents a particular relationship of Jesus to the spiritual needs of mankind. Interestingly, these statements He makes do not result in more people flocking to Him. In fact, this statement culminates in all but His closest followers leaving Him (Jn6:66-69).</p> <p>The previous day Jesus fed well over 5,000 people with only 5 barley loaves and 2 small fish. This conjured up images of Moses in the minds of many. After all, they remember how Moses provided manna for their ancestors during their time in the wilderness. Perhaps this Jesus is the Prophet Moses foretold (e.g., Jn6:14).</p> <p>As Jesus often does, He corrects faulty thinking and presuppositions (cf. Jn6:32). Jesus then moves on to speak of the deeper needs of humanity (Jn6:33,35). It’s easy to see a reference to the Lord’s Supper in His words. Paradoxically His death makes life possible for us. It seems Christianity is full of paradoxes – we gain our life by losing it; we are great when we serve as a lowly servant; a sinful person is really a saint...</p>	<p>Respond: Do you know anyone who has refused the truth about Jesus? What can you do?</p> <p>Do you have a favorite miracle of Jesus? What do you think it would have been like to be there?</p> <p>What is the most recent “faulty thinking” of yours God has corrected?</p> <p>What is your favorite paradox concerning Christianity?</p>
<p>Pray: Pray for the CEA; a mission New Life supports. Pray for the Holy Spirit to continue the work started (or continued) in our lives yesterday. Thank God for the sacrificial death of Jesus. Continue to pray for workers in God’s Kingdom (Mt9:36-38).</p>	

Tuesday: *He is the “Light”*

Read: John 8:12¹² Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

<p>Reflect: The physical setting for this statement is important. It took place during the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles (Jn7:2). During that time the Temple of YHWH was illuminated. In fact, some say it was so bright that there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem unreached by the light.</p> <p>The historical setting is also fascinating. In the Old Testament God is the light of His people (e.g., Ps27:1), His word is a light for our path (e.g., Ps119:105), and God’s people were to be a light to the nations in order to bring salvation to all people (cf. Isa49:6).</p> <p>The spiritual setting is imperative to understand. Jesus has already been identified as the light and life of men (Jn1:4), which enlightens everyone (Jn1:9), yet not all come to Him because they prefer darkness (Jn1:11; cf.3:19-21) – or doing things their own way. Interestingly, right before Jesus says these words people are rejecting Him (Jn7:27,52) – they are in darkness. Fortunately we can learn from their mistake(s); if we want to walk with God – both now and in eternity – we must follow Jesus.</p>	<p>Respond: What was significant about the Tabernacle? (cf. Exod40:34)</p> <p>What are two recent ways you have conformed to God’s Word?</p> <p>Is there an area of your life that is still in “darkness”? What can you do to bring it/them into the light?</p> <p>How is your “walk” with God going? What would others say?</p>
<p>Pray: Pray for Lincoln Christian Seminary, Manhattan Christian College, and Ozark Christian College; missions New Life supports. Pray for a heart that loves the light and hates darkness. Pray for the Unity and Purity of New Life. Continue to pray for God’s people to have boldness to speak for Him (Acts4:29).</p>	

Wednesday: *He is the “Door” and “Good Shepherd”*

Read: John 10:7⁷ So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. **John 10:11**¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

<p>Reflect: It’s important to note that immediately before this pericope (i.e., segment of Scripture) one of God’s people was being mistreated by the religious authorities of the day (cf. Jn9; esp. v34). With that said...</p> <p>Doors are a point of access to whatever is behind them. Ideally a door keeps out those who are not intended to have access to the contents of a room. Yet as we know, merely because a door is present does not mean access to whatever is behind it is unattainable (cf. Jn10:1). These verses in John 10 are strong words against the religious leaders of Jesus’ day – they are the thief and robber... Yeah, you can imagine that didn’t set too well with them.</p> <p>Jews in later days didn’t like this truth about Jesus being the door either. His half-brother, James, was martyred (killed) when he answered “What is the door of Jesus?” (meaning “the door of which Jesus spoke”). His answer, “Jesus is at God’s right hand and coming soon...”, was considered blasphemous.</p> <p>Jesus is also “the good shepherd”. By stating this He is making a claim to divinity – once again. In the Old Testament God is viewed as a shepherd (e.g., Ps23), yet Jewish leaders are viewed as bad shepherds (e.g., Ezek34). Jesus will later prove His words by laying down His life.</p>	<p>Respond: Why would thieves and robbers want access to sheep?</p> <p>To what type of commitment does “the good shepherd” call us (1Pet5:2-3; 1Jn3:16)?</p> <p>Have you been praying for our recent High School graduates?</p>
<p>Pray: Pray for Shiloh Home of Hope and Emporia Christian Schools; two missions New Life supports. Thank Jesus for laying down His life for us. Pray for boldness to speak the truth about Jesus. Continue to pray for God’s Word to spread rapidly (2Thess3:1).</p>	

Thursday: *He is the “Resurrection” and the “Life”*

Read: John 11:25-26²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

<p>Reflect: Jesus’ friend Lazarus has now been dead for four days. Mourning for a Jew may last a full year – although it decreased on both the third and seventh days. Therefore, the heaviest mourning for Lazarus was finished, but four days is not a long period of time (nor is a year for that matter) when a loved one dies.</p> <p>Martha’s faith in Jesus is remarkable. Jesus said Lazarus wouldn’t die (Jn11:4) and it’s <u>possible</u> that news got back to Mary and Martha. If that was the case, can you imagine how much more crushed they would have been when Lazarus died? It’s clear that Martha believed Lazarus would not have died if Jesus would have been present (Jn11:21).</p> <p>I wonder about this account of Lazarus. I wonder if Jesus did not intend to raise him back to life... After all, Jesus is talking about eternal life in God’s presence in vs25-26 – not about never physically dying. I wonder if it’s possible the grief of those who loved Lazarus (including Jesus’) moved Him to do this miracle. It seems it’s in the realm of possibility...</p>	<p>Respond: Do you believe God is moved by the pain of His people?</p> <p>Are you continuing to pray, “God please give me Your heart for this person” when you interact with others?</p> <p>How is death (speaking of physical death) not a part of God’s plan?</p>
<p>Pray: Pray for Cookson Hills; a mission New Life supports. Thank God for His interest in our lives. Pray for Brent McCrory; preaching minister at New Life – pray He is truly led by God. Continue to pray for open doors to share God’s Word (Col4:2-6) and the boldness to do so.</p>	