

## JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY (Calven Celliers)

On the night of His betrayal, as Jesus gathered with His disciples in the Upper Room, He was preparing them for the events that lay ahead. For over three years, these men had been following Jesus and learning from His teaching and example. They had placed their hopes in Him as the Messiah, the promised deliverer, yet there is a sense that they still didn't quite understand how He was going to accomplish that deliverance.

Let us pick up in a conversation between Jesus and His disciples after they'd shared in the Last Supper, as Jesus begins speaking about His imminent departure, and the questions that were sparked in His disciples as a result.

**Read John 13:33.**

This statement prompted Peter to ask a question: **Read John 13:36.**

As Jesus patiently continued to teach His disciples, He began speaking more plainly about heaven, describing the place He was going to prepare for them – **Read John 14: 1 – 4.**

Thomas spoke up on behalf of the others – **Read John 14:5.**

And it was in response to this question that Jesus uttered the words that I want for us to consider: **Read John 14:6.**

I want to ask you a very important question? Do you believe that Jesus is the one and only way? And the reason I say it's a very important question is because Jesus left no room for confusion, He made it quite clear – **Read John 8:24.**

Not only did Jesus claim to be "*the way*," He explicitly said, "*No one comes to the Father except through Me.*" Jesus isn't a way, Jesus is *the one and only way*! If you decide Jesus is not for you, God doesn't have a Plan B. Do you believe that?

The apostle Peter believed it. When he and John were hauled before the Sanhedrin, Luke records for us in Acts 4 what Peter, *filled with the Holy Spirit*, boldly declared – **Read Acts 4:12.**

If mankind could have been reconciled to God in any other way, then Jesus would not have had to die. Christ's death illustrates the fact that there is no other way. Therefore, no other religious leader or religion can bring someone to the knowledge of the one true God. No other religious leader or religion can reconcile us to the one true God. **Read 2 Corinthians 5:19 – 21.** Jesus died in our place so that we could enjoy a right relationship with God. But the story doesn't end at the cross and with Jesus' death. Jesus came back from the dead, demonstrating that He was and is the one whom He claimed to be, the unique Son of God and the only way by which a person can have a personal relationship with the true and living God.

And as much as we believe this, we need to realise that in a world where just about anything and everything goes, in a world that promotes inclusivity and pluralism, there's going to be push back.

There's going to be resistance. In a pluralistic world, where everyone seeks to be politically correct, shouldn't we accept an inclusivity that embraces multiple ways to salvation? Isn't it arrogant, and narrow minded to believe otherwise?

A few years ago, a major study on religious affiliation, beliefs, and practices was conducted and of those who participated, 70% claimed to believe that many religions can lead to eternal life. Perhaps the most surprising finding of the study was that 56% of the self-identifying Christians who participated, claimed to believe that there are many paths, other than faith in Christ, to God and eternal life. It would seem that increasing numbers of Christians, are questioning the long-held commitment of the Christian faith that salvation is found only in Jesus Christ. As Christ followers, you and I need to face up to the fact that we are going to deal with this kind of undermining of, and in some instances, antagonism to one of the fundamental claims of our faith.

**Read 1 Peter 3:15.** We might read that and freak out, as if Peter was telling us we need to have an answer for all the questions that people might bombard us with regarding faith and the Bible. But that's not what Peter was saying at all. He said *"If someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it; always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."* What is your hope? Are you clear in your own mind about what the hope that you as a Christ-follower has, and are you prepared to defend it, to explain it to whoever asks?

**Read 1 Peter 1: 3 & 4.** The Greek word for hope, that Peter uses in the original text means "an eager, confident expectation." I like how John Piper defines our hope – *"Christian hope is not wishful thinking. Christian hope is when God has promised that something is going to happen and you put your trust in that promise. Christian hope is a confidence that something will come to pass because God has promised it will come to pass. Hope comes from the promises of God rooted in the work of Christ."* Unlike the empty, dead hope of this world, the *"living hope"* that we have is energizing, alive, and active in the soul of every believer, thus we live with great expectation. Our living hope originates from a living, resurrected Saviour. Our living hope is Jesus Christ – the way, the truth, and the life. No matter what we as born-again believers face in this world, it cannot compare to the blessings of the future resurrection and the life to come in eternity.

Living hope is anchored in the past — Jesus rose from the dead. It continues in the present — Jesus is alive. And it endures throughout the future — Jesus promises eternal life to all who believe. We have an inheritance that will never be touched by death, stained by evil, or faded with time; it is death-proof, sin-proof, and age-proof. This inheritance is also fail-proof because God guards and preserves it in heaven for us. It is wholly secure. Absolutely nothing can undermine the certainty of our future inheritance.

**Read John 3: 16 – 18.** That is my living hope, that is your living hope, that is the living hope of all who yield their lives to Christ's lordship and accept the redemptive work of Calvary. And it comes to us through nobody else, or any other way, other than through Jesus Christ. Do you believe that? Is that the conviction of your heart?

This might not be a politically correct teaching, but it's a biblical teaching. Today it's popular to say, "Everyone's going to heaven" or "All paths lead to heaven." There are many who are deceived into thinking that they can have heaven without having Jesus. They want the glory, but they don't want to be bothered by the cross, much less the One who died there. Many don't want to accept Jesus as the only way of going to heaven and are determined to find another pluralistic path. But Jesus warns us that no other path exists and that the consequence for rejecting this truth is an eternity in hell.

**Read John 3:36.** A lot of people mistakenly believe that they will get into heaven if their good deeds outweigh their bad deeds. The reality, however, is that no single human being is, has been, or ever will be good enough to merit admission into heaven, based on their own efforts or in their own strength. Good people don't go to heaven, forgiven sinners do!

One cannot read the Bible seriously without seeing it over and over again — the line is drawn. The Bible says bluntly that there is one and only one way to heaven — Jesus Christ. Let him who has ears take heed of Jesus' command — **Read Matthew 7: 13 & 14.** Faith in Jesus is the one and only means of going to heaven. Do you believe that? Because unless you believe that Jesus is the one and only way, you will die the ultimate death.

**Read John 14:6 and John 8:24 *again!***