

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE...
John 14.1-7

They did a great job in that skit didn't they?
That is a great metaphor-Jesus like a map shows us the way.
We're going to talk about the way in a little bit different way today.

Let's hear how Colton Burpo, the 4 year old, who died, went to heaven,
and came back to tell about it, says about Jesus being the way.

This conversation with his father is recorded in the book Heaven Is For Real.
It was Good Friday so Pastor Todd was mulling over his responsibilities of the day,
thinking ahead to the family communion services that evening.

He was driving along with his two children Cassie and Colton so he asked, "
Hey, Colton, today is Good Friday. Do you know what that means?"

Cassie starts bouncing up and down waving her hand, "I know. I know."
Colton says, "I don't know."
Dad says, "Ok Cassie, "What is Good Friday?"
"That's the day Jesus died on the cross."
"Yep, that's right, Cassie. Do you know why Jesus died on the cross?"

Cassie had to think about that a while so he asked Colton,
"Do you know why Jesus died on the cross?"
He nodded and said, "Jesus told me he died on the cross so we could go see his dad."

Isn't that good? "Jesus died on the cross so we could go see his dad."

Peter would agree, I Peter 3.18, "**For Christ died for sins once for all,
the righteous, for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.
He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit,**"

Ephesians 2.18 (TEV) speaks of the way as well,
"**It is through Christ that all of us are able to come into the presence of the Father.**"

Ephesians 3.12 (TLV) is also encouraging, "**Now we can come fearlessly right into God's presence.**"
Do you believe that, that you and I can come fearlessly right into God's presence?

It's simply a matter of trusting but sometimes trusting God is not such a simple matter for us.
Actually I think Jesus understands that
because three times in this passage he encourages the disciples to trust him

First because there are a few things going on that night of the Last Supper,
the night before Jesus was crucified that were a bit unsettling and he says,
"**Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me.**"
In other words; you trust God, you have faith in a God you cannot see;
so trust me too, one who you can see.

Then he adds, verse 2, (MSG)

“There is plenty of room for you in my Father’s home. If that were not so I would have told you.”

Then for more assurance, verse 2b and following, **“...I’m on my way to get a room ready for you. And if I’m on my way to get your room ready, I’ll come back and get you so you can live where I live.”**

We’re asked to trust Jesus like the son whose dad dropped him off at a corner grocery store and said he’d be back in 20 minutes. The car broke down; there was no way to call, so the dad wasn’t able to get to his son for 4-5 hours.

It was 11: 00 at night when the dad finally pulled up to the curb and found his son walking and whistling a happy tune. The dad apologized profusely. The son said, I" wasn’t worried dad." You said you would come back to get me.

The disciples might have been ok with what Jesus had said; but then he says, **“You know the road I’m taking.”**

Hun?

Thomas asks what everyone is thinking; basically what are you talking about? And Jesus makes the assertion that he is God and the only way to God, **“I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life and no one goes to the Father except through me.”**

I love to talk about these “I AM” sayings. I call the “I AM” sayings The Big Because, because, “I am” means to be, to exist, that’s it, that’s all there is, there isn’t any more.

And when God says, “because,” that is huge, because that because is the “Big Because.”

Let me try to explain.
You and your kids are in the store.
They want something special.
You don’t want them to have that special something.

When they ask, you say, “No.”
They ask why?
You might say, “It isn’t good for you.

They counter, “All the other kids have them.”
You say, “NO!

Then they attack, “You’re not nice. You don’t love me.”
You say, “I do love you. The answer is still no.”

They come back, “But why?”
You hang tough, “No!”

The whys and the no's are bantered back and forth
until they've said "why" one too many times
and finally you say, "Because!!! Because I said so!

Now from your point of view, a parent's point of view, the conversation is done.
That it!!! That is all there is!!! There isn't anymore!!! That is your final answer!!!

I'm not sure that would be what your kids think but
your answer because was your final answer. (at least for the moment)

You are in good company.

Remember God asked Moses, asked him nicely the first 4 or 5 times to go talk to pharaoh.
Moses found umpteen excuses as to why God should not to send him to Pharaoh.
One was what if the Israelites don't want to go-what am I going to tell them?

In Exodus 3.14, God finally screams, or at least, emphatically makes the point;
"...I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites; I AM has sent me to you."

That sounds like a Big Because to me?

We know Jesus said I AM a number of times covering all aspects of life and death.

He claims to be all there is of time and thought, sharing and shepherding,
giving and goodness, help, hope, and healing, as well as being substance and sustenance.

Here are some of the titles we've talked about; the Bread of Life, the Living Water,
the Light of the World, the Door, the Good Shepherd, the Alpha and Omega,
the First and Last, the Beginning and End,
the Resurrection and the Life, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and the Vine, and etc...

The Message has a neat way of describing Jesus being the incarnation
and us seeing God because of him, John 1.14b,
**"We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father-like son,
generous inside and out, true from start to finish."**

When he says, "I Am the Way," he is claiming to be God and the only way to God.
Jesus has made this claim in John 8.24
when confronted by devout religious Jews who denied he was the Messiah,
he said, **"Unless you believe that I am He, You will die in your sins."**

Peter told the devote religious Jews in Acts 4.12, **"Salvation is found in no one else,
for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."**

And Paul speaking to the Corinthians in the first few verses of chapter 15 (MSG) covers it again,
**"Friends, let me go over the Message one final time...
the Message on which you stand and by which your life has been saved.
(I'm assuming now, that your belief was the real thing and not some passing fancy,**

**that you're in this for good and holding fast.
The first thing that I placed before you
what was so emphatically placed before me:
That the messiah died for our sins,
exactly as the Scripture tells it; that he was buried...rose, according to the Scriptures."**

We have this wonderful truth but we don't want to be arrogant or rude about it.
Ravi Zacharias says we need to respect what others believe,
but we don't have to believe that what they believe is equally valid or even true.

Does two plus two equal four or twenty two.
Two answers but only one is right-right?

A few weeks ago Pastor Eldon talked about light and light healing.
Suppose there is a baby with jaundice.
A doctor, with all his training, experience, and expertise's prescribes the cure-light therapy.
It's simple, put glasses over his eyes, a diaper on his bottom, and set him in the light.

But what if I suggested another cure.
Scrub the baby really hard with soap and water every three hours and cover him in a heavy blanket.
There are two treatments, two choices, but certainly one is more valid than the other.

You and I have a terminal illness called sin.
There are a number of "physicians," some well meaning, some not, who believe they have the cure.
And there are some physicians who don't think there is anything wrong at all.

The truth is you can't scrub away, work away, walk away, run away, or hideaway from this sickness.
We must give it away; give it to Jesus, for Jesus is the way;

You know we often hear-we're all going to the same place.
That sounds good. I love to think it and I'd even love to say it too,
but if we are trusting what Jesus said,
Jesus, who we profess to believe, then we're not all going to the same place.

He tells us to trust in him if we want to go to heaven,
John 14.6b, **"No one comes to the Father except through me."**
Those that don't trust, stay condemned, and experience the horrors of hell for eternity.

There is some common ground with other faiths especially when talking about morality and good works.
We are to do good and work for good in our world,
but those works are a result and a demonstration of having received God's love
not a merit badge of having earned his love.
Our faith is first and foremost about what God has done for us.

Mandy and I get to do the one on ones with the Confirmation youth
and it's great to hear these young people talk about their faith.
Some of the students as are some of you, just as I am at times concerned.
We don't think nor feel we're good enough to go to heaven.

The painful truth is they're not, nor are you or I.
We don't deserve it and we don't earn it.

But we have a God who loves us.

Ephesians 2.8-9 (MSG), tells us that **"Saving is all his idea, and all his work.**

All we do is trust him enough to let him do it. It's God's gift from start to finish."

The metaphor of the temple curtain provides a wonderful way for us to understand Jesus being the way.

This temple curtain was like the curtains on school or auditorium stages only bigger.

It was forty feet high, probably about 25 feet long and 6-8 inches thick.

Thick and heavy threads of blue, purple, and red were woven together.

In the temple the curtain separated the Holy from the Holy of Holies.

The Holy of Holies held the presence of God and the Ark of the Covenant.

The Ark of the Covenant was about four feet long and two feet wide

and held Aaron's rod, some manna, and the 10 commandments.

Watching over the ark on either side were two "angels."

Jewish priest were allowed in the sanctuary, Jewish men on the outside of the sanctuary,

women were allowed in the back of the temple complex,

and the gentiles were outside the temple complex.

The high priest was the only human being allowed to be in the Holy of Holies

and he was only allowed to be there only once a year seeking forgiveness for the people.

He was in robe and wore bells on the robe and had a rope around his ankle.

The thinking was that if the other priests did not hear the bells ringing,

they would assume that the high priest had died or passed out,

and if that happened they would pull him out by the rope.

On the Day of Atonement, the day the community sought forgiveness of their sins,

the High Priest would sacrifice a lamb right at three o'clock.

He would take some of the blood, walk backwards toward the ark and throw blood over his shoulder.

The blood offering would be a sign of obedience

just like the Israelites at the Passover were told to put blood on their doorposts,

so the angel of death would know this was a family that was obedient to God.

The blood offering is symbolic of a covering that protects the people from the wrath of God.

Jesus blood is that covering for you and me.

Isaiah says that the punishment that was meant for us was put on him.

And the blood is also a symbol of adoption, of being part of the family of God.

I'm just a dumb city boy but I've been told that if there is a bum lamb or calf,

the farmer or the shepherd takes the blood or placenta of a lamb or calf

that has died and puts it on the bum lamb or calf.

Then momma ewe or momma cow will accept the bum lamb or calf as hers.
Not only does the blood of Jesus protect us but tells us who we are and whose we are.

OK, so after he throws the blood on the Ark of the Covenant,
then he would take the rest of the blood and smear it on another lamb or goat's head.
Then that goat was taken 12-15 miles outside of town and tossed off of a ledge.
The second lamb or goat represents the scapegoat.
The picture is that the guilt has been taken away and lost.

Now we know that Jesus died right at three o'clock and Matthew 27.51 tell us that,
**"At that moment, the Temple curtain was ripped in two, top to bottom.
There was an earthquake, and rocks were split in pieces."**

You see because the curtain was torn, there is now an opening,
there is access; there is a way to God,
and that way was through the body of Christ.

And it is torn in two from top to bottom which tells us this is God's doing.

Perhaps Hebrews 10. 18-21 says it best, **"I'll forever wipe the slate clean of their sins...
So, friends, we can now-without hesitation-walk right up to God into 'the Holy Place.'
Jesus has cleared the way by the blood of his sacrifice acting as a priest before God.
The curtain into God's presence is his body."**

Now we better understand Paul's words in II Corinthians 5.21,
**"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us,
So that in him, we might become the righteousness of God."**

The curtain symbolized sin, a barrier to God. The curtain symbolized Jesus who became sin.
So because of his death we have the way to God, the way to the Father,
As Colton Burpo would say, the way to dad.

Do you know the way to dad?

Let's thank God for Jesus, the Way, the Truth, the Life.
Please stand and let's sing All Glory, Laud, and Honor.