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**SERMON TITLE: "Why is Jesus the Way, the Truth, and the Life?"**

**SCRIPTURE: John 14:1-11**

**DATE: July 1, 2018**

*Check out the service at [www.fpcd.org](http://www.fpcd.org).*

READ John 14:1-11 and Isaiah 52:13-53:6

*This* summer you were invited to suggest sermon topics. One topic was *'what will heaven be like?'* Jesus talked about that the night he was betrayed. Perhaps he had been thinking about his upcoming return to heaven—maybe he thought, boy, I so wish I could explain to them what it is like.

When we went to Hawaii last year, friends had stayed where we were staying and they described it perfectly. They said, 'if you want this kind of food go to this restaurant, or the other way is our favorite, just two miles.' Another friend's sister lives down the street from our hotel. She said, "She wants to meet you and you all can meet at the coffee shop on the corner. It's two blocks away. If you go the other way, that's where we used to eat when I lived there."

And now we've been to all those places.

Now I can say to you, "If you take the road to Hana, the view of the ocean is magnificent. The water is an exquisite turquoise blue. There are waterfalls and garden spots, even the Garden of Eden! If it were not so—I would not lie to you!

Jesus wanted to talk to his disciples about where he was going. It was very personal for him. One day they would join him where he was going. It was reassurance for them that even though Jesus was gone, they will join him one day and it will be GREAT. He talked about heaven with such ease, like they should know exactly what it takes to get there. Let's hear the story. READ John 14:1-11

Well, they were still troubled. They couldn't imagine it. They didn't know the way, and they didn't know the Father. They had "never been to Hawaii," so to speak.

Jesus is talking about a great big subject here. Slow down, Jesus! What do you mean we're going to the Father and we are staying in his house? We're not so sure about the way—we don't know the way!

If my friend had said, "My sister has plenty of room in Hawaii, and you will stay there with her." I would have

replied, "Well, thanks but I don't know your sister and how can I be sure she really wants guests?"

You can see why the conversation between Jesus and Thomas went the way it did. Why would the disciples be welcomed because they knew Jesus?

You might even see why people say, "How can Jesus be the only way to God?" So Jesus explained that to doubting Thomas. He said these facts:

1. I am the way; I am the truth; I am the life.
2. I am the only way to God.
3. I am in the Father -- The Father is in me. (2X)
4. The Father dwells in me -- I speak the Father's words.
5. The Father does his works through me -- I do his works.

Jesus is different from any other person because of his relationship with the Father.

They all sense that Jesus' death was imminent. Local authorities reject Jesus' authority as equal to God's. Why would Jesus be the way, the truth, and the life?

The reason is that Jesus' death and resurrection and ascent to the Father open the path for us to take. We might say it this way. *"Jesus is the way that leads to truth and life because he embodies the truth and life that come from the Father."*

He's not someone outside of God, like a prophet pointing to God who just says what's true. He is actually God's Word embodied. God has chosen to be made one with Jesus, so Jesus is the way to the Father.

Isaiah explains what Jesus does.

God's people were exiled; taken captive by enemies too strong for them. So God sent his messenger to redeem them. This messenger is Jesus who comes to announce salvation and tell God's people, "Your God reigns." (52:4, 7)

God's servant Jesus triumphs:

"He shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up and be very high" (52:13).

But that amazing exaltation comes through a path of suffering:

“His face was so disfigured he seemed hardly human, and from his appearance, one would scarcely know he was a man” (v. 14).

But that humiliation is not permanent; it will be reversed. He will be exalted:

“And he will cleanse many nations. Kings will stand speechless in his presence. For they will see what they had not been told; they will understand what they had not heard about” (v. 15).

It would seem as if everyone was against God’s messenger:

“We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care” (v. 3b).

It seemed as if the Lord was against him:

“And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins!” (v. 4b).

But God had a reason for his rejection:

“He carried our injuries and pain; he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed” (v. 4-5).

Humans had left the truth, and thus the life of the Father to follow our own desires. Yet the Lord laid our sins on Jesus and he absorbed the cost of our offense against God (see v. 6). Jesus is the only one who has carried our sins himself and paid the price for them.

Doesn’t God have the right to restore the wrong committed against himself?

Did you ever steal something as a child? Did you ever get caught?

- Your parent may have given you a whipping,
- Or, marched you back to the store to return the item.
- The store owner may have given you a good talking to,
- Or, the store owner may have called the police.
- Let’s say you ate what you stole and nothing is left, so the store owner makes you work it off.
- Or, maybe someone saw you talking to the manager or a policeman about what you stole and that person steps up to pay the bill for you.

That action was grace, and you got off from a punitive consequence which the owner or the parents have the right to determine. They can absorb your debt personally or they can charge you with a crime.

God decided to take on your and my crime personally. His servant, though without sin himself, determined to submit himself to God in going through this massive suffering, and God determined that his suffering was sufficient.

This is amazing love—love God has for us and love for Jesus; and love Jesus has for God, and love Jesus has for us.

The servant, Jesus, was not coerced by God; he was not a victim but rather a person who offered himself. He took up the role of the priest, offering himself to atone for our sins.

His sacrifice would compensate for the crime against God.

God would never reject or diminish Jesus’ sacrifice, suffering, or humiliation. No, in fact, God has lifted him up as the name above all names before whom every knee shall bow. God has vindicated his Christ. God loves Jesus.

When someone says Christianity is intolerant and disrespectful there is a great lack of understanding of 1) the relationship between God and Jesus, and 2) the suffering of Jesus on our behalf. When someone says there are many ways to God, they are not talking about God the Creator of heaven and earth. God the Creator who has revealed himself through Israel chose Jesus as his emissary and has revealed himself through Jesus, whose works lead you to the truth and the life of God.

Will you defend the faith with this truth? Your own unitedness to Christ is a witness to unbelievers about why Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. You live in the comfort of his love, you experience rich fellowship with the Spirit, you love others like Jesus did, and you are growing in his spirit and purpose. (Philippians 2:1-2)

You must stand up for the truth before others so that they know, too. That is grace.

What incredible love.

“He alone bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness. By his wounds you and I have been healed. For we were like sheep going astray, but now you and I have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls” (Is 53:24-25).

This is why Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.

AMEN