



Sermon Growth Guide

October 1, 2023

The Way Home

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Lead Me Home - The Way Home

John 14:1-7

Key Verse: John 14:6

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Big Idea: God has provided the Way home through His Son, Jesus Christ.



Foundations

God created us to live in a perfect and holy relationship with Him. To reside with God in our spiritual home was God's plan and design, but human sinfulness corrupted and strained that plan to where humanity needed a Savior who would pay the debt of our sin and reconcile us to God.

God's people had expected a Savior to come in the form of the Messiah. This Messiah was to establish God's rule over the earth and free Israel from oppression and captivity.

For three years, Jesus focused His ministry on teaching His disciples and others the values and ethics of God's kingdom, including God's plan of redemption and salvation. Many people wondered if Jesus was the long-expected Messiah but were somewhat confused because Jesus didn't exactly fit the mold of their expectations. Instead of military and political strength, Jesus lived a life of humility, service, compassion and love.

As the arrest, torture and death of Jesus approached, He began to teach His disciples about what to expect and how to move forward in carrying out His mission. This disturbed and confused the disciples greatly. They had left everything to follow Him, and now He was declaring that He would soon be taken from them.

In the midst of their confusion, Jesus offered the words, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me." And then He spoke to their home, a home that had been prepared for them by God, and a home that could be entered through one Door only.

Affirming His deity with one of several "I AM" statements (Exodus 3:14), Jesus declared, "I am

the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

If we want to enter our eternal and spiritual home, Jesus is **The Way Home!**

Understanding God's Word

Read John chapter 13 to familiarize yourself with the events that led to today's passage from John 14:1-7. What strikes you about the things Jesus said to His disciples in John 13? If you were sitting in that room, what emotions might you have felt as Jesus was speaking? Now, as you read John 14:1-7, what do you notice about the tone and content of Jesus' words? What questions come to mind as you read "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Applying God's Word

What does it mean to you that Jesus is the *Way* and the *Truth* and the *Life*? Did you notice that Jesus didn't say *a* Way, *a* Truth, and *a* Life? That Jesus said *the* instead of *a* reveals the wonder of God's plan of salvation according to God's sovereign plan. In what ways does this plan give you comfort and peace?

Witnessing God's Word

One of the challenges Christians face in today's culture and world is that people can be offended by the idea that there is only one way to salvation and eternal life. How can you speak the truth of scripture in a loving and winsome way and invite others to join you in **The Way Home?**

You've heard me share that my parents were born in England and immigrated to the United States after WWII. They crossed the Atlantic Ocean on the ocean liner the Queen Mary. My mom said she was seasick during the entire five-day journey. Now that's a way to start a new life! Here's one of my favorite pictures of that story, taken by my father from the Queen Mary's deck. Like many, they came to America seeking a new and better way of life in the post war years. They eventually settled in Hollywood, CA and established their new lives there. Around 1970, they made the decision to become American citizens, so they went through the required training, passed the examinations, and raised their hands to pledge allegiance to their new country as American citizens.

If you had asked my parents where their home was, they would have told you their address, their street, their city, and their state. And while this was true, there's no doubt in my mind that they also felt that their true home was England. I think it may be true that there can be a difference between a person's *physical* address/citizenship and a person's *soul* address/citizenship.

When my father died in 1981, he was cremated, and we took his ashes to a place near where he lived as a child in England. When my mother died in 2010, we also had her cremated and decided to take her ashes back to England. We placed my mother's ashes in the courtyard of St. Margaret's Anglican Church in Essex, which was the church where my parents were married in 1950. Both of my parents eventually found their way home. I think they would have been pleased to know that they were home. And there is certainly a difference between a person's physical address and a person's soul address!

In this series, we've talked a lot about our soul address, i.e., what it means to be at home with God. Today we consider the fundamental question of what **The Way Home** is. Jesus answers

that question for us in John 14. But before we get there, let's consider what led up to the profound words of Jesus.

Chapter 13 begins with these words: "It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end."

Jesus then carried out an act of supreme service. He rose from the table and began to wash the feet of His disciples. Peter strongly objected to this, but Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." And Peter replied (in typical Peter fashion), "Not just my feet but my hand and my head as well!"

Jesus then predicted His betrayal by Judas and identified the betrayer by giving him a piece of bread that had been dipped in the dish. Judas left to carry out his treacherous plot.

And if that betrayal wasn't enough, Jesus then predicted Peter's denial. Typical Peter boldly proclaimed that he would lay down his life for Jesus. Jesus replied, "Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!"

The disciples were clearly confused and troubled. They had left everything to follow Jesus. They had high hopes that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah who would set Israel free and usher in a new season of God's rule. But now Jesus told them that He would soon be taken from them. Those high hopes were crumbling before their eyes!

I wonder how many times we've felt like the disciples. Sometimes life throws us a curveball, and we find ourselves also very confused and troubled. We may face the illness and death of a loved one. We may learn that we have been diagnosed with a serious illness. We may lose the stability of our employment.

We may face pain and dysfunction with a family member. And in the midst of having our hopes, dreams and expectations pulled from underneath us, we may wonder where is God. We may long to be held in the comfort of His merciful and loving arms.

When we are in this state, we may wonder how we can find the comfort of our spiritual home. The compassion and understanding of Jesus touch us where we are and reminds us that He is **The Way Home**.

To these troubled disciples Jesus said, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Jesus offered hope for His hopeless disciples. He gave two imperatives: (1) Do not let your hearts be troubled, and (2) Believe also in me. When I preached here back in July, I talked about what it means to *believe*. The Greek word *pistis* describes a union of information and emotion, where the head and the heart land at a place where we embrace truth to be fully committed and invested in it.

As His disciples questioned where Jesus was going and how they could join Him, Jesus invited them to believe; to trust that God is kind and gracious and merciful, and that God has provided a way of calling sinful and rebellious people back into His loving arms. And that Way is His Son, Jesus.

The key verse for us to consider today is John 14:6, “I am the way and the

truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” It’s important to connect the dots on this. In Exodus 3:14 Moses was on the mountain and was speaking with God in the form of a burning bush. Regarding his commissioning, Moses asked, “Who shall I say sent me?” To this, God answered, “Tell them ‘I AM’ sent you. I AM who I AM.” In John’s gospel, Jesus said I AM seven times and in doing so, profoundly asserted that He, too, is God.

Interestingly, this verse, and the belief that there is only one way for humanity to be reconciled to God in Jesus, has received considerable criticism. Some have contended that we are arrogant and exclusive by affirming that Jesus is the only way to salvation. Some have contended that we are judgmental about other beliefs that they are inferior. Some have contended that to make such a bold statement is naïve and fails to affirm the mystery of God’s salvation. But to that criticism, I would offer two thoughts:

First, isn’t it amazing and wonderful that God provided a means to reconcile people to Himself? God could easily have decided to blow us off, to cast us aside, to be done with us because we have rebelled and sinned against His perfect and holy will. Instead, because God is perfect love and extends perfect grace, He pursues us as His wayward children and invites us to receive the atoning sacrifice of His only Son, to die in our place and to bring us home.

This is God’s sovereign design and will. And, since God is all-knowing and all-powerful, He can establish His plan of salvation to bring us home. Remember what you see in most NFL end zones, John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

Second, lest we think that John 14:6 is an obscure and one-off verse, we need to remember that the entirety of

scripture, point to one plan of salvation through God's Son and Messiah, Jesus.

In Acts 4:12 we read, "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

In 1 Timothy 2:5 we read, "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

In Romans 6:23 we read, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

And in Philippians 2:8-11 we read, "And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Are the words of Jesus in John 14:6 *inclusive* or *exclusive*? The answer is YES! They are amazingly *inclusive* in that people from all lands and tribes, classes and social standings, people from east and west and north and south are invited to receive God's gift of salvation in Jesus Christ as **The Way Home**. And they are *exclusive* in that, according to God's design, there can be only one Savior, one Redeemer, one Mediator, one Lord and His name is Jesus!

Do you want to know **The Way Home**? Then get to know Jesus. He is not only the Way, but He is also the Home. Get to know Jesus.

In late 1982, I was the High School Ministries Director at Hollywood Presbyterian Church, and one of the guys in my youth group was Chris Ringer. Chris said to me, "You really ought to meet my cousin, Jenny. I think you'd like each other!" Not long after that, Jenny came to the Sunday night worship service at Hollywood Pres. She had been a long-time member of

another church in the LA area but was looking for a new church home.

Now I've talked with a lot of couples through the years who have said that when they met it was love at first sight. That they immediately knew that the other person was the "one." I'm here to say that. That most certainly was not the case with Jenny and me! I was a Youth Director. My wardrobe was of Levi jeans and t-shirts. I was generally goofy and did the goofy youth director things. Jenny was the assistant to the Board Chair for a banking institution. Her wardrobe was business suits and high heels. She had the hair, make-up, nails and jewelry for someone in the corporate world.

When Chris introduced us, we immediately didn't like each other! I thought she was way too formal and stuck up. She thought I was immature and shallow. Both of us thought, "Thanks, but no thanks."

Then in June 1983, Jenny joined me to be a counselor at our high school summer camp. Truthfully, I didn't think this stuffy, corporate woman could ever relate to our high school students! But spending the week together in a ministry setting gave us many opportunities to talk about life and faith and to see beyond those first impressions. Both of us finished that camp thinking, "He/She's not so bad after all!" Two years later we were married, and she's been putting up with my goofiness for the past 38 years. And I'm very thankful for that!

Now, why am I telling you this story? Because the only way to really get to know a person is to spend intentional and quality time with them. When we do that, we get to know them beyond the surface, we discover their values and passions, we get to know what makes them tick. We get to actually know them.

Do you want to know **The Way Home**? Then spend time with Jesus and get to know Him as the Way, the Truth, and the Life and discover that He truly is **The Way Home**! Amen.