

Only One Way

John 14:1-12



I know that you have probably heard this story before (it's one of my favourites), but it makes me smile every time I come across it. In the nineteenth century there was a French circus star known as Charles Blondin. He was a tightrope walker and he astounded the world in 1859 by walking across Niagara Falls on a tightrope. He didn't just do one walk. He did it many times. He did it blindfold. He pushed a wheelbarrow. He took a portable stove over the falls and cooked himself an omelette. He then threw down a challenge. He said to the assembled crowd: "Do you believe I could carry a man on my back across the falls" People enthusiastically said yes until he went up to individuals and offered to take them. They all believed he could do it, but none were prepared to trust him and take a ride. Well, actually there was one person, Blondin's manager called Harry Calcord who went across. It was one thing to know about Blondin – but it was another to put their life in his hands!

It's one thing to believe something is true, but it's another thing when you come to staking your life on it. I'm not a nervous driver, but people who know me know that I'm a nervous passenger. I can trust myself to drive safely, but putting my life in someone else's hands...

Those are extreme cases, but actually life is a mixture of three things – doing what we're sure of, trusting others and avoiding things we can't do and we don't think others can do for us.

OURSELVES There are things in life we can do and must do in order to live – eat, sleep, get exercise, work – they're all things to do with living.

OTHERS Surprisingly we live in an age where we don't trust people – we try to be self sufficient. So to people who are close to us, we trust and are trusted. But long gone is a sense of community and even trusting relationships like marriage is not what it was in society.

NO-ONE And then there are other things which we never do or never consider because we don't understand them or aren't interested or think they are beyond us. So if you're older you may be a technophobe. Or maybe you've never fancied deep sea fishing! But what about God? We live in a society that has departed from Him? Why? Is it self-sufficiency, is it disinterest, or is he just beyond people? Or are they in denial. Perhaps some or all of these?

I say all this because trust is at the heart of the Christian faith. What about trusting Jesus?

It's an important question because it's an issue that lies at the heart of the Christian faith. John 14 records a long conversation Jesus had with His disciples the night before He died. As we read through all four gospels, we find that the disciples had no problem being amazed at His miracles, enthralled by His teaching, empowered in His service and believing that He was the Messiah – the promised One of God. But in the latter week of Jesus' ministry it was starting to dawn on them just what the truth about Jesus was.

And they had to get their heads around it – and now Jesus was spelling it out clearly to them to help them to understand that when Jesus said He was the Son and He and the Father were One, He was making Himself equal to God. The Jews had already picked up stones to kill Him with the previous day when He made that claim.

And they had to get their heads around it – and that is what we have to get our heads around too. And suddenly there are these amazing words: *"Do not be worried and upset," Jesus told them. "Believe in God and believe also in me. 2 There are many rooms in my Father's house, and I am going to prepare a place for you. I would not tell you this if it were not so. 3 And after I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to myself, so that you will be where I am.* If you are a believer this morning – and in fact even if you're not, I want you to understand the importance of these words. For anyone who

is a follower of Jesus – a disciple of Jesus Christ, you already have a place with a name on the door as it were. And Jesus says: the reservation is made “I am going to prepare a place for you”.

That’s a huge thing to say, because it is an answer to the questions of life and death. You’re a disciple of Jesus this morning then know this your room reservation is made and it’s all done and paid for by Jesus.

And His disciples just looked at him and went “doh”. Actually Thomas spoke well for them all: *Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; so how can we know the way to get there?"* .

Good question Tom! There are lots of people that would love the answer to that question! you’re preparing a place Jesus – tell me how I can get it.

And Jesus said *"I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me.* It’s what’s been on the screen all morning. Jesus said, I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life.

People think that there are many ways to know God and to get to heaven. But look at these words – Jesus doesn’t give anybody that option – no-one comes to the Father except through me. He is the only way, the only true way, the only living way.

What Jesus says here has no compromise to it He is the way the truth and the life – if you want to know God then He is the way. End of story. But what amazes me is the nonsense even people in church – and professing Christians – say because they do not grasp the full implications of scripture.

How many people have you come across who believe doing a Dedication like we have done confers some sort of special favour on a child. Or people who believe that believe that going to church makes them a Christian. Or people who think that praying makes them spiritual – particularly if they need an emotional crutch or have a crisis on. These things have merit in them in some way, but in themselves can’t bring us to the Father.

I have helped host some message boards on AOL for some years now and I am always saddened by the religion board. There are so many people that feel that knowledge will some how get them to God. People sometimes say to me “I believe Jesus is the Son of God. I believe he died so that God could deal with the issue of people’s sin.

But there is a difference in believing something is true and relying on the truth of it. Remember Blondin? Everyone believed he could carry a man across Niagara on a tightrope, but only one man actually did. Only one man believed Blondin sufficiently to trust his life to him.

And the Bible picks up on this idea of there being a difference in belief and trust. James says in his letter that *2:19 Do you believe that there is only one God? Good! The demons also believe --and tremble with fear.*

And Jesus said I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father except through Me. As we found with Blondin, faith isn’t just about believing something is true, but it’s acting upon them and trusting what Jesus says is true.

Look at these words; they are proactive – I am the way..no-one comes.... Trusting Jesus is like taking a trip with Blondin over Niagara. If we want to get to the Father then we follow Him. And in doing so, we don’t just get over the Niagara that’s death, but we find that life becomes an exhilarating experience too as we follow Jesus’ one way street to heaven.

And how do we start this journey of trust in Jesus? By accepting that He is the way, the truth and the life. Accepting that through Him is God’s one and only way in which we may find God. Accepting that Jesus died to deal with my sin and yours so that we may find forgiveness from the wrong things we have done and which have separated us from God.

But if we are to go all the way to the Father – then Jesus is the way – so we need to follow His instructions. It’s logical if you think about it. If your house was burning down and a fireman appeared and told you he could lead you to safety, what would you do? I’ll tell you,: you’d accept his offer, but to get to safety you

would need to follow his instructions. It's the same with Jesus:

So what's so exciting about this one way to the Father. I only have a few minutes to give you a few nuggets from this passage in John 14 this morning: **15 "If you love me, you will obey my commandments** So we realise what Jesus has done to save us? So what do we do – we enjoy following what He says to us because that gets us to God and to our awaiting accommodation in heaven in the way He wants us to go.

And if we don't follow His instructions? The we get burnt, we hang off the rope over Niagara or whatever. One of the reasons many Christians have deep personal problems or the church finds it lacks so much integrity in our generation is we don't trust and obey but do our thing. It's the bottom line. We like the idea of eternal life and our own space reserved in heaven, but we are not prepared to trust the saviour and obey His commands – so it's hardly surprising that we find ourselves only thankful for small mercies rather than big ones!

And the amazing thing about following Jesus and obeying Him is that He wants to do powerful things through us – but that only happens when we obey Him and conform to His will. Whether you have been a Christian for years or have never trusted Christ, God wants to pour out His blessings through us, if we are prepared to follow Jesus and trust Him. Look at these promises of Jesus just in these few verses which He gives to all those who are prepared to trust Him and follow His commands:

12 I am telling you the truth: those who believe in me will do what I do--yes, they will do even greater things, because I am going to the Father.

Let's do a quick recap of what Jesus did – healed the sick, freed the captives, raised the dead, brought words of life, did amazing things. Is that us? No. Should it be us? Could it be us? Yes. Why not? Because we don't ask and we don't obey.

13 And I will do whatever you ask for in my name, so that the Father's glory will be shown through the Son. 14 If you ask me for anything in my name, I will do it.

I could do a whole sermon just on this verse and I daresay probably will one day. But for now, we see that those trusting Jesus have dynamic prayer lives. Actually this isn't carte blanche for asking for a Ferrari or bottomless riches. It's a means of saying that when we trust Jesus He gives us the dynamic prayer lives that result in the amazing things we have just talked about. Do we have a dynamic prayer life? Do we see amazing answers to prayer? Have we kept a record. I believe God wants us to have a revolution in prayer in this church – but it starts when we follow Jesus in obedience, trusting Jesus alone.

16 I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, who will stay with you forever. 17 He is the Spirit, who reveals the truth about God. The world cannot receive him, because it cannot see him or know him. But you know him, because he remains with you and is in you.

The great thing about saying, yes Jesus, you did die for me and I do want to take advantage of what you offer me in eternity. Yes, I do follow you and trust you. He doesn't leave us to sink or swim, but gives us the Holy spirit, so that the things that don't make sense, start to make sense as the Holy Spirit reveals Jesus to us.

Challenge to Christians – you've started to follow; but are you listening to the instructions? God wants to pour His blessings out on you.

Challenge to Ncs – need the peace of mind of knowing God's eternal security – then throw in your religion and start taking Jesus at His word and accept his gift of eternal life – then expect to start to understand amazing things you never knew were true, start seeing things amazing happen in your life, start to realise that God can be known – all as you follow Jesus.