

SERMON FOR MAY 10, 2020

TEXT: JOHN 14: 5-11

THEME: THE ONLY WAY TO BE SAVED

**5** Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” **6** Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. **7** If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him. **8** Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” **9** Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? **10** Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. **11** Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

In the name of Jesus:

The current pandemic has brought many changes to life as we know it. More people are washing their hands and using proper sanitizing protocols than ever before. Social distancing is being practiced and we are seeing more people wearing masks out in public, all in an effort to remain healthy and keep those around them healthy. State governments are implementing changes that affect all of us.

In the state of Georgia, their Governor has made a change in how people can obtain a drivers' license. Georgia is now allowing people to get their drivers' licenses without having to take a driving test during the coronavirus pandemic. Qualifying teenagers in the state just need their parents' permission to get one.

Governor Brian Kemp has waived the road test requirement for teens applying for a driver's license. Now, teens must still complete other requirements such as making certain that they complete necessary hours of driving under a parent's supervision. The teen must still know the rules of the road in order to obtain a license. No matter what you think of the Governor's order, at least there is a baseline of knowledge that the new driver must know the rules of the road, including what the road signs mean and how you must follow the road signs.

If you don't know the meaning of the road signs and follow the meaning of the road signs, that can be deadly for the driver and those who ride with the driver. If you neglect what the signs say, peril awaits. If you are driving and see a sign on a road that says One Way, as a driver you better know what the sign means and how you need to obey the sign. Many people have been

affected, physically as well as emotionally, for not obeying the road signs. If you run a stop sign, an accident can occur. If you go the wrong way on a one way street, you place your own life and others in danger. Running a stop sign or going the wrong way on a one way street is potentially a deadly deal.

Jesus makes a unique claim in our Gospel lesson for today. Jesus says that He alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, that no one can come to the Father except by Him. This is an exclusive claim that Jesus makes, that He alone is the Way to the Father, that no one can be saved except by believing in Jesus.

This claim draws the ire of many today. How can Jesus say this, they say. Others charge that Christians are the most bigoted people to believe that Jesus is the only way to heaven, What about all of the other religions? What about people who believe that their faith is correct? How can you say that God is a God of love, they charge, if God will send other people who don't believe in Jesus to hell, they ask?

Sincerity is only as good and helpful as the thing or person you place your faith in. Using the example of a one way street or a stop sign, sincerity

doesn't do you or anyone else much good if you don't do what the sign says. It really doesn't matter how sincere you are if you get on an interstate going in the wrong direction. That is how accidents and needless deaths occur.

So Jesus' words today provide not only a warning, but a gracious invitation. His words are a warning to all who hear Him, for He and the Father are one. The Father's will is that all be saved and come to know the Truth. That is why God sent His Son into the world, Jesus, the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. Jesus made the claim to be the Son of God and backed up that claim as He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and raised the dead during His life and ministry. The Father backed up Jesus' claim to be His Son for at Jesus' baptism the Father spoke from heaven saying: "This is My Son." The Father also spoke on the Mount of Transfiguration from a cloud saying "this is My Son, listen to Him." The Father testified from heaven, and Jesus bore witness in His life that He is the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.

The grace and truth of God was shown in the cross and empty tomb. . On the cross Jesus was despised and rejected not only by man but also by God His Father. "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" The Father

rejected His Son on the cross, damning Jesus for your sins, for my sins, and for the sins of the entire world. The sins of those who believe in Jesus, as well as the sins of those who don't believe in Jesus, were placed on Christ when He was crucified on the cross. The Father forgives the world in Christ, by making His Son the scapegoat, placing the blame and punishment on Jesus, in place of sinners. .

Jesus' victory over sin and death has been revealed in His glorious resurrection. God the Father approved and accepted the sacrifice of His Son by bringing Jesus back from the dead, and those who believe in Jesus receive what God has promised, namely forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation.

This is why Jesus is able to exclaim that He is the Way, Truth, and Life, that no one comes to the Father except by Him. His claim is exclusive, in that He alone is the Way to the Father. There is no other Way. His resurrection from the grave proves this, as the Bible says that if Jesus hasn't been raised then our faith and our preaching is futile, for then we are found to be misrepresenting God (1 Cor. 15: 14-15).

But in fact Christ has been raised, and in Him all sinners have the certainty of eternal life. This certainty and promise is for you and for all who believes, it includes everyone. For all have sinned and fall short of God's glory, but the free gift of God is eternal life for all who believe. This free gift of God is indeed Good News, which we have received and in which we place our faith.

God the Holy Spirit has given you faith in Jesus all so that you might tell others that Jesus is the only Way to heaven. The world is going in the wrong direction, driving as it were, in reverse and on a one way road to Hell. God seeks to use you to invite people to turn around, to repent, to believe in Jesus, for He is the only Way to heaven. Many may be sincere in their own belief of placing their faith in something other than Jesus, but that misplaced faith in their own sincerity will be their spiritual undoing. In the end, in rejecting Jesus, they will have rejected the means by which God the Father has determined to save the world, namely, in His only begotten Son. That is why Jesus says: "The one who hears you hears me and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects Him who sent me." (Luke 10: 16).

This is why we then are involved in mission and evangelism work, because God wants everyone to believe in Jesus . This is why we seek to persuade others to trust in Jesus. The love of Christ controls us,; Jesus lived and died so that none of us now live for ourselves, but we live for Jesus who for the salvation of sinners was crucified and raised from the grave. As the Apostle Paul proclaims: “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. **18** All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; **19** that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their sins against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. **20** Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us”

And so, because Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, we invite others to believe in Jesus. Our invitation is simple, Come and be God’s friends. For Jesus, who knew no sin, became sin for you and the Way to life with the Father in heaven. For Jesus alone is the Way, Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except through Him. Amen