

131. The Gospel of John—14:1-6

“The Only Way to Heaven” Part 1

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier

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I don't have to tell all of you that we are living at a time in American history where the very future of our Republic seems uncertain and ready to collapse into obscurity.

As American patriot Thomas Paine once said about the days in which he lived—the early days of our nation when we had just declared independence from Great Britain and were fighting for our right to exist as a free and sovereign people, Paine said—*“These are the times that try men's souls.”*

As Americans, we are living in perilous times—exactly what Paul the Apostle predicted conditions would be right before Jesus' return to the earth to establish His Kingdom—

2 Timothy 3:1-4 (NKJV)

¹ But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ² For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴ traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

There are things that breed fear and anxiety in our hearts—one of these is uncertainty for the future. This was exactly the place Jesus' disciples found themselves in our study of John's Gospel.

Let me say it again—when we came to Chapter 13, we found ourselves roughly 15 hours from Jesus' crucifixion—but more specifically, Chapters 13-17 cover a 6-hour period (roughly 6 pm to midnight). This was such an important 6-hour period that John spends one-quarter of his entire Gospel recording it.

The evening began in an upper room somewhere in Jerusalem where Jesus and His disciples were celebrating the Feast of Passover together.

After Judas left the room to carry out his betrayal of Christ, Jesus instituted Communion with His remaining disciples—and proceeded to give them one final teaching before His death. The purpose of this final teaching was to prepare and encourage them for what lay ahead.

In just a short period of time, He would be returning back to His Father in heaven leaving them to continue the work He had begun on earth. This extremely important discourse (that only John records) covers John 13 through 16 culminating in Chapter 17 with Jesus' 'high priestly prayer' to His Father.

And so once again, in John 13–17 we have in essence our Lord's *“farewell message”* to His disciples where He endeavors to comfort their hearts in the *present* but also to prepare their hearts for the *future*.

I bring all of this up because—many of the things Jesus told His disciples to encourage their hearts also apply to us living right now.

The things that Jesus shared with His disciples that evening, things that were designed to strengthen them for what lie ahead are universal in scope and apply to all of God's people in any age facing anything that is causing them to fear what might be coming—so take heart!

Jesus starts off this importance discourse in Chapter 14:1 with a command in the Greek—"Let not your heart be troubled."

This admonition by the Lord Jesus is not surprising—He had just announced that one of His Apostles was a traitor who was going to betray Him, and that Peter (the unofficial leader of Jesus' disciples) was going to deny Him not once but 3 times! Then the greatest 'bombshell' revelation of them all—He revealed to them that He was going to leave them, and they couldn't follow Him.

And that's why Jesus follows up these 'bombshell' revelations with the words (a command in the Greek)—"Let not your heart be troubled..."

By saying this, Jesus wasn't telling them, not to *start* being troubled—they were already troubled! He was giving them a command—to *stop* being troubled!

Please understand, God never commands us to do anything without supplying the power for us to obey. This command was tied to their faith in God—but in particular to their faith in His Son Jesus Christ:

John 14:1 (NKJV)

¹ "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

The concept of a 'troubled heart' involves **fear**—and with regard to His disciples troubled hearts—fear for the uncertainty of the future. (Comment)

So we could paraphrase what Jesus told His disciples in John 14:1 as—"Don't let your hearts continue be fearful."

After commanding them to stop being troubled—Jesus quickly follows that command with a promise that was designed to *comfort* their hearts—

John 14:2-3 (NKJV)

² In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

As we said, this statement by Jesus has both a *prophetic* and a *cultural* application attached to it—and He purposely presents them in such a way that they dovetail with each other and result in one very comforting promise. (Check out the 2 previous studies in John 14)

When Jesus told His disciples, "In My Father's house are many mansions..."—the Greek simply means "*rooms, abiding places, or dwelling places*"—"In My Father's house are many 'dwelling places'"

I want to point this out first of all to set the record straight about 'mansions' in heaven. But with regard to the idea of "*dwelling places in the Father's house*"—Jesus was using something His disciples were very familiar with to teach a spiritual truth.

In the Jewish mind any reference to "*God's house*" would have immediately pointed them to the Temple in Jerusalem—which of course goes back to the days of King Solomon who built the first Temple.

The Temple proper (the actual Temple building) consisted of 4 stone walls and a roof divided into 2 rooms called the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.

As God directed Solomon, he was to extend the walls of the Temple outward so that the sides and back contained 3 stories (levels) of rooms that could be accessed through outside stairs leading up to walkways on the second and third floors (think of an outside travel motel).

The ground level rooms were used for storage consisting of supplies that were needed for the upkeep and maintenance of the Temple.

It was also in these storage rooms that the tithes God's people had brought to Him were kept—tithes of oil, grain and the other offerings the people had given to God. These offerings would be stored and given to the priests and Levites—to them and their families as a partial payment for their service to the God of Israel (not to mention the meat from the animal sacrifices).

The upper rooms were apartments (not at all elaborate but very simple probably containing a bed, a table and chair and an oil burning lamp for light) where priests would live for 2 weeks out of the year when it was their turn to minister to God in the Temple.

We get a good example of these storerooms and apartments from the Book of Nehemiah Chapter 13:4-13.

Eventually, the Babylonians destroyed the Temple that Solomon had built and it was later rebuilt under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua (as recorded in Haggai and Zechariah).

Roughly 400 years later the Temple proper was greatly beautified by Herod the Great and the whole Temple precinct was massively expanded (over 30 acres)—this was the Temple that existed during Jesus' life and ministry on the earth.

The original architecture that God had Solomon incorporate into that first Temple was maintained with these dwelling places for the priests to live in once again built connected to and as extensions of—*"the Father's house."* Of course, the earthly Temple in Jerusalem was a model of the true Temple of God in heaven—the 7th Trumpet of the Tribulation Period demonstrates this:

Revelation 11:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

So, Jesus is using the earthly Temple and its dwelling places for the priests of God as an illustration of the true Temple in heaven.

Last time we talked about how Jesus' words in John 14:2-3 apply to Jewish wedding customs of the bridegroom going away to prepare a place for him and his bride to live in built onto his father's house called the 'bridal chamber'. But this also applies to the fact that, as we are told in the Book of Revelation—by redeeming us, Jesus has made us a *"kingdom of priests"* (Revelation 1:6; 5:10).

Priests who would be living in the Father's house in heaven someday—not for 2 weeks out of the year—but for all of eternity!!

John 14:2-3 (NKJV)

² In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for

you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there you may be also.*

As we have already said, this is the first place in the New Testament where the *Rapture* is alluded to.

In case you're new and have never heard of the Rapture—it is the sudden '*snatching away*' or '*catching up*' of Christians off of the earth to meet the Lord Jesus in the air. (See the messages referring to my teaching on this here [[Episodes 129 & 130.](#)])

John 14:4-6 (NKJV)

⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know." ⁵ Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

I have named this message—"The Only Way to Heaven."

Almost all of the people on earth who believe in a Divine Being that created everything and to Whom we must someday stand before and give an account—have been raised to believe in what theologians call a "works/righteousness" system of salvation.

Or in other words, they have been taught that the way into heaven is by keeping laws, rules, ceremonies, and other religious works of righteousness—and if they do, they will *earn* heaven.

Even though most people grew up (like me) being taught that '*good people*' go to heaven and '*bad people*' go to hell—the Bible teaches that there are no good people—we're all fallen sinners who don't deserve to go heaven.

This is something Paul the Apostle made abundantly clear in Romans 3—"There is none righteous, no, not one...There is none who does good, no, not any." (Romans 3:10, 12)

God's Word is crystal clear on this subject that nothing we do or don't do will earn us heaven because—salvation is a gift we receive and not a reward we earn:

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV)

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

Titus 3:5 (NKJV)

not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit...

Jesus here in John 14 made it clear that the way to heaven is not a path we walk (works)—it is a Person we know (verse 6)

In other words, **Christianity is built, not on principles—but on A Person.**

You can remove Mohammed from Islam, Buddha from Buddhism, Confucius from Confucianism and nothing would change, because those religions aren't built on their leaders—on their teachings, but not on them personally.

But remove Christ from Christianity and it ceases to exist because Christianity is inextricably linked to and built upon the Person and work of Jesus Christ! **Only Jesus**, the sinless Son of God could have paid the price for our sins and rescue us from coming judgment.

The big problem with legalism is that it tries to ignore or diminish Jesus' death with regard to salvation.

Legalists (those who believe that keeping laws, commandments, rituals, and religious ceremonies will get a person into heaven) give Jesus' death (in some ways)—*"lip service."*

They say Jesus' death and resurrection will get your *"foot in the door"* of salvation—but now you have to work to *"finish the process."* In other words, Jesus death on Calvary's Cross made salvation possible—but now it's up to you to earn salvation/eternal life in its entirety by going to church, keeping sacraments, helping in the local food pantry etc.

All of these things they teach (and more) are necessary for a person to earn *"full salvation"* (whatever that means)—I mean, how a person can be *'partially saved'* and needing to finish the work so as to achieve 'full' or 'complete' salvation is beyond me!

This very issue is something that Paul deals with in Galatians 3 when he says—

Galatians 3:1-3 (NKJV)

¹O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? ²This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? ³Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

You see legalists believe that Jesus *started* the work of salvation for us—but now *we* have to finish it through our works (going to church, keeping commandments, getting baptized, lighting candles, praying rosaries etc.)

Even though on the cross Jesus said, *"It is finished"* they feel what He really meant to say was, *"It is almost finished...I've done My part now it's up to you to do your part and finish what I have started."*

You see that's the difference between law and grace, between religion and Christianity.

Religion based on law says *"DO"* (if you want to please God and earn heaven)—Christianity based on grace says *"DONE"* (as in *"it is finished"*).

The word "religion" comes from the Latin word "religio" which has a meaning influenced by the verb "religare" to *bind*, in the sense of *"place an obligation on"*.

The Dictionary defines "obligation" as "duty" which, in turn, is defined as *"a thing which a person ought to do; a thing which is right to do."* Therefore, religion is an obligation or duty to do certain *"right things"* (it depends on each religious group to define what those *"right things"* are).

If a person is faithful to do what their religion says constitutes good works—then they will *earn* a place in heaven when they die. The way to heaven is confusing to many (like Thomas) and then to add to the confusion Jesus said—

John 14:4-6 (NKJV)

⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know." ⁵ Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You

are going, and how can we know the way?"⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Verse 6 of John 14 contains the 6th of 7 "I AM" statements that John built his Gospel around.

The phrase "**I AM**" is the name of God as first expressed in the book of Exodus 3:13-14—it's a verb that means "*the becoming One.*" (Explain)

In John's Gospel Jesus called Himself "I Am" (name of God) coupled with 7 different nouns expressing what He desires to become to people.

The very first thing that Jesus wants to become to us—is our salvation!

This desire to be our Savior is expressed in His very name—'Jehovah (I AM)-shua' = Y'shua = Jesus = "*Jehovah has become our salvation*").

Each of these "I Am" statements is a declaration of divinity since they each begin with Jesus declaring Himself to be the Great 'I AM' in human form—which is the theme of John's entire Gospel (20:30-31).

Think of it as a name coupled with a description—like, "*Phil Ballmaier—the Pastor*".

So far, in our study of John's Gospel we have seen Jesus declare—

1. "*I Am—the Bread of Life*" (John 6:35)
2. "*I Am—the Light of the World*" (John 8:12)
3. "*I Am—the Door*" (John 10:9)
4. "*I Am—the Good Shepherd*" (John 10:11)
5. "*I Am—the Resurrection and the Life*" (John 11:25)

And now the 6th "I AM" statement—"**I Am—the Way, the Truth, and the Life**" (John 14:6a)—and then He added something that drives skeptics and religionists crazy: "**No one comes to the Father except through Me.**" (verse 14b)

One pastor responds—

"This is a very radical, narrow, and intolerant statement by Jesus. If there's anything that drives unbelievers crazy about us Christians, it's intolerance and narrow mindedness.

"*You're too narrow,*" they say to us. "*I don't mind you believing what you believe, but don't say it's the only way.*"

We don't say this—it's Jesus who declared it. Call me narrow if you wish, but *Jesus* is the One who said, "*Narrow is the way which leads to life eternal, and broad is the path that leads to destruction,*" (see Matthew 7:13)."

Remember, Jesus started out John 14 with the words, "**Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.**" and then in verse 6 He called Himself the great "I AM" by saying—"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

Believing in the true Jesus is the only way to heaven! (2 Corinthians 11:4; Matthew 24:4)

If you were to take to the street and canvas people as to who they believe Jesus Christ was/is—for many today the conversation would go something like this—

➤ **“Who is Jesus Christ?”**

- *“Well I believe he was a great religious teacher sent here by God to teach us truth.”*

➤ **“Do you believe He was God in human form?”**

- *“No, not really. In fact, I believe we’re all on our way to godhood...”*

➤ **“Well do you believe that He is the Savior of the world who came into the world to save us from sin?”**

- *“No, I don’t believe we’re sinners, I don’t believe there is any right or wrong—it’s just whatever is right for you.”*

➤ **“Do you believe He’s the only way to heaven?”**

- *“No, I believe there are many roads that lead to heaven.”*

So, many believe Jesus was a good man, even a great man—but just a man not the Son of God.

Whenever we talk about those who believe Jesus was a great man but not God—the words of C.S. Lewis, in his famous book, *Mere Christianity*, come to mind:

“...I am trying here to prevent anyone from saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him, ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse.

You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

How anybody can say that Jesus was a great religious teacher and yet reject everything He taught about Himself and salvation is ridiculous—and deadly!

John 8:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ **Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins.”**

You’ll notice that the word **“He”** in verse 24 is in italics—which means it’s not there in the Greek but was added by the translators in an effort to ‘clarify’ what Jesus said.

Only here it doesn’t help to *clarify* Jesus’ meaning here—it clouds it!

What Jesus really said was, **“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins [go to hell forever]...if you do not believe that I am—you will die in your sins.”**

One of the essential doctrines that a person must believe if they are going to be forgiven of their sins and go to heaven is that Jesus is Jehovah God (‘Yahweh’)—the Great I AM!

Next week we’ll continue this all important subject we’ve entitled—**“The Only Way to Heaven.”**

Thank you for checking out today’s message, “The Only Way To Heaven”.

Jesus said in this weeks’ verses, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” Have you heard/read God’s Word today and desire to know Him? To know with certainty? We are all sinners in need of a Savior.

To understand more fully what it means to become a child of God click here: <https://www.ccelkgrove.org/abcs>

It would be our privilege to lead you to a saving faith with The Lord our God.

Reach out to us at: <http://www.ccelkgrove.org/next-steps>

May The Lord bless you and keep you, may He be YOUR peace, and YOUR Savior – as you seek to walk with Him, know Him—day by day...