

How many of you have had the pleasure of driving in downtown Madison? While most cities have their streets laid out in a grid, Madison is laid out so the state capital is the destination point and all the streets are like spokes on a wheel. Many of those streets around the capital are one-way. That makes it hard to find your way, let alone get to the right place. That’s very frustrating.

Many people feel frustrated with life. It’s hard to find your way through life, let alone get to the right place.

I do need to attach a warning label this evening. Jesus is going to make statements that have no wiggle-room, zero, when it comes to getting to the right place.

In the verses leading up to tonight’s “I Am” Statement, Jesus pictures a house. Actually, it’s more like a mansion with lots and lots of rooms. The reason Jesus had to leave his disciples and ascend back to heaven was to prepare a place for them in his Father’s mansion. It only makes sense, if he’s going to prepare rooms for them, he’s going to come back and take them to the rooms he’s prepared just for them. That would allow them to be together again, and then he adds: **“You know the way to the place where I am going.”**

When Jesus spoke these words, his death on a cross was less than 24 hours away. His rising from the dead was less than 4 days away. His ascension to heaven – the place he was going – was about 6 weeks away. We know all these things because we have the written record of these events in the Bible. The disciples weren’t exactly sure what he was talking about, or the place he was going.

The truth is, by nature nobody has any business in God’s heavenly home. Sin has barricaded the way. Only Jesus’ death could provide the demolition for sin. Only his resurrection could provide the

complete construction necessary for each believers’ room.

Jesus came into our world to create a way to heaven. He comes through his Word to invite us. Every disciple of Jesus has a reservation there. By faith in him, Jesus guarantees you a place in his Father’s mansion.

All of Jesus’ disciples should have known the way there by now. He had been showing it to them for 3 years. Do you know the way? Of course you do! Jesus has been showing it to you for – 20, 50, maybe even 80 years. Ever since the day you were baptized.

Thomas! You remember Thomas. He’s the one who doubted Jesus’ resurrection. Here, Thomas was the only one brave enough to ask what the other 11 were wondering: **“Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”**

Jesus, always the patient teacher, tells his disciples everything they needed to know as he answers Thomas: **“I am the way and the truth and the life.”** In tonight’s “I Am” Statement, Jesus tells us he does everything that needed to be done for our salvation.

“I am the way.” Followers of Jesus Christ we’re not always called Christians. In the early church this new religion, was simply called *“The Way”* – based on this John 14 passage. It was the early church’s way to distinguish itself from their Jewish roots. When Paul made his legal defense before Roman officials, he called himself a follower of *“The Way.”*

Jesus’ words slams shut the door on any other way. He didn’t say I’m one of many ways. Jesus said: **“I am the way!”** Period!

Just in case there are lingering doubts, the Bible doubles down with Act 4:12: **“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.”**

There is only one way. God made it very simple for us. It’s sin and stubbornness and apathy that keeps us from believing this truth. Truth – that’s a loaded word in our world, isn’t it? You may ask, like Pontius Pilate once did – *“What is truth?”*

Jesus has an answer for that. He said: **“I am the truth.”** Truth! Do we even know what that means anymore? We’re so overwhelmed with lies and half-truths and false news.

Jesus said HE is the truth. He’s the truth about who we are – sinners who stand guilty of every charge ever brought against us. He’s also the truth about who he is – our Savior whose death makes us *“not guilty”* of any charge ever brought against us.

As his followers, we should want to do all we can to keep his Word the truth, so that it remains our truth. That would include spending quality time and quantity time with his Word in personal study and at worship online now, and in-person soon.

The final of our triple “I Am” statement, **“I am the life,”** is a repeat from some of our earlier “I Am” statements from Jesus. Did you catch it? This is the third time Jesus told us he’s *“The Life.”* He’s *the Bread of Life. He’s the Resurrection and the Life.* And now, *“He’s the Way and the Truth and the Life.”*

In a world that is filled with death, and every one of us will die - Jesus emphasizes he is life. He is the source of physical life. He created us and continues to supply oxygen for our lungs and beats for our hearts. He’s also the source of spiritual life. When we were dead in sins, he made us alive spiritually – there’s our Baptism again. Whoever believes in him and is baptized has eternal life.

Jesus has just stacked up 3 bold statements. He’s going to finish off tonight’s lesson with an even bolder announcement: **“No one comes to the Father except through me.”**

Each time we hear this verse, were probably a little shocked at how politically incorrect Jesus is. If he had said something like that today, he would have been heckled and screamed at by people, demanding, how dare he make such a judgmental statement and exclude people. Who does he think he is? Among all the religions in the world, only Christianity has got it right?

Yes, Jesus’ teaching is exclusive. A huge contrast when many say all religions lead to God, they just follow different paths. God quickly squashes that notion. There are no other paths. **“No one” comes to the Father,** unless we’re holding Jesus’ nailed scared hands.

The Father’s heavenly mansion is the place, and Jesus is the only way to get there.

Prayer: (Hymn 356)

*You are the WAY; through you alone
Can we the Father find;
In you, O Christ, has God revealed
His heart and will and mind.*

*You are the TRUTH; your Word alone
True wisdom can impart.
You only can inform the mind
And purify the heart.*

*You are the LIFE; the empty tomb
Proclaims your conqu’ring arm,
And those who put their trust in you
Not death nor hell shall harm.*

*You are the Way, the Truth, the Life;
Grant us that way to know,
That truth to keep, that life to win
Whose joys eternal flow. Amen.*