

The following is a rough transcript, not in its final form and may be updated.

Exclusively Inclusive

John 14:4-6

Intro: At the end of [ch13](#), Jesus had thoroughly shocked His disciples by His actions and comments concerning a traitor in their midst and Peter's imminent denial of his Lord. Thus, [ch14](#) opens with declaration of comfort for those troubled disciples ([1-3](#)). Notice He doesn't reprimand them for their emotional upheaval or their obvious lack of faith. Jesus recognizes that the things that are troubling them are real; they have just cause to be upset. What Jesus does here is merely remind them that they have even greater cause not to be troubled! The fact that they know Jesus, who is God; that they not only have a home in heaven but a special place there that He is preparing just for them. Since that is the case, they can also be assured that He will come back to get them and they will be with Him forever.

If that doesn't comfort your heart, you're in a bad way. Either you are refusing to acknowledge the truth of salvation or you have yet to accept it fully into your heart and life. If the comfort Jesus offers in these verses is not comforting to you, that's a pretty good sign that you are outside His grace and the blessings He describes do not apply to you.

Jesus then ends this short discourse with a puzzling statement; at least for the disciples it was puzzling...

4- This statement seems to run counter to the mind-set of the disciples at this time. Peter had just asked Jesus about where He was going in [3:36a](#). Clearly, he was completely mystified on the destination Jesus has been referring to. In the very next verse, Thomas will display his own confusion by pointing out that if they haven't got a clue where Jesus is going, how is it possible that they could ever know the way to that destination?

Jesus is asserting here that, despite their immediate confusion, they not only know where He is going, they also know how to follow Him to that destination. In fact, He has been showing them the way to the Father in the whole body of His teaching. If they would merely follow all He has taught them, they too will arrive at the same destination. This truth should be a great comfort to believers. So much of our Christian walk is clouded by

confusion and doubt. There is so much about the spiritual world that we don't know and the things we learn are often confusing because they are the exact opposite of the physical experience of our lives. But, if we will take what we know and apply it to our lives faithfully and obediently, Jesus assures us that we will arrive at the same destination that He is currently at.

Of course, this truth is entirely lost on the disciples at this moment as displayed by Thomas' question in [vs5](#)...

5- This is an expression of perplexity. We can commend Thomas for his honesty, at least. He won't let Jesus' words pass by as though he understands them when he does not. He'd like the position to be made clear. This approach to God's Word is both commendable and humbling. It's humbling because it requires the individual to admit that they don't understand something; that they're not as smart as they let on. Often times in a discussion, when we don't quite understand something, we tend to get defensive or frustrated because we're loath to reveal our own ignorance of the subject. Thomas didn't allow his ignorance to prevent him from seeking further clarification from Jesus.

That's why his question is commendable. Instead of allowing pride and ignorance to rule the day, he swallowed his pride and revealed his ignorance in order to pursue greater truth! At least he was in good company. He was simply asking the question that every other disciple at the table was wondering. Jesus wasn't offended at this question despite the fact that it seemed to contradict the statement He had just made in [vs4](#). The truth is, Jesus was honored by this question because it allowed Him to share even greater truth with the disciples and with us. It allowed Him to further reveal His divine nature and character and how it works to secure our ultimate benefit and our eternal joy.

Discovering spiritual truth in God's Word must begin with an honest acknowledgement of our own spiritual ignorance; of the fact that, though we may like to think we know what God is like, what He thinks and what He wants from us; the reality is that we really don't know any of this apart from what He has revealed in His Word. The commendable goal of every believer's life is to commit themselves to the discovery of God's own revelation of Himself in His Word and the insistence of believing and following everything they learn from this life-long endeavor.

Notice the picture of intimacy that is presented to us here. See how the disciples speak to Jesus with a natural, easy familiarity. There are no pious benedictions or wordy orations. They address Him as though speaking to a close friend, feeling free to ask a seemingly contradictory or repetitious question. Jesus responds in kind; not reprimanding them for their ignorance or foolishness but in full sympathy with their weaknesses; teaching them little by little as they are able to learn. They ask the kind of questions a young child might ask a parent. They often show their ignorance but they never seem to be timid in His presence or ashamed to let Him see how shallow or hard of understanding they really are. This should instruct us in our own prayers. God is never shocked or discouraged by how much we don't know but He is honored and pleased by how much truth we are willing to discover and learn from His Word.

6- Our study of John has now brought us to what probably is the most exclusive, and some say most offensive, of all of Jesus' sayings. It's may be the most exclusive statement ever made by anyone. Of course, all the "I am" sayings of Jesus have a degree of exclusiveness to them: "I am the Bread of life." This claims the exclusive ability to fulfill the deepest spiritual hungers of humanity. The others imply a similar exclusivity: "I am the light of the world; I am the door; I am the good Shepherd; I am the resurrection and the life; I am the true vine." Each of these are exclusive statements but none of them are as comprehensive (and thus, objectionable) as the one we have in our text today.

Jesus is categorically declaring that He is the way, the truth and the life. And just to ensure that there is no possibility of misunderstanding what He's actually saying, He concludes by stating that no one could ever hope to come to the Father except by going through Him. This statement is definitely exclusive but it needn't be offensive since Jesus is just saying He's what the human race need the most. His words should be received with joy and thanksgiving.

Before sin entered the world, Adam and Eve enjoyed a threefold privilege in their relation to God. 1st) they were in communion with God. 2nd) they knew God and the truth that flowed from Him. 3rd) they possessed spiritual life. But, when they disobeyed God and fell into sin, they lost these privileges. Instead of enjoying communion with God, they experienced alienation from

Him. Instead of knowing the truth, they fell into falsehood and error. Instead of having life, they began to know death. This is our human condition. We're alienated from God, ignorant of the truth, and condemned to spiritual and eventually physical death. Jesus' claim is a divine answer to our 3 problems. Instead of alienation from God, there is "the way" to God. Instead of ignorance and error, there is "the truth." Instead of death, there is "the life." This is actually the gospel in microcosm. It's the good news of God and it's all in Jesus!

the way- this term supposes two points: origin and destination; for a way is merely a path from one point to another. Now, it's true that through His teachings and by His lifestyle, Jesus shows us the way to the Father by revealing it but the greater truth declared in our text is that Jesus doesn't just show us the way, He is the way! Jesus is the path from man's total ruin in sin to the very presence of the Father. This truth applies first and foremost to the guilt of sin. We all start out as sinners in God's sight. What is to be done with our sin? Turning over a new leaf won't suffice because it can't accommodate all our past sins. How can we as sinners ever hope to stand justified before a holy God?

The only way is through the work of redemption performed by Jesus Christ. God sent His own Son to earth as a man to be one with us and be eligible to bear our sins on Himself. He became our substitute, dying in our place, bearing in His own body God's just wrath against sin, and by His death, removed the guilt and punishment of that sin forever. Because of His atoning death, our sins have been blotted out ([Isa 43:25](#); [44:22](#)), removed as far as the east is from the west ([Ps 103:12](#)), placed behind God's back ([Isa 38:17](#)), cast "into the depths of the sea" ([Mic 7:19](#)). Our sins are forgiven ([Col 2:13](#)) and forgotten ([Heb 10:17](#)). They are gone, but only through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

the truth- Jesus doesn't say that He came to tell us the truth about the Father but that He is the truth of the Father. What truth do we learn about the Father from observing Jesus? 1) God is a person. He's not some impersonal force in the universe that just set the world in motion and governs it through abstract laws of matter and motion. That kind of god would not explain the self-conscious life we possess. God's not impersonal. He has a personality and desires to relate to humanity and wants them to know Him. It is through Jesus that we know that He desires this.

2) God is holy. We wouldn't know this by looking anywhere else. In the world we see good and evil, order and disorder, and they're often mingled. If we were to judge by what we see in the world, we would only think that God doesn't care about evil. But Jesus is holy. He's without sin and He's declared that God is like Him in His holiness.

3) God is merciful and loving. He's not deaf to the cries of humanity. Even while requiring justice, God came to earth willing to die for us, in our place in order to provide us with forgiveness, peace, joy, goodness, self-control and all the other blessings of the Christian life. Through Jesus we know the Father is a personal, holy and loving God.

the life- for everyone who believes on Jesus, He is the emancipator from death. Outside of Jesus Christ, a person is spiritually lifeless, meaning they are dead to spiritual things, to heavenly things. They exist but they have no spiritual life. Jesus promises to give this life to all who come to Him in faith. The life He gives is the life of God, eternal life.

Jesus came that you might have life. Will you receive that life from Him Will you come to Him where you are? He doesn't require you to do anything. What could you do, even if you wanted to? There's nothing to do, except receive Him by faith. There is nothing to achieve, no improvements to be made, no lessons to learn. Just believe on Jesus. Accept Him for what He claims to be—the way to God, the truth about God, the life of God. This is the only logical and rational choice there is to make, as the rest of this verse so clearly states.

No one- You'd think that as definitive as the first half of vs6 is, Jesus has said all that needs to be said (mic drop). But, as soon as He declares that He's the way, the truth and the life, He immediately says the whole thing over again in different words so we'd understand it. If He thought it necessary to restate it; we should take another look at it too. Taken together, this verse means Christianity makes an exclusive claim. Those critical of our faith constantly complain that we are narrow-minded when we say that Jesus is the only way to God. But, we're really only as narrow as Jesus is. He's the One who said He's the only way to God. There is no other way. Sure, we'd probably be better received by the world if we waffled on this point and said other ways have some value too but we can't,

because they don't! There's no salvation apart from Jesus. This truth is taught all over Scripture: [1 Cor 3:11](#); [Acts 4:12](#); [1 Tim 2:5](#).

Maybe you're one who hasn't come to grips with this truth, maybe you're interested in Christianity but think Jesus is **a way** to God but not the way. If so, understand that according to His teaching, He's the only way and any attempt to find another way is a foolish endeavour that leads to despair, and is perverse. The reality is that apart from the grace of God folly, despair, and perversity characterize each one of us. We're fools because we seek another way. We despair because there's no other way to be found. We're perverse because God's told us that there's only one way. Thus, by turning from Him to try to find another way we dishonor Him.

Why is pursuit of another way foolish? If a way to the Father has been provided, it's foolish to look for another! Who would demand an alternate cure for cancer if a perfect cure had already been found? This is the foolishness of the human heart in spiritual things. We don't want to do it God's way because we're determined to provide for ourselves!

(Ramp in Cocodrie: skate, bike, motorcycle, car, jet car – each get a little further but all fall painfully short of Mexico).

We're never going to get ourselves over the Gulf to salvation. Jesus came to provide a way for salvation. He is the way. Don't be so foolish to turn your back on Him because of pride.

Looking for another way to God is also a road to despair. If Jesus is the only way then there's no other way to be found. The Father is the source of all spiritual blessings, blessings every person needs and desires. The way to the Father is Jesus. If you're trying to find another way, you'll never get those spiritual blessings. To look for any other way is to strike out on a road of despair that has no exits and no destination.

Some people claim to search for God in nature but this is a dead end because God can't be found in nature. They can find out things about God in nature (existence and power) but that's all that can be known of Him and even these things condemn them. You can't worship a supreme being, an eternal power or a law of nature. What they're really doing is using nature to avoid God. They don't want to be with Christians or under the preaching of the Word so they try to escape from God by hiding out in nature.

Some try to find God through morality: “I’ll be good. I’ll get to Him that way.” This also leads to despair when you consider how good you have to be. God cannot settle for anything less than perfection. Even if you achieved the maximum goodness possible of anyone in the world, you’d never get to God that way because it wouldn’t be enough.

The most popular way people try to get to God is through religion. “If I can’t be righteous enough, at least I can do things that God likes. I’ll be baptized, get confirmed; I’ll go to communion.” This also leads to despair because it’s based on a false concept of God. It suggests God settles for externals. Does He? No! We may but God doesn’t. He looks on the heart. You can be baptized but it means nothing to God if your heart is not cleansed. You can partake of communion but it means nothing to God unless you’ve first accepted Jesus Christ by faith. Jesus is the only way to God, to look for another way will only lead you to despair.

Looking for another way to God is not just foolishness that leads to despair – it’s also perverse: it’s insulting to God! It’s insulting to Jesus because He said He was the way to the Father. If you insist on looking for another way, what you’re saying is: Jesus is a liar! You’re saying that the very One in whom the Father is well pleased can’t be trusted! In light of all He’s done, how can that be considered anything but an insult and an affront to His grace? It’s also an insult to the Father for He was the One who planned the way of salvation out of His great love for sinners. It was His love that sent His only begotten Son to this earth to take our place on the cross. It was His love for us that allowed Him to watch as His Son was falsely accused, beaten beyond recognition and cruelly executed for our sins. It wasn’t easy by any means but that is what God’s love has done for us. It’s nothing but sinful, obstinate perversity for someone to say, “That’s all well and good but I’m going to look for another way.” There is no other way.

Is Christianity exclusive? In one sense it is, for Jesus is the only way into the faith. But, in another sense, Christianity is the most pluralistic and tolerant of all the world’s religions. It’s the one religion that embraces and fits perfectly into any culture and has the most urgency to translate their Scriptures into other languages. A Christian can keep their native language and culture and can faithfully follow Jesus in the midst of it. In fact, an early criticism of Christianity was that they would take anybody: slave or free, rich or poor, man or woman, Jew or Greek or barbarian. All were accepted but only on

the common ground of the truth as revealed in Jesus Christ. To leave this common ground of truth in Jesus is spiritual suicide. Have you come to Jesus? Will you come to Him today? 😊