

Series Title: ENOUGH
Sermon Title: I Am the Way - *Peace*
Text: John 14:1-6
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Speaker: Garth Leno

In June of 2006, Warren Buffet, the world's second-richest man at the time, announced that he would donate 85 percent of his \$44 billion fortune to five charitable foundations. Commenting on this extreme level of generosity, Buffet said: "There is more than one way to get to heaven, but this is a great way." (preachingtoday.com)

Ever since God put people on this planet people have been persistent in designing new ways to get to heaven. Like the cyclist in the drama, we just keep looking for another way. We don't want to follow the map. We don't want to follow the Bible. We want to build our own path – *thank you very much!*

Sounds a bit like Isaiah 53:6, doesn't it? *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way...*

Problem is – if there is only one way up the mountain – that's the way you have to go, or not go at all.

So if there's only one way to God – if that's true – then that's the way you have to go ... or not go at all.

Our step-by-step progression through the "I Am" statements of Jesus has brought us to what is probably the most exclusive and offensive of all the statements made by him.

So far in this summer series, we've heard Jesus declare:

I am the bread of life.
I am the light of the world.
I am the Good Shepherd.
I am the resurrection and the life.

And now this - from John 14...

John 14:1-6 NIV

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going."

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

He starts out talking about peace because the disciples were troubled about something.

Some of you are troubled today. Unemployment. A broken relationship. A lack of purpose or direction... You don't know whether to retrain and go back to school, back to work, or back to 1953. And it's all very troubling...

Last week I read about a teacher named Linda, who teaches grade one. She talked about an interaction she had with one of her students on the very first day of school last year. Accustomed to going home at noon in kindergarten, Ryan was getting his things ready to leave for home when he was actually supposed to be heading to lunch with the rest of the class.

Linda asked him what he was doing. "I'm going home," he replied. Linda tried to explain that, now that he is in the first grade, he would have a longer school day. "You'll go eat lunch now," she said, "and then you'll come back to the room and do some more work before you go home." Ryan looked up at her in disbelief, hoping she was kidding. Convinced of her seriousness, Ryan then put his hands on his hips and demanded, "Who on earth signed me up for this program?"

(<http://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/weekly/09-08-10/7081009.html>)

I feel like that sometimes, don't you? You come across trials or tragedy in your life, and you want to look up to heaven and ask, "Who signed me up for this?" I didn't sign up for this! *I want another program!*

The prescription Jesus gave to the disciples is the same prescription he is giving us today: Trust. *Trust in God; trust also in me.*

And then he moves on rather quickly to this exceptional, categorical statement: *I am the way and the truth and the life.*" Then he adds, lest anyone should misunderstand him, *"No one comes to the Father except through me."*

Wow...! If we acknowledge that these words are true, as Christians believe they are, then, although they are exclusive, they don't need to be offensive, because they are actually what we need most as human beings. This is what we need the most!

I believe with all my heart that these words bring freedom to the human soul. If your heart is truly searching for spiritual *reality*, not simply a spiritual *experience*, then these words bring freedom, not constraint.

Before sin entered the world, Adam and Eve enjoyed communion with God. They knew God and the truth that flowed from his heart. They enjoyed spiritual life as a gift from their Creator God. However, they disobeyed God and fell into sin, so they lost this privilege. Instead of communion with God, they experienced alienation from him. Instead of knowing the truth, they fell into falsehood and error. Instead of possessing life, they encountered spiritual death. And we inherited this same depraved human condition from Adam and Eve. We too, by virtue of our human nature, are alienated from God, ignorant of the truth, and condemned to spiritual separation from God.

Romans 3:23 says all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God... But the point of John 14:6 is that Jesus is the answer, he's the solution, to our separation from God. Jesus is enough to bring us back into a right relationship with God the Father.

In the first place...

1. Jesus is the Way (Reconciliation)

When we lost our close-knit relationship with God the Father through the fall of Adam and Eve, we too became guilty before God.

We are sinners in the sight of God. God declares it to be so, and our consciences agree with him. But what shall be done? How shall sin be removed? God sent his one and only son to die in our place. As our substitute. His death removes the guilt and punishment of that sin from us forever.

Jesus is the way for us to be reconciled to God.

God...reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation... (2 Corinthians 5:18)

He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west. (Ps 103:12 NLT)
God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. (Colossians 2:13 NLT)

Our sins are forgiven and removed from us completely through faith in Christ.

Jesus is the only way to be reconciled to God.

Fred Winters was the pastor of First Baptist Church in Maryville, Illinois, when he was shot and killed during a Sunday service in March of this year by a troubled young man. (Mar. 8/2009)

A week after the tragic event, his wife, Cindy, was interviewed by Julie Chen on the Early Show. When asked about her husband's alleged killer, Mrs. Winters spoke only a message of forgiveness. She said:

I do not have any hatred, or even hard feelings towards him. We have been praying for him. One of the first things that my daughter said to me after this happened was, "You know, I hope that he comes to learn to love Jesus through all of this." We are not angry at all, and we really firmly believe that he can find hope and forgiveness and peace through this, by coming to know Jesus. And we hope that that happens for him.

The reconciled reconcile.

The forgiven forgive.

And Jesus is the way to all of that.

2. Jesus is the Truth (Illumination)

The second claim is to be "the truth." He did not say, "I have come to tell you the truth." Nor did he say, "I have come to discuss nature of truth." He did not say, "Come let us reason together – you bring your definition of truth and I'll bring mine."

He said, "I am the Truth." Jesus reveals the truth about God. He illuminates the truth about God the Father, because he and the Father are one (John 10:30)

Truth is the scarcest commodity in the world. No one mind was ever great enough to grasp it; no one personality was ever pure enough to achieve it by conduct. Truth is neither an abstract system of integrated propositions, nor is it an impersonal ethic contained in many rules. It is both the reality and the ethic expressed in a person who

is eternal, unchanging and consistent. Jesus Christ spoke with final authority in words adapted to human understanding. He is the Truth!

He is the way, the truth...and

3. Jesus is the Life (Regeneration)

The last part of Christ's great claim in John 14:6 is to be "the life." He is the emancipator from death for all who believe in him.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ~ John 3:16

Jesus is the Life!

Mark Buchanan is a pastor in British Columbia. He tells the story of how an alcoholic woman called Wanda came to Christ. Wanda did well for about eight months, Mark writes. She got into Alpha and a 12-step group, got her kids back. Then she didn't do well, in and out—mostly out—of rehab. Then she vanished.

Then one day she called again, sober, after a year in rehab in Vancouver. She was getting out the next week.

Could she come *home*?

Her first Sunday back, I initially didn't recognize her, Mark wrote. She looked healthy. Dressed and in her right mind.

I was preaching on the ten lepers Jesus healed, and the one, a Samaritan, who returned to give thanks. I said that anyone who has been cleansed by Jesus, who wants to be made whole by him, worships at his feet in deep thankfulness, in utmost desperation. They have nowhere else they want to go. And then, to close, I reminded people we have a tradition at our church: anyone can come up to the front and pray with one of our prayer partners.

Wanda came forward. But she didn't go to a prayer partner. She walked onto the platform, between the guitarist and the drummer, and stretched her hands heavenward. She worshiped like One Leper returning.

A woman who didn't know her, and who isn't on the prayer team, walked up, put her arm around her, and worshiped, too. Then—you could hear it—all of us worshiped with deeper thankfulness, out of greater desperation. Out of the storeroom had come new treasures as well as old, and the Kingdom hovered very close.

Mark Buchanan, "Treasures Old and New,"
Leadership journal (Fall 2008), p. 114

You see....Jesus not only brings new life, he is new life!

One author put it this way:

"The whole Bible bears solemn witness to the fact that the natural man is spiritually lifeless. He walks according to the course of this world; he has no love for the things of God. The fear of God is not upon him, nor has he any concern for His glory. Self is the

center and circumference of his existence. He is alive to the things of the world, but is dead to heavenly things. The one who is out of Christ exists, but he has no spiritual life. When the prodigal son returned from the far country the father said, 'For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' (Luke 15:24)."

New Testament Christianity is not a system of philosophy, nor a ritual, or a code of laws. It is the impartation of divine life. Spiritual life. Eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ who is Life. Christ can make dead people live again. People who are far from God can come close and experience the new birth and genuine spiritual life through faith in Christ.

Jesus came to give us life. You can come to him right now, right where you are. You may be Catholic or Lutheran or Baptist. You may be United Church, Pentecostal Church, or no church. This claim of Christ, from John 14:6, has nothing to do with religion or with church denominations. It has everything to do with your personal destiny.

Without the way, there is no going.
Without the truth, there is no knowing.
Without the life, there is no living.

Come to Jesus. I invite you to come to Jesus today.

John 14:6 once again.... "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Remember the cyclist in the drama? He tried to find another way up the mountain. But there is only one way. There is no other way to the Father. There is no other way to heaven. There is no other way to eternal life. Jesus is the Way. And he is enough.

There is nothing to do, except receive him by faith. There is nothing to achieve, no improvements to be made, no lessons to learn. Just believe in Jesus Christ. Put your faith in him. Accept him for who he claims to be.

Prayer

Closing Words

What would it take to restore your hope?
What would you need to reenergize your journey?
Though the answers are abundant, a couple come quickly to mind.

The first would be a person. Not just any person. You don't need someone equally confused. You need someone who knows the way. Jesus is the Way.

And you also need the truth. You need someone to tell you the truth, and hold you to the truth even when it hurts. You need someone to look you in the eye and say, "This isn't the end. Don't give up. There is a better place than this. And I'll lead you there." Jesus is the Truth.

And, perhaps most important, you need direction. If you have only a person but no renewed vision, all you have is company. If he has a vision but no direction, you have a dreamer for company. But if you have a person with direction—who can take you from

this place to the right place—ah, then you have one who can restore your hope. Jesus is the Way.

Follow Jesus, my friends. He is the only way to the Father.

There is no other way.

May the grace and peace of God be yours today and throughout this week. Amen.