

I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life

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[0 : 00] Now, from today's passage in John chapter 14, let us pray first. Let us pray. Thank you, Lord. Father, thank you, God, for this church, KAC, O God. Thank you for the people in this church, O God. Lord, you are doing a work in the people here in this city.

And, Father, we pray that as we have read the word, as we will look at the word, O God, that you, Father, will speak to each one of us individually and as a church, O God. Father, we pray that it will strengthen our faith, O God, especially, O God, in this very well-known passage, O God, I'm the way, the truth, and the life.

And so, Father, we pray, Holy Spirit, come, that you, O God, will do your work, O God, in our hearts. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. In 2014, September 2014, the Pope visited Singapore, and he was speaking to some young adults. And in one of his interactions with his audience, he started to say a few things, and this was what it was recorded.

He said, all paths, all religions are paths to reach God. And after that, he put aside his notes, his prepared speech, and then he started to speak freely.

And this is what he said. They are all like different languages in order to arrive at God. But God is God for everyone.

[1 : 35] Since God is God for all, then we are all children of God. If you start to fight, my religion is more important than yours, mine is true and yours isn't, then where would that lead us?

The Pope continued. And then he said this, There is only one God, and each of us has a language to reach God. Some are Sikh, some Muslim, Hindu, Christian, and they are all paths to reach God. So the Pope is saying, Pope Francis says this, that God is for everyone, therefore, we are all God's children. The Pope is saying, God is one, each of us have a different language or different way to communicate with God, and therefore, all paths lead to God.

So, what would you say in response to this? Well, this is what this passage is talking to us about. And I'd like to share with you these three things. Of course, you can find it in your bulletin. Now, the first thing, the first question I'd like to ask is this, is that, do all religions lead to God?

[3 : 03] Do all religions lead to God? Well, this is actually a very common belief today. Even some adults who are in our congregation today would say this same thing, that it doesn't matter, whether you're Christian, whether you're Buddhist, all these all lead to the same God.

So, there will be some people who are thinking this way. Now, consider this, what the Pope says. The Pope says this, that many religions can, all these religions lead to one God.

There's a survey done by Barna in 2018. It says that 58% of American teens would agree with this statement, many religions lead to eternal life.

There is no one true religion. And even more so, the adults, 62% of American adults would say the same thing. There is no one true religion.

That would be nice, right, if we could just say that there is no one true religion. And then we can all be in peace with one another, and we can agree with one another.

[4 : 20] There won't be any more fights among religions. We won't have to argue with one another. We won't have to defend our faith. We just respect one another. Wouldn't that be nice, right? But let's consider this.

What the Pope says about Sikhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity. He says that all these four lead to one God.

In the table that you find in your bulletin, you will see that there are differences in religions. There are differences in how we view God.

For example, Hinduism has many views about God. Some people believe, Hindus, they believe that there are many gods, millions in fact.

Some of them believe that everything is God. And another group believes that there is only the one ultimate reality, and that is God.

[5 : 21] The Sikhs believe that there is one God. Yeah, they are monotheistic. But they also believe that this is a formless God. Islam believes in one God, but completely just one God.

In opposition to what Christians believe. Christians believe in one God, but we believe one God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And so even what we believe in God is already different. And there are other things in the list here. Origins, where do the different religions come from?

What is the human problem? How do we reach salvation? For example, for Hinduism, it's through good deeds and devotion and over many lives, many rebirths.

For Sikhism, the fulfillment or salvation is through remembering God, righteous living, and God's grace. For Islam, it's obedience, good works, God's mercy.

[6 : 29] And the Christian faith is grace through faith in Jesus Christ. And so, if we have different beliefs, do all lead to the same way?

Now, if it's just a matter of human opinion, we can respect each other's opinion. And every one of us can be in peace with one another. But this is such an important part of life, such an important thing that determines our eternal destination, that we can't just say that this is your opinion, this is my opinion, and all of us can agree to disagree, and all of us will be right.

Another thing is that if it's really God's opinion, then it really matters which is the right way.

So again, consider these four beliefs, the different views of God. How can all these views be the same? For Hinduism, for example, millions of gods.

And for Sikhism, one formless god. For Islam, one god. Just one exclusive god. But for Christianity, there are three.

[7 : 51] We are three. We have Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Not three gods, one god, three persons. So can all of them be true at the same time? And this violates the law of non-contradiction.

When we talk about logic, law of non-contradiction. So what is this law of non-contradiction? Well, let me just illustrate this way.

It's that my name is Lawrence. And then if somebody, another person asks me, what is your name?

Can I say my name is not Lawrence?

Because my name is Lawrence and not Lawrence. Can it be at the same time, I'm Lawrence but I'm not Lawrence? And then if somebody asks me my age, I'm 49 years old.

And then somebody else asks me, I'm 39 years old. Can I be both 39 and 49 years old at the same time? It contradicts. Another contradiction is this.

[8 : 56] I'm here in Kuching now. And then if somebody asks me, where are you? My answer would be, I'm in Kuala Lumpur. Can I be both in Kuala Lumpur and in Kuching at the same time?

Only through Zoom. And also playing with the IP address. But no, you can't be at two places at the same time. Now, the next question is that my faith, Christianity, is true.

And your faith, whatever faith that is, is true at the same time. Can that be? It can't be. It violates the law of non-contradiction.

And so if we are somebody who would answer that question that all religions lead to God, we need to look again at this passage and see what it really says.

So how do we tell the difference? How do you tell the difference between what is right and wrong?

We're living in a time that is very, very difficult to tell the difference between right and wrong.

[10 : 05] Nowadays, we have AI-generated pictures. Any of you have seen any of those before? Perhaps you have swapped your face with the body of a hero, maybe Avengers hero like Iron Man.

So your face is not Tony Stark's face, it's your face. So we have AI images. For example, in 2023, there was an article that goes like this.

It says, research finds AI deep faces look more real than genuine photos. Do you think you can tell the difference between an AI-generated photo and a real photo?

So they did this research in 2023. This is two years ago. More than two years ago. This is January 2023. And the result was that the ones who studied could not tell the difference.

In fact, they got it wrong. A lot of times, they said that the AI-generated photos of people, of these persons, were actually real persons.

[11 : 19] How did they do it? The reason was that people tried to look for the less attractive-looking photos of people. The ones with the wrinkles, the ones with the flaws on the face.

And then they said, this must be a real picture. So AI can generate in such a way that we can be fooled. More recently, there was an article.

Finance worker pays out \$25 million after video call with deep fake chief financial officer. So you can look it up. He made a payment of \$25 million because he thought that he was in a Zoom meeting with his CEO and also the other directors.

So be very careful when you go online. It might not be a real person. How do we tell the difference between real and fake? How do we tell the difference?

This calls really for discernment. And how do we tell the difference between the religions? And this is where we go back to God's Word. So what does Jesus say in response?

[12:31] Point number two. What does Jesus say in response? We go to our passage. And chapter 14 is actually after chapter 13.

What does chapter 13 say? Chapter 13, Jesus had predicted his death. And if you remember, what happened was that Peter said that, Jesus, I would not deny you.

I'll give up my life for you. Jesus said that you would disown me three times. And now this is the context of chapter 14. So in chapter 14, if you go to verse 2, it says, My father's house has many rooms.

If they were not so, would I have told you that I'm going there to prepare a place for you? I was telling Pastor Brian many times when I'm preaching from or sharing from John chapter 14, It's a funeral message many times.

Because this passage is used all the time. In my father's house are many rooms. For some people who think that when we go to heaven, you have a big bungalow, I have bad news for you.

[13:45] There is no big bungalow there. There are only rooms. There's only one house. This is what it says in this passage. So, we would think that actually John 14 is talking about how to go to heaven and Jesus preparing the way for us.

But actually what John 14 and verse 2 is actually saying is that in order for you and me to enter heaven, Jesus has to go before us.

Jesus has to go before us and he needs to die on the cross. It is only through the death of Jesus that he unlocks the door for us to enter the Father's house.

So, Jesus is telling his disciples that, I need to go to the cross. I must go to the cross. If I don't go to the cross, there will be no way that you can enter the Father's house.

So, it's only through the cross that Jesus unlocks the door to heaven. And then verse 1. Verse 1. Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me.

[15:05] So, why did Jesus say, do not let your hearts be troubled? He said this because their hearts were troubled. They were troubled because Jesus was going to the cross. Their rabbi, their master, whom they had followed for three years, would now be going to the cross.

He would die. He would leave them. And that's why their hearts were troubled. But Jesus is saying here is that, because I'm opening the way to heaven, because I'm going to the cross, there will be room for you.

He comforted their hearts. Three Fridays back, there was one sister who asked me a question.

It was during a barbecue, Christmas barbecue, for one of our small groups. And she asked me this question, Pastor, if I don't get baptized, can I go to heaven?

Well, knowing her background, I explained to her, yes, if you don't get baptized, you can go to heaven.

[16:27] And I quoted this passage from Romans 10, verse 9. It says, So, baptism is not a prerequisite to enter heaven.

But I did tell her this, that you really need to believe in Jesus. You really need to put aside all other gods, all other practices. because she continued to think of her, one of the late parents, and continued to do some of the Chinese rituals.

I was saying that, eventually, little by little, when you believe, you'll eventually put aside all these things, God will give you the strength to do so. But baptism is not the main thing that I wanted to share with her.

It's that you need to put aside all these things and follow Jesus, believe in Jesus. Most important is to believe Jesus is the only way. Verse 3 says this, 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.

Now, if you ask anybody, if you ask anybody, do you want to go to heaven? Most of the time, they will say, yes, I want to go to heaven.

[17 : 54] Of course, there are some naughty people who would joke, I'll see you in hell. They will say, they think that hell is a joke. And they will joke that, I want to go to hell.

But most people, when they think of death, they want to go to heaven. But most people do not know this, especially those who are, who don't believe in Jesus.

They would say that heaven is a place, a place of eternal bliss, eternal happiness, paradise.

But if we look at what this passage says, is that actually, heaven is not just a place, but there is a relationship, a relationship.

Think of your home. How many of you like to go home? You are even thinking of your house right now. You are thinking of your bed, you are thinking of your living room, thinking of your garden.

[18 : 54] Now, home is not just a place, but home is also a relationship. I was just talking with somebody the other day, and I was talking about selling a particular property, and I was asking the person, does it really matter if a family sells this property?

It is just money, right? And then she was telling me, no, we grew up there. I grew up there. My family, my siblings, we grew up there. And with our grandparents, and there is so much memories. So home is not just a property. Home, there is relationship. There is family members. There are relationships with our grandparents, our siblings, our parents, our children.

The memories are sometimes even more valuable than just the property itself. And so what is heaven? Heaven is actually, it's more than a place.

Heaven is a relationship with God. We go to Jesus. If Jesus doesn't come back in our lifetime to take us back, we will go to Jesus when we die.

[20 : 10] And so if you don't like Jesus in this lifetime, you will not like heaven. This is what it is. Heaven is about a relationship with Jesus. Now Jesus says in verse 4, you know the way to the place where I'm going.

You know the way. You know the way. When I was driving here, I know the way here. I had to make a U-turn at the Maybank.

I know the way here. But before coming, I know there was another way to get here along Laksamana. Yeah, we know the way to get here.

So, do we know the way to get to Jesus, to come to Jesus? Whenever I don't know how to drive to a certain place, I always go to my trusted application, which is Google Maps.

Who prefers ways over Maps, Google Maps? I prefer Google Maps. But there are limitations. And a year and a half ago, I was with my mom, and we were in Kota Kinabalu.

[21 : 25] I was traveling with her because she had some business dealings there. And I thought of bringing her to this place that was recommended by our Hope Church in Kota Kinabalu, the pastor over there, Pastor Anthony.

And he says, you must go to this place called Kokol Hill. There's a nice view, a cafe there. There's a nice view over there. So I thought, okay, I'll bring my mom there.

And so, tap into Google Maps, and Google Maps say, yeah, this is the way to go. So I followed the way. All the way, we came to a place where I was looking up, there was a hill, so this must be the right way.

And we went into a kampong area, and after that, going through the houses and all, then the road started to bring us to this place.

I could see that there was a highway being built. And then it says, turn left. So before going into that place where there was construction of the highway, I made a turn to the left.

[22 : 30] And when I looked down that road, it was an untarred road, and it led down to a stream. So what would you do if you were me?

Untarred road and a stream. I stopped there, and I talked to my mom. Should we keep going? Thank God I didn't.

I had a bit more discernment. I reversed the car and started to try to find another way to get there. Not all roads lead to Cocoa Hill. Not all roads lead to Cocoa Hill.

So not all roads lead to Jesus. So Thomas said to him, Lord, we don't know the way where you are going, so how can we know the way?

How can we know the way? Jesus answered, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

[23 : 31] Now Jesus says here that there is no other way. If you want to go to the Father, if you want to go to the Father's house, I am the only way.

There is no other option. There is no other road that leads to the Father in Heaven or to the house where my Father in Heaven is or where I will be going.

The only way is through Jesus. Not all roads lead to God. Only one way.

So if this is true, if there is only one way, then what should our response be? What should you and I do regarding this knowledge that there is only one way, one truth, and one life?

So Jesus says this. He says in verse 7, If you really know me, you know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.

[24 : 41] To go to Heaven, brothers and sisters, friends, we need to be on the right way. We need to know the right way.

Last Tuesday was the third time I visited Star Wars General Hospital in November and December. Third time. there was a sister who was in the hospital and she came from Miri.

She used to be our BM group, our Baha'u's group pastor, leader and she was taking care of the whole Sarawak region, traveling a lot to different parts of Sarawak, planting churches, encouraging the groups.

But she's not well. She is not well. And so she flew in from Miri on the advice of the doctor, one of our doctors in our church and asking her to come to Kuching for therapy, radiotherapy to manage the pain.

[25 : 55] So she was here for a few days and I visited her and this last time that I visited her both of us had this thought that this will be the last time I'll be seeing her and she was also thinking that it's the last time she'll be seeing me.

We spoke very lightheartedly about different people and she was also sharing, you know, on the other side in heaven there'll be a lot of people welcoming me and they'll be telling me she was saying this, they'll be telling me why do you take so long to come?

And so she is very realistic about it that her time is very short. so before I left I prayed with her and anointed her hands anointed her head with oil prayed with her and at the end of this prayer she then prayed for me she prayed for blessings on me my family prayed for the ministry that I'm doing and I could see that there were some tears in her eyes but not to the point of crying yet and I was just about to leave because I had to go and go and fetch my daughter from school and but just before I left I walked out I looked at her again and I told her kakak we affectionately affectionately call her kakak I told her kakak I think

I should hug you so on the hospital bed I I gave her a hug and at that moment all our tears started to flow we just kept we just uncontrollably all our tears so hug and prayed with her I mean hug her and then after that I went back and sat down in front of her I told her why are we crying why are we crying we were crying and we were just joking and laughing as well very light heartedly and you know as a believer even in tears we can also have joy because we know that this is not the last time it might be the last time I see her in fact I'm wearing this band here this band was given by the sister to us to thank us for praying so it was actually for two months that I've been wearing this already so it reminds me to pray for her but it also reminds me that life is short life is fragile and there are people who have needs but this assurance that I have is that

I will see her again in paradise and there's one thing that she told me before I left she said you know Pastor Lawrence I never regret serving God never regret serving God and here is this person in a hospital bed may not have long to live we keep praying that she will be healed but we also realize that time is short because of very advanced stages of the cancer but here is this person who has served God all her life and I don't think there's any wealth or much property to her name it's a bit like what

[30 : 18] Job was saying naked I come from my mother's womb naked I shall return may the name of the Lord be praised it just puts things into perspective that what is life all about and I was very encouraged to continue to serve God and finish my own race how about each one of us today would we be certain of that of that we have finished our race just like our sister she told me I never regret serving God and she has done her work I still have my race to run now there are two things here for our response the first thing is to know Jesus number one to know Jesus so Jesus says in verse 7 if you really know me you will know the father as well!

this word because what is heaven heaven is a relationship with Jesus relationship with God so we need to know Jesus now how do we know Jesus one way of course is what the Bible says we are in this series of the I am there were how many 1 2 3 4 5 I am this is the fifth one I'm the light of the world I'm the bread of life I'm the gate know Jesus if we know Jesus we will know the father because Jesus has removed all the roadblocks to heaven many other religions it's all about how to become a better person how to do more good works how to earn more how to have more rewards in heaven it's all about moving upwards and becoming better and better but for the Christian faith is not about being a better person it's about realizing how evil we are it's about realizing how depraved we are it's about realizing that we cannot save ourselves no matter how much good works we do and salvation is not based on our works but on the works of Jesus Christ who died on the cross for us one life for another life paying for you and me so that you and I can enter the gates of heaven going into the Father's house it's not about us it's about what Jesus has done by grace through God's son Jesus Christ so Jesus says I am the way the truth and the life no other religions it's not about other religions it's only about Jesus I'm the way have you found this path have you found this way

I'm the truth what is truth unless we believe everything and then we are contradicting ourselves and what is the life that Jesus offers life is not about just about going to heaven but life is about life now so the first thing is knowing the second thing is about believing believe in Jesus number two is to believe in Jesus Thomas said we don't know the way we don't know the way Jesus and then Philip says show us the father and that will be enough for us so Jesus says this to Philip don't you know me Philip even after I have been among you such a long time anyone who has seen me has seen the father so a lot of times we want to see before we believe but in God's ways it's believing before we see believe before we see not seeing is believing believing is seeing the words

I say to you I do not speak on my own authority rather the father living in me who is doing his work believe in me when I say that I am in the father and the father is in me or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves so the next thing is we need to believe!

[34 : 56] I want to see evidence but we can't see all the evidence if we were to see all the evidence then we will be omniscient we will know all the facts but no one knows all the facts no one can know all the facts and that's where we have this element of faith we need to believe well there's one thing that helps me in my faith and my belief is that fellowship with people of the faith yesterday we had some of our senior people our senior group we met in our church and there was not just the senior people we call it senior family they were also young people so our what we call the youth and young adults they came and they joined in together with the senior people and they were singing songs there was somebody who came and led the senior people to play some games very fun games senior people may not be able to move around so much but this person was very clever in how he arranged the games for the senior people it was good fun and it was a time of our senior pastor was there pastor

Dennis I'm taking care of the English congregations pastor Dennis takes care of all the congregations including the English Mandarin Bahasa there's Iban there's the so he oversees all that and I oversee only the English congregation so pastor Dennis was there and he was sharing about how important the seniors are and how the seniors have there were a couple of families couples that he mentioned how they helped him in his faith and also in building of our church that even in the early days they were there and yesterday they were there as well very encouraging to see some of them I affectionately call them uncle and auntie as well because they really are like uncles and aunties who genuinely care who genuinely love the younger people so we do need each other to encourage one another in our faith so there were the young people who were singing and later on just sitting next to the senior people and it was a wonderful time of interaction we do need each other

I was we called it life group and in this life group we was in the house of a family we had Bible discussion after our Bible sharing and in that sharing there were questions like what is one way you can deny yourself in following Jesus so when that question came I was in the group one of the smaller groups we broke in the smaller groups I was thinking one way I can deny Jesus what would you say if you were in the group well they were sharing different ways of how they deny themselves how they deny themselves to follow Jesus and for me I was saying that one way that I'm denying myself to follow Jesus is to go for every meeting during this Christmas time that people invite me for so

I was invited to go for this life group this life group this life group and I go and deny myself I prefer to be at home I prefer to stay at home but I was stretching myself because I wanted to be with the people I wanted to also touch base with a lot of our people in our church so that is one way one way is accountability to one another we need each other we need to meet one another we need to meet one another in the flesh when we look at each other's expressions it's very different from those days during the COVID times when we were looking at each other on the screen so we need to be with each other only then is our faith really strengthened somebody once said that there are three ways that God strengthens his church these three ways the word of God the spirit of God and the people of God and so we need to encourage one another the people of God let's encourage one another so believe in Jesus if we have doubts let's also share with one another and perhaps our brother and sister they can share their testimony how they overcame those doubts and looking at the faith of others as well we too can be encouraged Jesus says I am the way the truth and the life now Pope Francis again I go back to his quote he said all religions are pathways to reach God how would you answer after today's message well Greg Laurie senior pastor of Harvest Christian Fellowship took

[40 : 50] Pope Francis' words all religions are pathways to God and then so he says Pope Francis all religions are pathways to God the next line he wrote this Jesus Colin I am the way the truth and the life no one comes to the father except through me so which do you believe in do you believe that all religions all faiths are pathways to God the same God or will we believe Jesus' words I am the way the truth and the life no one comes to the father except through me I want to invite you today let's put our trust in Jesus he is the only way there are no other ways burn all other bridges I am the truth there can't be many truths there's only one truth if

God said it there's only one truth and there's only one life life in Jesus and life eternal with God the father shall we pray let's spend a bit of time to pray and respond to God thank you Lord Jesus thank you Lord father in heaven thank you so much for your word oh God and Lord in the book of John we see so many of this I am as we have come to the conclusion of our series that Jesus says I am the way I am the truth I am the life Lord we pray that each one of us we will not be looking for many other ways we will not be distracted by so many things in the world or other beliefs of God but we will be on that path the way that we will believe in the truth of your word of God and we also be having that life life with Jesus life of knowing Jesus that abundant life that you have promised that even in this life we can have an abundant life but also eternal life with the father in heaven through you Jesus Christ so Lord we pray that each one of us our hearts will be challenged! God bless all of you have a good year good end of the year and also a good start of the year God bless all of you