

"I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (Part 1) - John 14:6

We have been going through the "I am's" of the New Testament, and there are seven we mentioned in the Gospel of John. We now have come to the sixth which is, "**I am the way, the truth, and the life.**" (John 14:6) We want to take a look at it because it is something that is absolutely profound within our life, and I think it is perfect timing, as we get ready to go into the New Year.

There was a bumper sticker on the back of a trailer that read, "If I am not headed west, stop me, and turn me around." I thought that was kind of interesting to have that written on the back of a trailer, because that would mean that he probably, oftentimes, gets lost. And that is difficult for a man to really admit. You see, men never get lost. But a wife knows he is lost about five minutes into looking for something. If you want to find a man lost, take him to the mall and you will find him lost and in pain. It is a wonderful place to realize how you can feel lost. And if he still does not feel lost, take him in someplace where you have to buy all the things for women; and he will get lost.

There are certain things that we just do not want to admit. But I am here to tell you that every one of us in our lives gets lost. It is easy to get lost. It does not seem like it is easy, but it is extremely easy within the society we live in. Because we live in a secular world, and because things are changing so quickly, governments are changing and sceneries are changing, it is hard for us to get focused on one thing. If you were to head towards New York and look for the Twin Towers, that was going to be your guiding point, then you would not be able to find how to get downtown because it has changed. And when you begin

to realize that Jesus Christ said: "There is only One Way" – then that is a wonderful thing in our life.

When I was young, I would always have to feel that I would need to defend for He is the only way. But now that I have gotten older, I realize I do not need to defend it. I am more thankful for it. You see if Rob and I were going to start hiking, and there were 15 different paths for us to take, first of all we would probably get in somewhat of a hassle because he would want to go one way, and I would want to go another way. If one way was a little bit steeper and one way was a little bit flatter, I would take the flat road and he would take the high road. He likes to climb; I like to walk. I am heavy; he is thin. That is where it is at, bottom line. My feet hurt, his feet do not hurt. He needs to go shopping then he can get his feet hurting like mine. But then we would have to question which road are we on. And we would really never know whether if we were on the right road or the wrong road until we finally find out one day.

But when you finally find Jesus Christ, and you get on His road, you can never get lost, and you can enjoy the things that God has for you. The world desires to bring other distractions and seeks to take you off the road. If you are obedient and stay on that road, you will never be lost and you will always be found. And so it is pretty much an "idiot proof" road. Follow Me and you will find the Kingdom of God; and I need that in my life. I do not need to make a bunch of decisions, and the reason why is because my heart is deceitfully wicked. And who can know it? The decisions I make sometimes I think are good decisions, but sometimes I find out that they are selfishly made. I also read in my Bible **"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."** (Proverbs 14:12) So though the roads look right and though the things look good, the end of this road is going to be the death of my spiritual life. And though I can do certain things and get involved in certain positions, or take new jobs, or do new trades, or become more active in certain

things; there is a way that leads to death, if it is on the wrong road. And the Bible declares also that said, **"When the Kings died, every man did that which was right in his own eyes."** (Judges 21:25) And you see when it comes to a group of people, we do what is right in our own eyes; and oftentimes the road we take leads to destruction. And Jesus said follow me for, **"I am the way, the truth and the life."** (John 14:6). And Paul declared, **"Follow me for I follow the Lord."** (1 Corinthians 11:1) So we come to this passage in John 14:1-6, **"Let not your heart be troubled: Ye believe in God, believe also in me. 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. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; and where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know".** Thomas said, unto him, **"Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?"** Jesus saith unto him, **"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."** Now the interesting passage I want to bring to your attention is in verses 4 and 5. The heart of the text is in verse 6. But I have never seen this before and here it declares, **"We all know the way"** (John 14:4) **"And whither I go ye know, (underline that, ye know) and the way ye know."** Those were the words of Jesus Christ. Now why do I bring that up this morning? Because I believe that every one of us knows more than we let on to know. I believe that you know exactly what God wants in your life. I believe you know where you left your faith and where you walked away from the Lord.

I believe that when Elijah was serving and ministering, and that one servant came and said, **"Master, Alas, Alas! I've lost my ax, I cannot work!"** **Elijah said, "Show me where you lost it?"** And the Bible declares the man took him to the exact place where he was working, where he lost the head of his ax. And the Bible declared that Elijah prayed, **"And the iron swam to him."**

(2 Kings 6:5-6) He put it back together and told the man to get back to work. But the story is, he knew where he lost it.

So that tells me, I know where I've gone off the road. I know what took me off the road. Now, I'll try to make excuses and maybe bury it and subconsciously, not try to remember it. And Satan will come and try to confuse the issue that you don't know where you went wrong. Oh, you know exactly where you went wrong; when you begin to become unequally yoked, or when you begin to violate the scriptures, or when you made decisions on your own, or made decisions without praying or seeking the mind and heart of God. You made wrong decisions. And sometimes you marry and it has been a horrible situation. Or sometimes you try to help God out and that has become a horrible situation, but you know where you have gone wrong. And Thomas declares, "We don't know where you're going." And Jesus said, "You knew." And then he said, you knew. And so either Jesus is lying or Thomas is lying; and I would say that Thomas, because of the overwhelming fear and insecurity of his life, knowing that the Master was now going to go, he allowed the fear to dominate his mind so that he could no longer think clearly.

Peter had the same problem. **"Jesus said to Peter, when you are tried and you are tested and when Satan comes and seeks to destroy you, I want you to know Peter that I have prayed for you. And when you overcome this incredible trial in your life, go strengthen the brethren. And Peter said, I will not deny you."** (Luke 22:31-33) Now either Peter is lying or Jesus is lying. And when Thomas says, "Now wait a second, we don't know the way." And Jesus said, "You know the way." So either Jesus is lying or Peter is lying. So now that brings me to us, or to me. "Steven, you know what I want. I have shown you oh man, what is good and what the Lord requires of you; that you would walk humbly before God, that you will love mercy and you would do it justly, that you would present your body a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto

God which is a reasonable service. That you would come out from among them and be separate, saith the Lord. That you would be holy, as I am holy." I know that's what God wants.

And so when I make my excuses and begin to explain to God why these things don't happen, I think I hear the voice very crystal clear. "Steven, you know." Now you can make excuses and you can share things, but you know the truth. And I've never seen that in all the years I've taught. I've always thought it was an honest question, I do think it was honest. I think Thomas was captivated in the moment of fear, insecurity and loneliness and he spoke. But Jesus wouldn't tolerate it. And He says, "you know." "I have been with you for three years. I have taught you well, I have been the teacher, I have been the ruler. I have healed the sick, and I have ministered to the multitude. And when you were unwilling to help feed the people, I explained to you that you had to have a heart of compassion. And when the man came with the demon-possessed son, I took the time and ministered to him. And when I went to Samaria and reached out to a woman that would have nothing to do with anybody, I want you to know, I broke through the barriers. And so I have led you, I have taught you, I have directed you how you are to lead your life."

And so He said, "**I am the way, I am the truth, and I am the life...**" (John 14:6). And I think if all we would do is stop and ponder just for a moment. You remember He said to David, and I love it so much. "**David, be still, and know that I am God.**" (Psalm 46:10). If you could just stop before you go into next year. If you could ponder this last year and look at the things that you have done, and the things that God has done through your life. And how he desires you to become more than that this year; then you need to stop and be still. If I could stand still and see the salvation of God; if I could begin to once again just allow God to fight the battles for me; not try to defend myself or try to explain myself, but just be at peace with God. That I would stand still and know that I

would see the salvation of God, and I need to see the hand of God, and I need to know the mind of God this year. And then as Naomi said to Ruth, **"If you will sit still my daughter, until He has done the work."** (Ruth 3:18) If I would just sit still, and not be running here and running there, and having my hands in everything. If I just would sit still, until He has done the work.

And so God wants to work in my mind, and God wants to work in my spirit and God wants to work down deep within my heart. But the people in Isaiah 30:15 said, **"Nay. They would not in quietness and confidence sit. But they took the horses and begin to run."** And so because of that running I don't see God, I don't hear God, I don't know God. And though God is saying that you know Me and you have seen Me and you have touched Me, and you have handled Me, "I am the Word of Life." Jesus stands before Thomas and He says, "I Am."

Now one of the things that stands out to me more than anything this year in the Bible, is that Jesus did not solve their problems. I've never seen that before; but I am seeing it so crystal clear in my life. There are problems I need to solve, and decisions that I need to decide on, and I want answers from God; and sometimes He doesn't give them to me, and it breaks my heart. How am I supposed to lead people, and how am I supposed to do these things, if You don't show me exactly what to do? But I tell you what He has done faithfully: He has always given me Himself. And that is exactly what He does here. Thomas, "We don't know the way." **"Thomas, I am the way, the truth and the life"** (John 14:6). He did not answer Thomas' problem. He gave Himself to the troubled heart. And that is the message: The trouble will never go away, until you let Him into your heart. Oh, you can explain the trouble, and you can justify the trouble, and you can blame the trouble, but it doesn't make a difference; you're in trouble. And until you come to Christ, until you come back to God, then you are going to have trouble. Because it's not someone who has robbed you, and

it's not someone who has taken the joy from you, you and I have taken our eyes off of the Lord.

And so a troubled heart is a lonely heart. It is a heart away from God. And so He came, you remember, once again to the Emmaus Road, and they were burdened and they were bummed out because Christ had died. And Jesus dropped in and Jesus said, **"What are you guys talking about?"** And they began to explain, **"Have you not heard, Jesus died?"** And Jesus did not solve the problem. He started from Moses and expounded the scriptures, until they broke the bread and their eyes were opened, and Jesus was gone. (Luke 24:13) He gave them Himself. So when you are having problems in your marriage, He may not heal the marriage, but he will give you Himself - and that will heal the marriage. You see God is after you. He is not after your wife to change her. He is not after some gal to marry you. He wants you. You are the preeminent of His love. You are the apple of His eye. You are the thing that God is after. And so maybe this year, I need to come His way. Maybe I need to know His truth; maybe I need to live that life.

And so we read very simply in these verses, three simple things I want to share with you. Number one in John 14:1-2: The peace promised. Just jot down "the peace promised" in verses 1 and 2. And then "The place prepared", the place prepared" in verses 3-5. And then lastly, "The pathway provided" in verse 6, the pathway provided. So the peace promised, in verses 1 and 2, the place prepared in verses 3-5 and the pathway provided in verse 6. Notice in verse 1 and 2, **"Let not your heart be troubled: believe ye in God, believe also in me. 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."** And so the peace is promised, one of the great verses of the Bible that has brought more comfort to people's hearts. But I want to remind you that He is in the upper room, and their hearts were troubled. Judas had already betrayed him. Peter was about

ready to deny Him. Jesus was about ready to depart from them. And Thomas was totally discouraged. And there were reasons why they were troubled. They didn't want Him dying. They didn't want to go with an uncertainty in their life. He had fed them for three years. He had taken care of their enemies for three years. He had stood by them for three years. Now He is on His way to die.

And their hearts were troubled. The word troubled in *Greek* means to break apart; it means to be crushed like a ship on an ocean. It means to be bashed as winds and waves are coming against his boat. And it means your life is going back and forth and here and there and being blown throughout the sea. But Jesus said when that happens, **"Do not let your heart be troubled."** You remember He walked to them on the water. He fed them and ministered to them, calmed the sea. When they were hungry He fed them with the bread. When they were tired, He said come apart. He was always looking out for them. And here it is once again. He is going to die. But whom is He more concerned about now?

And that is the weird thing about Christianity. We want to be loved so desperately by somebody, and Satan will not let us be loved by God. His love is beyond description. He wants just to love you, hold you. He wants to minister to your heart and take care of the problems, but it is our ego, our pride. It's the enemy that says, "Don't come to him." And Jesus said, **"I am the way..."** Unless you come to Me, I can't help you. And even if I am saved, I still need to come His way, not my way. You remember the Bible declares, **"There is a way that seems right unto a man, but therein is death."** (Proverbs 14:12) "Well, I'll just serve God this way." Well, that is death. There is only one way between God and man - that man Christ Jesus. And all the trials, all the heartache of this last year was doing it my way, not His way. His way is putting Him first and everything else will be added to you. His way is not fearing what man will say about you; but our way is the snare of the enemy. His way is no

burden, no breakage. **"Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden, I'll give you rest."** (Matthew 11:28) But we do not come. We are burdened, but we do not come. We are overwhelmed, but we do not come. And so we look to administration; we look to new ways to get the pressure off of our lives. We look to new Prozac; we look to new ways to run to try to keep the stress level down - but we will not turn to God. Why is that? Why are we so stubborn? Why are we so stiff-necked? Come to me My child, and I will love you. I made the heavens and the earth. Oh no, it's too narrow. Oh, that's the wonderful thing. There is one way, and if you love God, you have come back that way.

If you deterred off that path, He wants to bring you back. And the only way back is through repentance. And the moment you repent, the Bible says, He will make the road a highway back to God. (John 14:6) And God wants to bless you, and God wants to use you, and God wants to minister to your heart, but He is the way. But it's the way of the crucifixion. And though He was going to die, the very next day they were going to crucify Him; He did not talk about Himself. Did you hear what I said? He did not talk about Himself. The "I" was not important to His life. And the reason why was because there was a purpose and a plan why He would die. And when you know the purpose and you know the plan, then you are gone with your life. And the reason why we talk about "I" and "me" and all the problems "I" have is because we don't see ourselves in the plan of God. If we saw ourselves in the plan of God, then these are precious trials we are going through to perfect the work in us, to make us more patient, and gentle down the road. And they are to chasten us back to His love and we need these things. But when I see me and I see myself, and I see that I'm the center of everything; and my moods and emotions are generated around who "I am", then woe is me; I can't minister to anybody.

And maybe this has been a year about you. How you are going to get this, and how you are going to do that, and it has been a bad year. Because you left Him

out. Well, Jesus wants to be the center of your life. He wants to be the focal point of your heart. He wants you to know that He loves you far beyond what you could ever do. And if you would come to Him, and just give Him an opportunity, make Him a common denominator within your life; that you would look to Him with wisdom and guidance; He would turn your life around. He said, **"He will make even your enemies to be at peace with you."** (Proverbs 16:7) He will fill you with an anointing and a fullness of God that you will not get sidetracked and overwhelmed, but you will walk in that straight and narrow road. And the joy in your heart, and no guilt, and no shame will fill your heart and there will be a desire for the things of God. And you will be ready to meet the Lord, ready to see the Lord.

Jesus said, "I Am", but that way was the cross. And that way is a life of sacrifice. And we don't like that way, and so we take our way; the way of ease, and the way of undisciplined, the way of unconsecration, the way of undesirable things for God. And yet God is saying there is only one way. And you need to come my way. Well Jesus, "What was your way?" Steven, pick up the cross and follow Me. "I don't want to go that way." Well, then you're lost. And so I try my way and I get involved in this project and I get involved in that project and do this and do that. And you lose your marriage, and you lose your children, you lose everything. And all the time God is knocking at the door saying, "I am the way". What does that mean? "You need to come back to Me". Let Me back in your life. Let Me work through in and around your life. And so the peace is promised.

But note secondly in John 14:3-5: The place is prepared. **"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?"** But I want you to underline,

the word prepare a place for you. And again, I have never seen this before, but I want to throw it out to you this morning. There is no doubt that He is speaking of heaven. That He has gone to prepare a place for me and I cannot wait to see it. Now I think of my son when he comes over to the house. Gail begins to cook, and she begins to clean the house, and she lights the candles and she does all those wonderful things. And the house is fresh, there is food in the icebox, and she has prepared for my son. Now when the candles are out for me, I don't know if it is because I smell or what... But when I come home, there's not much for preparation. It's like, "How was your day?" "Great." "What are we going to eat?" "Great." But there is not that excitement as when family comes over, and my wife is very faithful doing that.

Well, I take that to be like God. God is going home, preparing to bring Steve Mays to His Kingdom. I just think, that's too much man! Forget it, just take me now. Don't fix anything else; just take me right now, God. You know, just do it now. Oh Steven, the things that you love the most, the things that the world has died for, gold. I'm just going to make pavement out of them, just to show you that your values and My values have never been the same. The thing that you died for to get to wear around your neck is asphalt in heaven. Because the value in heaven is a relationship; and we do not understand relationship in our society. And the reason why is because it's "I", it's "me," and you cannot build a marriage on "I", and you cannot build children on "I". Well, we're going to do this. Well, what do they want to do? Well we want to do this. What does He want to do? "Well, honey, sit and watch the football game." "I don't like football." "Oh, why do I have to sit and watch Bambi?" Let us have a relationship, so we had a fun to talk about that. "Well, I just don't like football." "Well, I don't like Bambi." Now if you were to blow Bambi up, that would be wonderful, I'll watch it. But just watching Bambi? And then she says to me, "Oh honey, it's just a time that we are sitting together watching Bambi." "Well, honey it is just a time that we are sitting together watching them going in the

football game." And it ends, "Well, honey, that's so violent." I said, " Bambi got killed, what are you talking about? That breaks my heart." I had an emotional breakdown after watching Bambi." Anyway, I'm getting away from the point here." But it is a relationship, and that is what He is talking about.

And lastly, oh one other thought, the pathway being prepared. We know it is definitely heaven, but could it be He was talking about Calvary? I go to a place to prepare: And going to Calvary to die for your sins, to give you forgiveness and to give you absolute assurance within your life. And I kind of believe that now thinking it through, that He did both. "Steven, I need to go and prepare a place for you, that you can bring your sins; that you will be forgiven, that you will be able to enjoy the place that I have built for you.

And lastly, the pathway provided, in verse 6. Jesus said unto him: The peace promised in verses 1 and 2. The place prepared in verses 3 and 5. And the pathway provided in verse 6. **"Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."** "I am" the only One that you can follow."

Lloyd Pulley from New Jersey was here a couple of weeks go; he spoke on Sunday night. We left my house, and he had a car that was given to him, he rented the car. He knows a personal friend in the business and they upgraded him to the guiding system on this car, a pretty nice guiding system. And so we're on our way Sunday night to church, and he is asking me the address of the church. And I am saying, "Well, it's 19300 South Vermont. And so he is pushing this in, and I am saying, "Well, Lloyd you don't need to know that." "Well, yes, I do." And so he went through everything, and he says, "The box will tell me how to get to the church." And I am thinking... "Lloyd, for 25 years I've been going down on this road. I am..." And Lloyd said, "No, no, no, no. You don't

understand this is hooked up to the satellite." And so I said, "Okay Lloyd, but I go to church there." "Well Steve, a lot of money has been put into this thing." And so he puts it up; and we are going down the street, and he says, now take this street and turn left at Western. You will be reaching Western in about half a mile. I'll beep you when it comes time to turn left." And so we are getting up to Western, and it goes beep, beep, "Turn left at the next light." And I said, "No, I don't want to go that way. I want to go a faster way. I want to get to church." "But the machine." I said, "Lloyd I know the way." So we made a turn on Anaheim, and all of a sudden the computer went beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep. And then I had to re-govern where the car was at; and it said, "You are now on Anaheim Street." Ok, great. "Well, turn left at Vermont." "No, Lloyd, go straight." "Well Steve." I said, "Lloyd, if you want to teach tonight, turn right at this street." But it was like hilarious. "Well Steve, the box. Steve." "Lloyd" I felt like saying, "I am the way, the truth, the life, follow me." Man.

But that's how we are. No the box, no this, no. I know what is best for the marriage. You do not even know how to get married, or be married or you don't know anything about your wife. "I do too." No, you don't. You're never going to know her. You're never going to know him. So who's the master at the marriage? Who's the master at the single life? Who's the one who knows everything? - God. But we don't come to Him. When you have problems with the children, you sit them down, you talk to them, you yell at them. But do you pray? "Well, no." Well then you're just telling them yourself. "Well we did this; I had to walk in the snow for six miles when I was a kid." You lived in Wilmington; you never walked in the snow. Give me a break, you know. My dad told me that, and I found out where he lived. He lived in San Pedro. He lied to me. And I thought... you know I had to walk two blocks to school, and I thought I was being abused as a child. But the problem is, is that I have this knowledge. "Son, I know what is good for you." "You do not know what is good for yourself." Now God has a way for your children. And God has a way for your

wife. And God has a way for the single people. And God has a way for me. Well, don't you think we ought to ask Him? "I am the way. If you would like to have a great year, would you come My way? I'll lead you, guide you, direct you, open the doors, go before you, and I'll make your way prosperous." The Bible says, **"If you will meditate upon my word day and night, then I will give you success, then you will prosper."** (Joshua 1:8) **"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all these things will be added."** (Matthew 6:33)

Closing Prayers:

Father we thank You. That God, as sometimes-foolish sheep, we think we know the way. Well Lord, after 30 years, I've come to a point that I do not know the way that You really want me to walk - except Jesus Christ. Things change, and circumstances change, and environment changes, and people change, but Lord You never change. And so God, I just want this year, myself, to do one thing better. Lord, I want to look to You more than I have ever looked to anyone in my life. God, I believe that if we could look to You, that You would say "I am the Way - I am the Truth - and I am your Life." Lord, I pray for the people that you have brought today who make up this wonderful fellowship. That Lord, all of us are in the very same boat. Lord, it was a good year; it was a hard year. It might have been a difficult year, even maybe a lonely year. Maybe even a trying year of losing relationships and going through difficult times. And Lord, we look back and we realize that we go our way, when we don't go Your way. Well, there are ambitions that we have, and dreams that we want to do; and Lord we are driven towards those ambitions and dreams, but how dare we do them if it's not Your way. And God Your way is the cross. Your way is sacrificing. Your way is to minister to the life of others more than we take care of ourselves. So Lord, take away the selfishness this year. Take away the "me" complex. And Lord, I pray that You would become the Ruler of our lives. And God that you would fill us and give us the fullness that we would know Your heart; and that God, we being in the way that You would show us.

I love that one verse where Abraham declared to Eleazar, **“Go out and find a wife for my son Isaac.”** And when he brought back the wife, Abraham said, **“How did you find her?”** And Eleazar said, **“I being in the way, God led me.”** (Genesis 24). Lord, may that be the prayer: I being in Your way, You have led me. And we will thank You.