

**I am the Way, Truth, Life Part 3 - John 14:6**

This morning I'd like to draw your attention to John 14 and we'd like to look at verses 1-6 as we conclude this sixth saying with three different sermons and this one text in verse 6. John chapter 14: **"Let not your heart be troubled: 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 to 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? And Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."**

**Prayer:** Father we ask, that You would give us great insight as we open Your word and as we look into this text. And Father, I pray that You would give us answers for our own personal life and we will thank You and we will praise You, in Jesus name, Amen.

Jesus declared that, **"I am the way, the truth, and the life."** One of the most searching questions I think that is ever found in the bible is found in the book of James. You don't need to turn there, but in James 4:14: **"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and vanishes away."** In the context of James, is that before you say that I'm going to do this or going to do that, would it not be wisest to say, if the Lord wills we're going to say this or we're going to say that, or we're going to go here, or we're going to go there. And the reason why is because of this interesting little phrase: For what is your life? That's an interesting question for each of us to ask ourself today. What is your life?

I was reading some statistics the other day, and for an average American who would be able to live until 70 years old, they will spend three years in business meetings. They will be watching 13 years of television. They will spend \$89,281 on food just for you. You will spend 89, almost \$90,000 on your belly. You will consume 109,354 pounds of food (I think I've done that in just the last couple of years). I like this one: You will make 1,811 trips to McDonalds. You will spend \$6,881 on vending machines. I definitely agree with this: they will eat 35,000 cookies and 1,483 pounds of candy and you will spend 24 years of your life sleeping.

Now when I look at those statistics, I realize that is not a life when your consuming 100,000 pounds of food and costing you \$90,000 and you're chewing down 38,000 cookies in one life time. No wonder we're a mess! But seriously, what would you say your life really is? Would you say that it's an education that for you being a Christian, or having life, would be having a good education? Or would you say that it would be being successful, an entrepreneur – one who was able to put together businesses and be able to do things in that realm? Or would it be simply just a good home and a great relationship with your children and with your friends? What would it mean for you to say, "This is my life?" If we were going to be honest, most of us would say that our life is pretty empty, often times boring, and often times filled with tremendous loneliness. And we've lost really the luster and just the excitement of what it is to really live. We are going through the day in and day out things and things sometimes get away from us.

The other day I was scheduled to go to Torrance Memorial. This is kind of a very embarrassing story, but it's such a great application, I couldn't pass it up. And it was going to be a time where they would put me under an x-ray machine and do a spinal tap. They would stick a needle into my spine. But for some reason I kept telling myself it wasn't going to be a bad procedure and yet for my life, I didn't sleep very well that night, thinking about it. But when I got up in the morning, I remember vividly putting

on the best pair of socks I had and making sure that I had the very best things underneath of my clothing on, just in case I had to be exposed. And I thought, "Well you know, there has to be some dignity here and I don't want to, you know, be prudish, but I'd like to, you know, it's a little embarrassing, and you know, I'm going to the hospital and being at the room by myself. And one of the things I really enjoy about Torrance Memorial, is they always give you two gowns; one for the front, one for the back, so you're not walking down holding one as you're going to another room - you know what I'm talking about. I need to be very careful here, over the tape and live. And so all of a sudden I begin to realize, "You know, this is really the real deal. I'm going to go in this room, I'm going to get this shot, going to go upstairs for another four hours (probably go on Vicadin because of the headache you're going to have), but you can do this because you're tough, and you have good clean socks on, and you look good all the way around." And I remember combing my hair and then I realized that I didn't have hair and I was a little bit nervous and I got there, and they said it's time for you to hop up on the table. So I was on my back and they were taking x-rays and they said, "Turn over." And I turned over and all of a sudden they picked up the gown and low and behold there was the bottom. And I felt like, really embarrassed and they put tape on it, and everything else and I'm thinking, "God, why do I have to go through this? This is not even a pleasant thing and everybody knows who I am." I mean, I'll be eating at a restaurant, and someone will walk up to me and say, keep talking, keep talking. And I'll keep talking, "You're um...nine-thirty at um...every 9:30 at night...every Monday through Friday, what's your name? And I said, "Steve Mays." "Oh that's your name, I know your voice." They don't know me, they know my voice. So, I'll be in getting a Starbucks and I'll say, "I'll have a Starbuck." "Pastor Steve, where are you?" And so my name kind of gives me away and so I'm trying to play real low key. I don't want people to know what's going on.

So, she gives me a shot of Novocain and it kind of numbed it and I told her, "Listen, I'm kind of a big guy, it's like Shamu, give me some more. You know I'm tough, I'm mean,

I could take a building project, but you know woman, I just don't like you right now, Novocain me." So she gave me the shot and it burned, I mean it really hurt and tears are coming to my eyes and I look behind me and I shouldn't of because I saw the needle. And I went, "Oh God, what am I doing here?" And yet I'm out laid and she has my back and x-rays and "Don't move, don't move, don't move" and "Well, don't poke me, don't poke me" and I'm having this dialogue with this woman and finally she poked me and man, it hurt and my stomach and I was going to throw up and I said, "Listen, get me a rag" and I was sweating and 20 minutes later, she hadn't even got to the bone. She couldn't get through. And so she said, "We've got to start all over again on the other side." I said, "Jesus, help her." And she wasn't saying a word, but I was in tears and I was all over the table. Finally she got into the spinal cord, and I won't do too much there, but all of a sudden, she said, "Now, I can see it." "You can see what?" "I can see what I've been going after." What have you been going after?" She goes, "I've been going after the sciatic nerve." I said, "Huh?" She goes, "Oh, did you think we were going to just kind of spray this on?" "Yeah." "No, we have to penetrate the sciatic nerve. We're going to stick the needle..." "What?" "Hold on, cough." "Ahhhhh", bam and my legs start flopping around and my legs are burning with tremendous heat and I'm screaming at this woman, you know, "Hurry up!" "Five more seconds, four more seconds (and I mean, I can count quicker than she can)". Finally she pulls this needle out and my hands go down, and my back is undone, and my bottom is exposed, and I thought, "I don't care, I don't care." And people are walking in and out, maintenance people are walking in, I don't care. This is my bottom, take a look at it, and you know, I am out to lunch, you know, and I'm sitting there and my socks don't make a difference, and I thought ok, no one saw who I was, I'm ok, I'm ok, they don't know I'm Pastor Steve. And so I get back up, they roll me over and take me upstairs and I get there, and all of a sudden, I'm really uncomfortable because the tape is still taped on my back and still have my bottom kind of taped to my other bottom and this nurse comes in, "Pastor Steve! ...Roll over." And all of a sudden I realize, "Oh Lord, what now?" And of course you know, I realize, "God, my flesh, who cares?"

And I'm bringing that story up to you because, in your life and in my life, our flesh is the most important thing that we could ever have. We take care of it, we nurture it, we feed it, we go to unbelievable degrees to make sure that we are presentable and we're never embarrassed, but when the Spirit of God begins to work and when all of a sudden you begin to see what you have done and what I have done (the very best that I have put forward), often times it's not enough for the inside work that God wants to do within your life. You see, when it was all said and done, I really didn't care about anything except just going home. The reality hit: I felt like Shamu, I just was wounded, wanted to go home and start my life over again.

And I think that there are times in your life that you do everything right, but you go to bed empty. You do everything that you think you should, but the loneliness is killing you inside. Though you are happily married, you are empty and lonely deep within your own heart before the Lord. And that is the message that I want to talk to you a little bit about this morning.

What is your life? Is it going to work; is it making money; is it investing and trying to make it through life, and when you go to bed after you've dealt with relationships, after you've tried to make it through the world in which you live, is there an emptiness, a loneliness; is there something missing in your life?

And I think it's time for us to realize that Paul the apostle very simply said, "**For me to live is Christ, and for me to die, is to gain** (Philippians 1:21)." He would of, at the very beginning said, "For me to live is Christ." It's not to look good at the hospital; it's not to try to look good in society; it's to look good and to be good with God. From the very beginning of your moment of waking, that your time is spent with God, that your fellowship is rich and pure from the very bottom of your heart. And so Paul

declared in Philippians 1:21: **“For me to live is Christ.”** And John you remember, in 1 John 5:20 declared: **“This is the true God that has given to us eternal life.”**

So when I sit down and talk with you about life, what would you say to me? “Well, my life is hanging out at Starbucks, going to work, going to school, raising a family, taking care of the spouse, trying to see if I could ever get married, running a business.” And I would say to you, “Then you’re very empty, and you’re very lonely and there are things in your life that need to change.” Because you should say to me, at the very beginning of your life, for me to live is Christ, everything else is secondary in my heart, in my life.

And Jesus comes now in John 14:6 and He says that, **“I am the way, the truth and the life.”** And so if you’re troubled, He said that you come to Him. If your heart is troubled, then let your heart not be troubled in 14:1. He declared, “If you’re fatherless, then you need to look to your heavenly Father, which is in heaven.” Maybe you’re homeless, then you need to know that there are many mansions that He has gone to prepare. Or maybe you just feel that you’re lost and you’ve kind of misdirected your soul and your life. Then He is the way, the truth, and the life.

I think one of the key bible illustrations is the life of Solomon. Here was a man that had everything. He was the wealthiest man who ever lived. He was able to buy islands and he made gold like dirt in the kingdom of Israel. He was wealthy and he was rich, and yet he was empty and he was lonely and he was reaching out for things. And so the whole book of Ecclesiastes is about a man reaching out, trying to find something besides what he has, and what he has isn’t too bad. He’s able to do what he wants, he’s able to write 3,000 proverbs, he understood Botany and Zoology and he was one of the most brilliant men who ever lived in the Old Testament. He was the wealthiest man. He was the wisest man (he wrote the book of Proverbs). And yet he declares, **“Everything is vanity** (Ecclesiastics 1:2).” But you see, he was reaching out and

building his life under the sun and not in the Son. So, it's possible for you and I to love God and not build our life in Christ; to build our kingdoms, to build our empires, to pour our self into our job, into the education, into our children and never be satisfied in life. To have a marriage and have children and have relationships, but then look across each other and say, "I really don't know who she is." To look at your children beginning to grow up and begin to realize that they don't need you anymore and the empty nest syndrome begins to come. To look at the dating process, where you have been dating and dating and nothing seems to fill your heart. You begin to look around to the country in which you live and you begin to see babies thrown in trash cans and you begin to see shootings down at Gardena and you begin to see Afghanistan and now the Philippines and you begin to question really what life is all about. And you go to bed every night thinking, "Is there more and what am I going to do tomorrow?" And there has to be something to take the edge away from the loneliness within my heart.

And though Solomon had everything that we would ever dream, he never reached out to the right thing. Paul the apostle did the very same thing. It says of him that he was a Benjamite. He was a Jew and he was of the tribe of Benjamin. He was a Pharisee and he was of the Sanhedrin. He was a brilliant man and he was reaching out. But the way Paul was reaching out, he was seeking to kill the Christians and though he was educated and he was wealthy and he was driven, he was driven the wrong way. And he was doing things contrary to the things of God. Though he loved the law and though he did the law blamelessly (the bible declares), yet he did not fulfill the very call of God upon his life. And so we read, very simply in Philippians 3:4, **"Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man think that he himself, I trust in the flesh, I more: I was circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, as a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, I persecuted the church; as touching righteousness which is of the law, I was blameless."** Let's take a look at that.

He was blameless when it came to the law. Concerning his zeal, he was killing Christians and holding them out of their homes. He was on his way to Damascus. He was making havoc with the church. He was bent on destroying people's lives and yet the other side of his life, he felt that he was doing God's will. But there was something missing. There was something not right. There was something absent that drove him to the point that he would go to the extreme and one day he consented to the death of Stephen. And there as the men took off their jackets and laid them at Paul's feet (probably in order that they could take the stones and get a better throw), it says that something happened in Saul's life, or Paul's life. Something devastated Paul. Something that he had never seen before and that's what I want to share with you.

It said that Stephen had his hands lifted up and there was a passion for Jesus Christ and he said, Father forgive them, and the heavens opened and Stephen's face turned like an angel. And it says that Jesus Christ stood up and there Paul witnessed a man having a relationship with God - that's it! And that was exactly what he didn't have. Though he loved God his way, he did not know God. Though he wanted to come to church, he was not in Christ. Though he was doing things for God, he was not loving people. And there was a kicking against the prick, and that word means a sharp object. That it was wounding him; it was beating him up inside. And every night you go to bed with loneliness. And everyday you wake up, bored. And everyday you walk through this world empty. There's that live little tiny prick of the Holy Spirit saying to you, "Something's missing in your life." And you can have more children, but it won't solve it. And you can change jobs, and it won't solve it. And you can go to a different school, and it won't solve it. And you can even divorce your family or your wife and it won't solve it. And you can make twice as much money, it won't solve it. And you can even take a plane to Hawaii for a couple of weeks' vacation and it won't solve it. It just buries it over and over again. And when Stephen died, Paul was pricked in his heart. And it shook his foundation because everything that Paul had it was not life. But what Stephen had, it was life in Jesus.

You know the story on the Damascus Road, then the Lord got a hold of Paul and Paul said, **“Lord, what would you have me to do (Acts 9:6)?”** And we find that Paul came to understand the fullness of Christ and we read again in Philippians 3:7: **“But what things were gain to me, those things I count lost** (Those things of education were not important). **Yea doubtless, I count all things but lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and I count these things as dung...”** In other words, when I look at everything that I’ve done, all the walls that I’ve built, all the buildings that I’ve built, all the people that I’ve known, all the dinners that I’ve had, everything I’ve ever done in my life, I still go to bed with this nagging area of my life that cannot get solved. And Paul came to realize that he did not have a relationship with God.

And I’m here to tell you in a very gentle, but very strong way, that you will never deal with the loneliness in your life until you take Jesus on a personal daily devotional life. The only thing that will take the boredom out of your life is the freshness of Christ and when you are in the word and hanging out with Jesus Christ and praying to your Father, your life will become exciting, not boring. And I suggest that the boringness of our life is really an indicator that our relationship with Christ is not as strong as we think. I think the emptiness in our life is not because we can’t fill it, not because we can’t buy it, it’s because we will never be fulfilled and sustained until I bow my knee in the morning and ask Jesus Christ to be the Lord of my life on a daily basis. And He will fill me with His goodness and with His presence and His word will be the strength and the dynamite of my life. And if I refuse to get into the word, then my life will be empty and I will be like Solomon throughout the day, seeking to try to gain all these things under the sun, because I refuse to live in the Son. And when I look at the emptiness and the loneliness of my life, I realize that it drives me to do things I would never do normally. And I’m being driven because I will not hang out with the Lord. And I think it’s a wonderful relationship, when you finally realize that God wants you to no longer

be nagged. That He gave you that nagging experience to drive you to a point where you will bring Jesus Christ into your life on a daily basis.

When you see the things that have happened on 9/11, that it would bring you to a point of intercessory prayer. But we cannot solve the problems. All we can do is mess things up. Apart from Christ we cannot do it. Oh you can build cities and you can build kingdoms and you can go to NFL football games and you can enjoy your life, but every night there's going to be an emptiness because Jesus said He placed eternity within your heart. And so I'm suggesting to you today, not that you would change anything except one thing, that you would work the rest of your life on building a relationship with the Master. And if you and I would build that relationship and maintain that relationship, then I come to know what life is all about.

Have you ever thought for a moment, "Why am I boring? Or why am I bored?" It's because I've lost the luster of life. And what is that life? It's the great commission. Because I'm not right with God, I'm not sharing Christ and the very opposite is happening: I'm bored because I refuse to be a blessing. And I believe that God has called us to be a blessing in people's lives. And if you are outside of yourself and you are into Christ, then you will be looking to bless others and you will never be bored. And if you are lonely, then you begin to look for people to fill it and you're going to get hurt. But when the Lord fills that loneliness, then you're able to be the person that God wants you to be. It's not finding the right mate; it's being the right mate. It's not trying to have the right kids; it's being the right dad, it's being the right mom. It's being a mom and a dad and a single person who loves the Lord with all their heart, with all their soul, with all their mind. And David went on to say, that in thy presence is the fullness of joy. And so God is not letting this thing happen deep within our hearts because we want to build our lives apart from a daily commitment to Christ. And all that God is asking is that you would know that He is your life. That your life is not contained in what you do, or what you buy, or what you wear. Your life is contained on

Who you know. There in the hospital, lying down, everything revealed - it's not my body, it's my heart that God's after. It's my desire, and Paul said it so well, that I am to see Christ in everything I do. And so Paul lived through Christ. You remember in Galatians, **"I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live. Yet not I but Christ that liveth in me and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God."** (Galatians 2:20) So I live through Christ.

Number two: I live for Christ. Paul declared in Romans 14:7: **"For none of us live for himself and no man dies to himself, for whether we live, we live unto the Lord and whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's."**

And then I live after Christ. In 1 Corinthians 11:1: **"Be ye followers of me, even as Christ, I follow him."** So the question that I would like to ask this morning: if I was to sit down and have lunch with you in your home and I was to say, "So tell me about your life." I hope that you and I would say, "For me to live is ...what? Christ. For I live through Him, let's say that, "I live through Him, I live for Him, and I live after Him." And everything else is His responsibility. **"If you seek ye first the kingdom, everything will be added** (Matthew 5:33)."

So to help you save money, help you not buy cars and homes, if you would just let God love you, then God will go with you and help you pick out the car. And you wouldn't have to go to bed at night guilty, because you left God out of your life. You say, "Well Steve, I'm really busy." I don't care. I'm real busy. What is the one problem I have throughout my life? Finding time with God. What is the evidence of that? No peace, emptiness, fear, loneliness. How do I solve my loneliness this morning? I need to tell my wife to love me more. She can never love me the way that God wants to love me. God wants to heal the loneliness with Jesus Christ. Steven, you will be lonely for the rest of your life until you are convinced that I am your best friend. I confess God.

"Lord I have a ministry!" But you're empty. You have everything going for you, but you're empty. Steven, everything in this world will never be the substance that I am to fill a lonely heart and a broken heart. You will never be content till you take Me. "Lord I'm bored; I've done it all!" Until you take the great commission, you haven't done anything. I wonder this morning if you can say, "For me to live is Christ." Well, if I can say that then I don't have any problems. Amen. I believe He'll take care of all the problems, don't you think?

**Closing Prayer:**

Father we ask that You would help us. And Lord, I'm guilty as everyone else in this room is of catering to our flesh and to making sure things are perfect. But when life gets done with us and we find our self in some hospital bed, and we find our self in some broken relationship, or we find our self just devastated from being fired at a job, or we find we've done everything but God, we're so empty inside. What do we do? And there are times that we look around and we love You, but we see people that are just filled with Your love and we hear You rejoice within our hearts, that's what I want from You. Will you spend time with Me? I'll take your loneliness, I'll take your emptiness, I will take that boredom and I will give you a reason to live, to die to yourself, to put others before you, to look upon the things of others, more than you look upon the things of yourself. I will personally take care of all of your needs. Lord, I pray this morning, as we humble our self before You, I wonder if we can be as honest as Paul that when we look at everything we've done and everything we've accomplished, and then we see a Stephen with his hands lifted up worshiping you. Lord it seems like everything we've done is dung. And Lord, Paul was able to reach out and embrace You; and so we find that everything was in Christ, and so I pray for this body, pray for myself that Lord, You would develop the deepest, intimate relationship with You that we've ever had; That no longer would the enemy rip us off; that there's no excuse for being lonely. There's absolutely no excuse for being empty or being discouraged for the One who made us is wanting to hang out with us. And Lord, we

are willing to come apart in order that we do not fall apart. And while our heads are bowed and our eyes are closed, maybe some of you this morning need to make that commitment. I'd like to give you that opportunity right now. If you'd like to ask the Lord to come into your heart, or to rededicate your life, that Jesus would become the Lover of your soul, I'd like you to simply raise your hand that I might pray for you this morning... Father we thank You and we praise You, in Jesus name...Amen.