

SUNDAY 2 AUGUST 2020

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## JESUS: IN HIS OWN WORDS

'I am the way, the truth and the life'

*Lord I come to your awesome presence,  
from the shadows into your radiance.  
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness.*

As I come into God's presence, I choose to praise him in the words of Psalm 104:31-34.

May the glory of the LORD endure forever;  
may the LORD rejoice in his works—  
<sup>32</sup> who looks on the earth and it trembles,  
who touches the mountains and they smoke.  
<sup>33</sup> I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;  
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.  
<sup>34</sup> May my meditation be pleasing to him,  
for I rejoice in the LORD.

It is all too common for this next self-disclosure of Jesus to be overshadowed by debates about the exclusive claims of Christianity. Such thoughts could not have been in the minds of either Jesus or the first disciples, and given that these words were spoken in private to those who followed Jesus, we must be ready to listen to what they say to us before we try to apply them to the wider world.

Jesus said to [Thomas], "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." (John 14:6a)

When Thomas asked Jesus about 'the way' he was using words and thoughts familiar to him and all those brought up in the Synagogue. The Scripture often spoke of the way as a metaphor for life and an expression of the faithful person's unity with God (see Psalm 1:6). However, when Jesus spoke these words there were, even among Judaism, many 'ways'. Most people followed the Pharisees' beliefs, though they did not abide by all their rules. Doing so would have been virtually impossible, especially for anyone who was not very wealthy, due to the requirements for labour, sacrifices, and giving. Jesus claims that these things are not the way to eternal life, which can be attained only through him.

Thomas' question is about 'the way'. Jesus' answer expands on this by adding truth and life. It is probable that we should not think of these as three different things, but rather see truth and life as explaining how and why Jesus is the way.

To recognize Jesus as the truth is to affirm that as the Word made flesh, Jesus makes the truth of God available to the world. It is to acknowledge that our relationship with Jesus is also relationship with the liberating truth of God, that Jesus' life and ministry are the ultimate witness to God's truth. Jesus is the way,

the promise of the possibility of unity with God, because in him we meet the truth of God.

When Jesus identifies himself as the life, he is repeating the self-revelation that formed the heart of the story of Lazarus. There Jesus claims God's life-giving powers for himself, proclaiming the heart of the Gospel. Jesus is the way because he brings God's gift of life to the world. He is the way because he is the access point to God's promise of life.

This is the heart of the good news for John: that in Jesus, the incarnate Word, the Son of God, we can see and know God in a manner never before possible.

We pause and pray, giving thanks that in the truth which Jesus reveals and in the life he offers, we find the way to live in the presence of God.

*Pause and pray*

It can be no coincidence that the early church described themselves as followers of 'The Way'. They understood the importance of these words. Salvation is not about which sect or group has the monopoly on truth. It is about looking to Jesus, seeing in him the way life can be lived, and following in his footsteps.

We know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law. (Galatians 2:16)

*In all my thoughts, may I think of you;  
In all my words, may I speak of you;  
In all my actions, may I act as you;  
In all my interactions, may I love like you;  
In everything, may I look like you,  
More and more each day.  
Amen.*