

Wednesday in Lent V  
"I Am the way, and the truth, and the life"

3/25/26  
John 14:1-6

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me".

In February of 2008, Benjamin Lovell was more than a little surprised when he received his bank statement. That piece of paper told him he had more money in the bank than he thought. \$5 million dollars more than he thought, in fact. Sensing a mistake, he went to the bank with statement in hand, where he was informed that there was no mistake. He really did have \$5 million dollars in his account and the money was all his, to do with, as he wished.

So Mr. Lovell took the bank at its word. He withdrew some of the money and gave it away. He invested some of it. Altogether, Mr. Lovell went through about \$2 million dollars, which meant he still had \$3 million left. Now, this is where you already know of the story ends. The bank realized they had made a mistake. They had confused **two** account holders of the same name and this Mr. Lovell did not have \$ 5 million dollars in his account. So, what did that bank do? Well, they didn't say, "All Benjamin Lovell's are the same. All money is the same." No, the bank didn't say that at all. In fact, even though it was the bank's mistake, Mr. Lovell -- the **poorer** Mr. Lovell -- was arrested and charged with grand theft.

As we continue looking at the "I Am" sayings of Jesus, tonight we hear Him say,

*"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*

It is good for us to hear those words of the Savior because we live in a world which says that all religions are the same. You've heard this lie: We all worship the same god, we just call him – or her – by a different name. All religions are just different roads that lead to the same heaven. In our world today, this is the politically correct position to have when it comes to religion.

The amazing thing is ... people aren't so politically correct when it comes to other subjects. Nobody expected the rich Mr. Lovell to be open-minded about his \$5 million dollars the bank gave to the other Mr. Lovell.

If you are sick, does it matter what medicine your doctor gives you? After all, aren't all medicines the same?

Ladies, what if you saw your husband kissing another woman? If you asked him what he was doing and his answer was, "All wives are the same," would you buy it?

So, I ask you: if one Mr. Lovell is not the same as any Mr. Lovell, if all medicines are not the same, and all wives are not the same, why do so many people persist in holding to the dangerous idea that all religions are the same and they will all take you to the same place? It just isn't so. This is a lie of the devil, the father of all lies, and it leads to hell.

You don't have to take my word for it. Look at what the religions themselves teach.

Islam doesn't have a Savior. Any number of times in the Koran, Mohammed asks for forgiveness. The best the prophet can do is produce a **five**-fold path that a person is supposed to follow if he is to have any shot at getting into heaven. And, of course, in Islam, since Allah is not bound by

any rules and regulations, nobody is given an absolute, iron-clad guarantee that he's going to make it into paradise.

Ask the Buddhist if he has a Savior. He will tell you that he has an **eight**-fold path which eventually, someday, in some way, is supposed to take him to a nirvanic enlightenment which is not much more than a great, non-material, painless nothingness. Because the Buddhist has no Savior, he's forced to work things out on his own.

Ask the Hindu if he will go to heaven when he dies. He is searching for Nirvana ... but without a Savior, he, too, must work things out for himself. Again and again, he must be born in this world; again and again, he must try to do better than he has in the past; again and again he is bound to fail until someday he hopes to get it right and be with Brahm, the all-pervading force of the universe. Will he accomplish it? He hopes, but he can do no more than hope and struggle and strive.

Standing alone and separate from all of the other religions of the world is Christianity.

We learn this from our *Small Catechism*. Question 186 reads: Why must we firmly hold to this teaching of justification by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith? The answer: We must firmly hold to this teaching because **(A)** it is the most important doctrine of the Christian religion; and **(B)** it distinguishes the Christian religion from false religions, all of which teach salvation by works.

Only Christianity says that we are saved **not** by our own works, but through faith in Jesus Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

While every religion of the world says we must struggle and strive to reach up to God, God reached down to rescue us in His only-begotten Son. While every other religion says a person must endlessly study and seek to

find a path which may lead to God, Jesus comes and announces He is that path which takes all who believe in Him to heaven. While every other religion of the world teaches that its followers must free themselves of their sin, Christianity proclaims that God's Son has taken our sins onto Himself and carried those sins to the cross. There, as He was unjustly crucified, God's innocent Son paid our redemption price. For us and for our salvation, Jesus offered up His life as the sacrifice which would remove our sins and their condemnation. Then, Jesus did one thing more -- He rose from the dead.

Think upon that for a moment. What other religion in the world can make the claim that its founder has defeated death so all who believe in Him will rise to eternal life? None can. But, as the prophets predicted, as Jesus Himself promised, three days after His heart had been pierced by a Roman spear, Jesus rose from the grave. He showed Himself alive in the weeks which followed to put to rest any doubt that He was still dead, or His body had been stolen. The resurrection of the Redeemer is proof positive that He is Whom He claims to be: the only Way; the only Truth, the only Life. The resurrection of the Christ is God's guarantee that those who believe in Jesus as the as Savior will not perish but have everlasting life.

Jesus is not just another religious leader. He is the Savior of the world. He is the only path, the only way, to forgiveness and salvation, the only Way to heaven.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.