

Sermon Wesley Box Hill 3 May 2026

I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE – John 14: 1-14

Greetings once again in the precious name of our Lord Saviour Jesus Christ.

In today's gospel reading, Jesus tells us something that we have heard numerous times, but that is always worth hearing again, and worth thinking about again: namely, that Jesus is our way, and our truth, and our life. It is the second week in a row when we are invited to think about one of the "I Am" sayings in John's gospel.

Last week, it was Jesus saying that he is the good shepherd, and the gate for the sheep. This week, it is Jesus saying that he is the way, and the truth, and the life. What does he mean by this? I will just take each in turn.

I Am the Way. Have you ever had someone stop you and ask way? Usually, we try to give directions. Perhaps it would be better not to tell them how to get there. Instead, say, "I happen to be going that way. Come with me", and walk them to their destination.

That, I think, is what Jesus means when he says that he is the way. At least part of it. It means more than that, but not less. Jesus shows us the way. He also blazes the way. He prepares the way. He provides the way. He is the way – the way to heaven. The way to a meaningful life.

The way to finding our vocation, our purpose. Jesus doesn't just give us instructions, ten steps to finding our purpose. He shows us the way and accompanies us through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Come, Jesus says. Follow me. I happen to be going that way. I will show you. I will walk with you. But even more than that, right? Because Jesus is not just our guide. He himself is the way. Perhaps he is saying that he will walk with us and show us the way.

If we get tired, he will even carry us, if that is what it takes. It's a little bit like that great scene in film "The Lord of the Rings" when Frodo and Sam are struggling up Mount Doom. Frodo collapses. Sam says to Frodo, the chosen ring-bearer, "Come, Mr. Frodo! ... I can't carry the ring for you, but I can carry you." He then proceeds to literally carry Frodo up the mountain. That, too, is what it means that Jesus is our way. He is going to get us up the mountain, doing whatever it takes.

Now, it's true that Jesus might let others help. He might send a Sam into our life to help us. Or he might ask us to be the Sam for someone else.

If you are helping the person to find their way, and happen to bump into a friend who you know to be really going in that direction you could tell the person who is lost that they can follow them.

Part of our task as Christians is to help show each other the way. We are, as Acts of the Apostles tells us, people of the way, because we know the way. We know Jesus. We believe in him; we trust in him; we follow him. Therefore, we know the way. At least, we should. Our lives should show this.

We should live our lives in such a way that people can see that we are worth following. They can see that we know the way through this confusing world. Not because we have a map, but because we have a faithful guide. The one who alone can show us the way because he alone is the way.

That is what happened to me in New Zealand on a 4-week Christian camping trip. I was invited to pray with another person. We prayed each night by the camp fire and others started to join us. There was a night when one of the young men who was on this trip who was not a Christian, came to join us.

He said he saw something special in us and wanted to know more. Different members of the group talked with him over a number of days and he was given a Bible, and we continued to pray for him. He could see that Jesus was worth following, and before the end of the trip, he gave his life to Christ. It was a real joy that at last he had found the way.

Jesus is the way. And Jesus is the truth. Once again, Jesus doesn't just tell the truth. He is the truth. But what does he mean?

Truth is a recurring theme in John's gospel, going back to the first chapter, when we are told that grace and truth come through Jesus. In John 8, Jesus tells us that we will know the truth and the truth will set us free. In John 16, Jesus tells his disciples that when the Holy Spirit comes, the Spirit of truth will guide us into all the truth. Then, finally, in John 18, Jesus tells Pilate he came into the world "to testify to the truth."

"Everyone", Jesus concludes, "who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Jesus is the truth. He speaks the truth. He guides us to the truth. And by his truth, we will be set free. What does he mean by all of this? One thing that he means by this is that it is through Jesus that we learn the truth about God.

Our universe has much to teach us about God. Open-minded scientists often find their faith is deepened as their studies and observations deepen and they are led to the truth that this universe can only have been formed by an amazing creator, who is God.

The prophets in the Old Testament also have much to teach us about God. Just like the universe itself, we can see in the history of God's people glimpses of the truth of our creator's purpose for this world and for us, created in God's image.

Our purpose is to care for this world, to bless this world, to join with our Creator in this sacred task. Our purpose is also to bring justice and peace to our world, to help our world look more and more like the kingdom of heaven.

Yes, we can learn about God from the universe, from God's prophets, and from many other sources. However, if we want the complete truth about God, there is one place to look that surpasses all others, that is to Jesus himself.

Suppose, by way of an analogy, you want to learn the truth about someone famous, someone you admire. For me, one of those was Mahatma Gandhi.

I read a biography of him, and watched the movie "Ghandi" several times.

I learned what I could about him. But none of this really got me very close to learning all there was to know about Mahatma Gandhi.

Now, imagine if I had been invited to meet him, to interview him myself. To spend time getting to know him. I would be learning more about Ghandi than I possibly could by reading books about him or interviewing him.

Jesus is the way that we learn the truth about our Creator. Because he and the Father are one. When we learn about Jesus, we are learning about the creator of the universe. The more we learn about Jesus, the more we learn about the God who created the heavens and the earth. Jesus is the truth, who teaches us the truth about God.

Jesus is the way. Jesus is the Truth, and Jesus is the Life. Again, this is a recurring theme in John's wonderful gospel. I wish I had time to take us through all 39 verses mentioning "life" in John's gospel. But let me just mention a few.

Going all the way back to John 1:4, for example, when we learn that in Jesus, the Word, "is life, and the life was the light of all people." In John 3:16 we learn that whoever believes in Jesus has eternal life. He gives the water that gushes up to eternal life. He gives himself as the bread of life, which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. He is the good shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep, and who came that we may have life and have it abundantly.

Finally, near the end of John's gospel, we learn that all of this was written "so that we may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing we may have life in his name."

Jesus is the life. Believing in him gives us life. Not just life after death, but life before death. An abundance of life. A life filled with joy, and filled with peace, and most of all life, filled with love.

Without love, we cannot live. Without God's love, there is no love. God is love! John tells us this in one of his letters. Jesus came to show us that love. It is through that love that we live. Now, and always. Jesus is the life, because his love gives us life.

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life," Jesus said. "No one comes to the Father except through me." So what about this last part? When Jesus speaks these words, he speaks them, in the upper room, to his disciples. Not to the crowds. Not to the religious leaders. Not to Pilate. Not to the soldiers who arrested him. He speaks these words only to his disciples, in the upper room. "No one comes to the Father," Jesus says to those who follow him," except through me.

I think that the meaning of these words is tied up in who he is speaking them to. These words are not meant to threaten or scare nonbelievers or non-followers. That is, to me, a misuse of their intent. Jesus speaks these words to those who do believe.

These words are not a threat, but a promise. We come to the Father through Jesus. He is our way, and our truth, and our life. The only way that matters, the only truth that endures, the only life that lasts. Jesus, for us, is the one we can trust to bring us to his Father's house, because he is our way.

He is the one we can trust to teach us the truth about our creator's love for us, because he is our truth.

Jesus is the one we can trust to give us a life filled with hope and peace and joy because he is our life.

No one who believes in Jesus comes to the Father except through Jesus. We don't have to turn anywhere else. Why would we? We turn to Jesus. Always to Jesus. When in doubt, we follow Jesus. When we feel lost, we follow him. When we don't know who to believe, we trust him. When we are struggling to find purpose in this life, we find it in Jesus.

Jesus is our Way, our Truth, and our life.
Now. Always. Thanks be to God.

Amen.