

The Way to God

by Paul van Engelenhoven

This sermon is a powerful message based on John 14:1-7, emphasizing the importance of Jesus as the only way to salvation and eternal life. It delves into the reality of facing judgment before God, the need for repentance, and the profound impact of accepting Christ's sacrifice for our sins. The sermon passionately calls for a decision to follow Jesus, highlighting various biblical characters as examples of responding to God's call.

Scripture: John 14:6, Romans 3:23, 1 John 1:9, John 3:16, Acts 4:12, Matthew 7:13, Revelation 3:20, Romans 10:9, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Isaiah 53:5

Topics: "Jesus as the Only Way", "The Call to Repentance"

Description

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Transcript

To the gospel of John chapter 14 the verses 1 to 7. John 14 the verses 1 to 7 are the living words of the Living God. This is what it says. Let not your hearts be troubled.

Believe in God, believe also in me. 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're 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. If I had known, if you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.

Thus far the reading of God's Holy Word. Let us pray that he would open these words to our hearts. Heavenly Father, we pray as we come before the mighty and glorious truths of your Word.

Father, we pray as we have read your words, as we have heard praise to you, Son. As our hearts have come to be instructed and to be lifted up by you, we pray that you would speak with the power of the Holy

Spirit. Father, that we do not only hear about you, but that we hear you speak to our hearts tonight.

For Father, we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. My dear friends, what I am about to share with you, it's not difficult to understand.

It's easily understood. It speaks to all of us. It speaks to all of our hearts and our lives.

And if you are able to understand it and to receive it in your heart, you will go to heaven. And if you reject it or you turn away from it, you will never get to heaven. You see, there are some things that are relevant to all of us.

We come from different backgrounds, from different countries, from different languages. And yet there's one thing that is the same for all of us. Whether you're young, you might not think about it, or whether you're old, you might be thinking about it all the time.

But this is the same truth for all of us. One day we will leave this earth. One day all of us will die.

Whether we are young and it seems a far distance away, or whether we are old and we're afraid that it's coming near, we will all one day know or leave this earth. Everyone knows this. This is nothing new to you.

My children who are young know this. And yet so few people think about these things. It doesn't matter how old you are or how young you are, how rich or how poor or how smart or successful or unsuccessful.

All of us have to face the harsh reality that one day we will leave this earth. Now the question is, what will happen when we die? Some people say that nothing will happen. It'll just be, you'll be putting back into the ground and out of you will come a flower and all of that and nothing will really happen in your lives.

But the Bible says that we will all stand before God. The God that you've just sung to, that we have just heard praises to. The reality is that all of us, as clearly as you can hear me this evening, so clearly you will hear the voice of God as you stand before his presence.

As clearly and more clearly that you can see me as I stand in front of you and you can see the people around you, so clearly you will see the throne of God. You will stand face to face with God and look into the presence and the eyes of God. Now there are really two options of where to go after you've come before God because it's a judgment seat.

Now many of us have never stood in a judge or before a judge and have to give an account for whether we did something wrong or defend ourselves that we didn't do something wrong. But all of us will stand in the courthouse of heaven and then we have to give an account for what we have done in this life. The words that we've spoken, with the things our hands have touched, the places our eyes have looked, the thoughts in our minds and the desires of our hearts will all be exposed before God on that day.

Now there are really only two options after that. If you're counted as righteous, you will go and see the God that we have just sung of. You will experience the joy and not just a desire for righteousness but it will be in your heart all around you.

It will be upon everybody's face. The love of God will be shed abroad in such a way that the heavens and the earth sing the praises of God and you'll be of that happy people that will last and live forever without any depression, without any sorrow, without any anxiety, even without any boredom. True and eternal happiness.

But then if we have sinned and we come before God with our sin, we will be judged and we will be punished and as joyful as the one is, so terrifying is the reality of judgment on the other hand. Now there's a problem isn't it? Because who of us would dare to stand up and say I've done only righteousness, I've done only good things, I've done everything perfect, my mind has been wonderful thoughts all my life, my lips have always speak in truth and I've never said anything bad to anyone, my heart has never become angry and shouted to anyone. Who can stand up? And so the question is how can you and I that are sinners, that have sinned, that have sinned more than we dare to explain, how can we go to God and go to heaven rather than to hell? How can we go to everlasting life rather than to everlasting judgment? That's the great question isn't it? And Jesus tells Thomas, which you may remember as unbelieving Thomas or doubting Thomas, Jesus tells this Thomas that he has made a way for Thomas to go to heaven, to go even though Thomas had sinned to go to heaven.

I want to give you this in three simple points tonight. First of all a simple question so rarely asked. Secondly the way to truth and the life and thirdly the invitation to all.

This is the simple question, this is what the Bible says, Thomas said to him in John 14 5, Lord we do not know where you're going, how can we know the way? Jesus was leaving, he had been walking with the disciples for a number of years, he'd been walking with Thomas and Jesus says I'm leaving you Thomas and I'm going away but you know how to find me and Jesus said I don't know how to find you. You may be like that tonight, you may say I want to go to heaven, sure who doesn't want to go to heaven but I don't know how to get there. I do not know the way when I die.

How do I know how to get to heaven after I die? I do not know the way. You have an answer to that question? Do you know how to get to Jesus Christ? Do you know how to get to heaven after you die? God is very clear that there is only one way, that all of us or any of us if we go to heaven there's one way, not many possibilities but one single way. The wonderful thing is this singular way, this one way will always lead to heaven, every single time.

Now it's not money, it's not power, it's not even our gifts, it's not how often you've been in church or how many songs, how many Psalms or hymns you have sung, it's not how many times you have helped old ladies cross the streets, it's not outweighing your your bad deeds with some really good deeds, it's not covering the outside or being really nice to pastors and elders and deacons, it's one way and it's the same for the beggar and the billionaire, for the powerful and the weak, for the murderer and the self-righteous, it's the same way. We need to answer this question, isn't it? How can we deal with our sins when we stand before God? It's a terrifying thought, if I were able to read your history, wouldn't it? If I could look into your mind, if I could look into your heart and see everything you've ever said, everything you've ever thought, all the intentions of your thoughts, if I could see them, I guarantee you nobody would want to live in my street, nobody would want to marry me because I could see exactly who you are. That would be even more terrifying if I could project this and I could project this on these big screens behind me and I could reveal your entire life.

It'd be terrifying, wouldn't it? When you stand before God, that's the reality. God sees all of your actions, all of your words, all you've ever done. Everything is known before God as clearly as when you first did it or first saw it or first said it.

Everything is crystal clear. When you stand before God it would be crystal clear what you have done. So if we get to heaven and stand before the judgment seat of God, we have one thing that needs to be solved.

The sin. Oh, that there would be a way that this whole mountain of sin would be done away with. And we stand before God not just as though we've done a few things wrong, but as though we've done nothing wrong.

That the Almighty God with His brilliant mind with infinite thoughts would say, I hold nothing against you. You have done everything right. You have said everything perfectly well.

Your intentions have been pure in every single way. Well, that is the gospel. That is the good news.

When Jesus says to Thomas, I have a way, I am the way for you to heaven, that's what he's talking about. It's not a specific road. Jesus is not saying I'm a specific road and you need to walk on me in some way.

No, Jesus is saying, you know what a road does? It leads you from your house to the place you want to go. Now, if you want to get to heaven and you want to go before God, you need to come to me. And if you come to me just as if you go on a road, I guarantee you that you will come and meet God in heaven joyfully.

God speaks to you and me this evening. I looked it up and 69 million people died last year. 69 million people died.

That's five times my home country in one year. All these people stand before God and many of them had never heard of this way to heaven. But you and I hear of this tonight.

You and I are able to receive this road tonight so that when we die, we will not go to judgment, but we will go to everlasting life. Even if you have murdered. Even if you've done things so terrible that even the justice system of this world has taken you in.

Even if you've been a hypocrite your whole life and dressed up nicely, but secretly in the back room you did your sin. Even if you were nice to your friends, but behind their back you gossiped about their lives. All of that can be forgiven.

And Jesus says in John 14 6, I am the way, the truth, and the life. Or we could say it this way, I am the true and living way to heaven. If you come to me, I will truly bring you a life into heaven itself.

You, not people in general, but you where you're seated right now. Jesus speaks to you tonight as he spoke to Thomas in the word. And he says, you, I know you.

I know your life. I know what's going on in your house, in your heart. I know what is going on in your mind, in your past.

I know all the shame that you carry on your shoulders as you march around the people in this world and say nothing's ever happened. I'm fine like everyone else. God knows you.

He sees your heart. He sees your life. He even knows every single time you rebelled against him and you thought he didn't see it.

He sees you. He knows you. I see you, but I only see the outside.

To me, all of you look like wonderful people, but God sees the heart. And if I'm honest, and I don't know whether you like me or not, but my outside is a lot prettier than the inside. I know what I've thought.

I know what my heart has desired. I know what I've thought and I know how I've sinned against God, but I found this way. This way that has cleared my past and even cleared my future.

The sins tomorrow that I commit have been forgiven already today. The sins in one year, if I'm still on the earth, have been forgiven already. Jesus has cleansed my entire life, past, present, and future.

He's washed me. He's cleansed me. When I pray, when God looks on me, he sees not my sin, but the righteousness of God.

Well, Jesus says, that is to everyone, every human being, no matter what you've done, no matter if you've been a hypocrite or a murderer. And who am I to judge you? But if I'm looking at myself and I think that you're a reflection of me, we have plenty of things to be grieved about before God. Jesus is the way.

You know how? Because he took your way. That's how he's the way. He's not the way in some kind of monkey spiritual life where you have to go and dwell in a cave or where you have to say prayer six, seven, or ten times a day.

That's not the way he's saying. What he's saying is this, I am the true and living way because I have taken your way. You say, well, what's my way? Your way was to judgment.

Your way was to stand before God and be judged as a sinner, like I was to be judged as a sinner. And Jesus, two thousand years ago, he said, I want to take your way. You travel my path to heaven and I travel your path and swallow the dregs of judgment for you.

And so when Jesus came to the earth, he took the judgment upon God and he was led to be crucified and he was nailed upon the cross and received the full force of the judgment of you upon himself. All of it. The Bible speaks about the cup with the wrath of God and he drank it down to the last drop.

He took your path. He, as it were, stood before the judgment seat of God and was declared guilty because he says, I want to take your sins and be placed upon me and I will receive the full force of your judgment. Now, you must take his way.

Turn from your sinful ways to the way of Christ. No longer to run in your path, but now to follow him. That's what it means to repent.

You turn around and you follow him and receive the righteousness of God and walk in his way. Then when you come before God and you think, I remember what I've done. Hope he doesn't remember what I said to my mother when I was young.

Hope he doesn't remember what I thought even about my best friends. What I said to a friend or to a spouse or to a child when I thought I was alone. And as you come before God, you realize there's nothing hidden before him.

His eyes pierce right through you and you think this is it. But then there's an advocate that stands up and he says, I am Jesus Christ and all the payment for the sin of this man, this woman, this child have paid in full. Now look upon this man, this woman on the stand and tell me if you see anything.

You stand there wondering, looking at the eyes of God and the judgment comes and he says, this one is righteous for his name is written in the book of life. Let him go into everlasting joy and enter into the joy of his father, his master, his Lord, his friend. That's the way.

That's the way Jesus is speaking about. He says, I have taken your way. Now you must take mine.

Now you can turn. Say, I don't want that way. I want to live my own way.

I love my sin. I want to continue in it. I want to rule my own life.

I don't care what's going on in my heart. You can do that. You can reject this message tonight, but know this, that there are millions that die without hearing this.

When you stand before God and I say this as a friend, because I have to, when you stand before God and you reject the gospel, it will be worse for you than for the murderers who never heard. You see, I never meant to lure you in in any way, shape or form, but because you've heard what you've heard tonight of this way of Christ, you are responsible to walk in the way of Christ or to reject it. The one leads to heaven.

The other one leads to hell. It is as sure as if we were standing before God right now, because God is here. He sees in this building, whether you believe it or not.

My children may think there is no moon in the day daytime because they don't see it, but you and I know there is a moon. We do not see God, and we may walk around and tell ourselves there is no God, but there is a God. And you and I, in a few more breaths, will stand in his presence as believers made righteous or as sinners rejecting the Son of God.

Now, how can I depict this? What it means to reject Jesus Christ. It's terrifying, isn't it? If you live in West Michigan, you most likely have heard the gospel before. There's a church on every street corner.

The gospel is proclaimed almost off of street buildings, I think. If you gather all the Bible verses in Grand Rapids together, you've got the gospel. You have the word of life.

You have truth. Back home, there are places where nobody hears the truth anymore, but you hear it tonight. You hear it from people around you.

There are people in your street that share the gospel with you by their lives, by inviting you and telling you that Christ lives. So, the question is, Jesus has given the invitation. He has called you.

He has revealed who you are, and that's unpleasant. I remember when Deloitte began to reveal my sin, I just wanted to die. I couldn't handle the truth of who I am and what I've done.

But soon after, Christ began to say, I took the dregs of your sin and swallowed them whole upon the cross, so that you could have the fruit of my eternal righteousness and live forever. And so, I plead with you tonight. I plead that you would one day join this choir tonight, if you haven't already, that you would be able to sing not only the words, but the spirit of the words.

There's a difference, isn't there? There's a way of just singing the words, and then there's a way of singing the spirit of the words, the truth of them, and the joy and the life that is in them. My prayer for tonight is that all of you would come. If you're here already, if you know the Lord, run more.

Run faster. Spread that good news. Let the light of the gospel reach every part of your lives and everywhere you go, because Jesus is coming soon.

He is near. I think we know it, don't we? Ten years ago, nobody talked about the end times except for a few odd people, and now everybody seems to be wondering, what is going on? If the Lord is not coming soon, he's certainly reminding us that we're going to him soon. And so, you're all invited, all of you.

You may be a Thomas. You've heard the gospel before, but you've always had doubts. You doubted your own faith, or you doubted other things, but God might be speaking to your heart tonight, and he might be saying to you tonight, come, doubt no longer, my friend Thomas, come.

You might be a Peter. You thought you were faithful to God. You thought you served him, I was willing to die for him, and then you betrayed him, and your heart is sunk, and you think, how can he ever accept me with everything I've thrown overboard? The gospel that I once knew I've rejected, how would he receive me? Jesus says to you tonight, do you love me, Peter? Do you love me? He's a forgiving God.

You might be a Paul, who was a persecutor of the church, making fun of the gospel, of Christians, ridiculing them. One day, Christ shines with his light, and Paul's life is turned upside down, and now he cannot do anything else. He's quiet for three days, as he's blind, and in prayer, until God says to another man, behold, the apostle Paul, or not the apostle that time, Paul is praying.

He calls you. You might be a Nathanael, a man seeking God, meditating, seeking, earnestly desiring, longing to know God, and the Lord's speaking to you tonight. I've seen your prayers.

I've heard your prayers. I saw you reading. I saw you crying.

Come to me today. You might be a Nicodemus, cold, religious at heart, a leader among your people, but you know that inside, all you've done is lay religiosity and religions on the layer of your heart, but the inside hasn't changed. Jesus comes to you tonight and says, look upon the serpent in Moses' time.

He was lifted up, and all the people that were bitten by snakes looked at him and were healed. In the same way, the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, would be lifted up, and when you look at him, you will be born again. He says to you tonight, look at me, and you will live, not because of your religion, but because of your faith in me.

And so, to all of you, Jesus says tonight, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. Amen. Let us pray.

To Heavenly Father, we come before you. We pray, Lord, that you would use these feeble words of mine, that by your Holy Spirit you penetrate the heart and give your children joy in walking in the way and calling others to come and live and follow you. For Father, we pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Let us now sing in response to the reading and preaching of God's word from Lift Up Your Heart 604, to God be the glory, and let us stand as we sing.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/tfDbcYDmchY.mp4>

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