

I am the Way the Truth and the Life

Nelson Cathedral

May 3, 2026

R1 Acts 8: 26-40

NT 1Peter 2:4-10

Gospel **John 14:1-14**

Introduction

Since Easter I have been pondering how the stories of Jesus' life we have in the Gospels, really only make sense in the light of the resurrection.

It is a bit like watching your favourite movies over and over again. You know the ending and that makes sense of the plots within the story (Anikin really is the chosen one in Star Wars— whoops not May the 4th yet) and we see parts of the story in a new light.

As we come to the Gospel accounts of Jesus, it is very easy to approach them from beginning to end, from Jesus' birth at Christmas, his ministry, his death, resurrection and ascension - a bit like a documentary.

But they were written down for us after the fact of His death and resurrection, and it is through this lens that we are meant to read them, so, as John say, we too may believe in Jesus.

We know the ending; Jesus died, and Jesus was raised from the dead to reign forever, so how does that bring light to what we read. In a way we are like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus as Jesus explained to them how Scripture points to him.

Last week Rev Nigel talked about Jesus the good shepherd with all its familiar imagery about sheep. We understand this now because Jesus is the good shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep – he died to save you and me. As Nicky Gumble in the

Alpha videos states, “If you were the only person on earth, Jesus would have died for you”.

So what about Jesus’ words today;

- “In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places...I go to prepare a place for you”; and
- “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

My Father’s House.

Our reading from John 14, is part of a summary of Jesus’s words during the Last Supper, as he was telling his disciples he was going to be leaving them, he was going to die.

And so the opening words, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me,” are words of comfort and assurance. Jesus’ leaving was not abandonment, but the fulfilment of his promise, the fulfilment of God’s plan all along: “Where, I am, there you may also be”.

The metaphor Jesus uses to explain the purpose of his departure is, “In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places”. “I go” Jesus said, to prepare a place for you and I will return to take you there.

It is very easy for us at this point to imagine the biggest 5-star hotel, a heavenly palatial mansion. But this is not the image Jesus is referring to.

“God’s house” or my “Father’s house” is simply a way of saying the place where God lives and the relationship between God the Father and Jesus the Son, a relationship characterised by the deepest love. The reference to rooms or dwelling-places means we will have a place where God lives.

Especially in John 14 and 15, the word that captures this best is “Abide”. The promise of Jesus and what he has bought about through his death and resurrection, is our eternal relationship with God, our eternal abiding in God’s very presence.

And the ultimate claim is that death – either Jesus' death or our own – will not interrupt that abiding. The fear of death has lost its sting and is replaced with eternal life.

I am the way.

Jesus has explained where he is going and why. He even promises to come back and take his followers there.

But there is an obvious question, now hanging in the air, one which only Thomas is brave enough to ask, "How can we know the way". Remember Thomas the one who later on, had to see and touch Jesus to believe!

It is here that we get the most exclusive claim; access to the Father's presence will only be through Jesus and no other as he says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life":

- Jesus is not "a way"
- or a guide to "the way".
- Jesus himself is "the one and only way".

If we believe in God we acknowledge that all truth and life can only be found in God. And only God the Father can provide access to his life and truth. Then in his answer, Jesus is stating that God the Father is fully present in Him - Jesus and the Father are one.

However, there is a problem for these first disciples because the belief was that no human could see God and survive. And even though in John 14 we have the disciples misunderstanding who Jesus truly is, as Philip now asks, "Show us the Father". As Jesus replied to Philip, "If you have seen me you have seen the Father".

This is one of the clearest statements recorded in the New Testament where Jesus states that he not only represents God the Father, and does the Father's

will, but that at the deepest of levels, He and God the Father are the same.

In this moment, Philip has before him the full embodiment of God as it can be seen by humanity. Jesus is God's very presence with us, Jesus is God in human form.

And the proof of this is the resurrection – God the Father raised Jesus from the dead. And in that locked upper room on Easter Sunday, the disciples finally understood and believed -they had their “Aha” moment.

There is a famous quote by CS Lewis in his book *Mere Christianity* which you may have heard before. Lewis writes:

"A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he

would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. "

As Lewis states, there are only two options we can choose from:

1. Jesus is the Son of God - God with us
2. or else a madman or something worse

Us: Baptism

As we hear these words from John 14 today, they are for us the same as they were for the first disciples, words of encouragement and comfort, words of hope in a messy hurting world.

- Jesus and only Jesus is God's very presence with us.
- Jesus has not abandoned us, and later in John 14 we can read he is still with us by His Spirit.

- And Jesus promises to return so we can be with him forever.

Just as the Ethiopian official in Acts 8 came to understand, Jesus is the way, Jesus is God's goodnews – the one who has taken our sin and guilt away by dying for us.

And returning to the metaphor of a building as Peter states, through Jesus and no one else, we are now part of God's household, God's family.

All this we affirm in the words and action of baptism,

- as Jade and Aaron have bough Rylan to be baptised,
- as we affirm our own baptism
- and together as the Church, the people of God, as we commit ourselves to support each other in faith.

Conclusion.

In baptism and in our readings we can be encouraged because of the truth claim we have in Christianity – even if our society feels uncomfortable about the notion of “truth”.

- Jesus does not merely point to the way, he is the way.
- Jesus does not teach the truth, he is the truth.
- Jesus does not represent one avenue to life, he is the life.

This is an exclusive claim that cannot be compromised...the human quest for God ends in Jesus.

It is in Jesus that we find God drawing us to himself. May we believe in God and believe in Jesus and respond:

“Amen! Jesus is Lord”.