

Who Is Jesus?
John 14.4-6
Series: Signs of Life
March 21, 2021

I. **What's the Question?**

- A. Peanuts – Charles Schulz
 - 1. Often addressed issues related to Christianity
 - a. Schulz was a man of faith
 - b. Though a complicated man of faith
 - c. Like many of us – he was on a journey of faith
 - 2. Nevertheless, he often raised issues of no small theological significance
- B. In one Peanuts strip, Linus – who often is used by Schulz as the strip's evangelist – is walking about with a placard which reads, "Christ is the Answer" **[Picture1]**
 - 1. In the next panel, Snoopy appears with another placard
 - a. It says, "What was the Question?" **[Picture2]**
 - 2. It seems a snide, almost cynical, comment to make in response to a believer's declaration of the sufficiency of Jesus
 - a. Indeed, a satirical caricature of Christianity
- C. As we study the gospel of John, it nearly appears that it really doesn't matter what the question is
 - 1. Whatever the question, Jesus is the answer
- D. The Gospel of John, as you recall, is famous for the "I Am" sayings of Jesus
 - 1. I am the bread of life – John 6
 - 2. I am the light of the world – John 8 and 9
 - 3. I am the door – John 10
 - 4. I am the good shepherd – John 10
 - 5. I am the resurrection and the life – John 11
 - 6. I am the true vine – John 15 (yet to be studied)
 - 7. Then today's statement – **I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14.6)**
- E. Difficult to imagine a question of genuine human need which is unrelated to one of the claims Jesus makes about Himself
 - 1. That's especially true for our text this morning
 - a. Which is a wonderful summary of all of the I Am sayings of Jesus
- F. **John 14:1–6** (NASB95) —
 - 1. 1 "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.
 - 2. 2 "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.
 - 3. 3 "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.
 - 4. 4 "And you know the way where I am going."
 - 5. 5 Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?"
 - 6. 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

- G. Just one example of a series of questions asked by the disciples in this section of John
1. Peter
 - a. Jesus has said that He is going away
 - b. **John 13:36** (NASB95) — 36 Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, where are You going?”
 2. Thomas
 - a. In the passage we just read
 - b. **John 14:5** (NASB95) — 5 Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?”
 3. Philip
 - a. **John 14:8** (NASB95) — 8 Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.”
 4. Judas (not Iscariot; often called Jude)
 - a. **John 14:22** (NASB95) — 22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?”
- H. Each disciple asks a slightly different question
1. And Jesus answers them each in a unique way – but they all involve directing their attention to Himself, to Jesus
 2. Peter
 - a. **John 13:36** (NASB95) — 36 Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, where are You going?” Jesus answered, “Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later.”
 - b. Jesus: “Where is not the issue; I am the issue. Eventually, you will be with Me”
 3. Thomas
 - a. **John 14:5–6** (NASB95) — 5 Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?” 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way...”
 - b. Jesus: “It’s still about Me, Thomas. If you follow Me, you are on the way.”
 4. Philip
 - a. **John 14:8–9** (NASB95) — 8 Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” 9 Jesus said to him, “... He who has seen Me has seen the Father...”
 - b. Jesus: “You want to see the Father – you have seen Him; you have seen Him because you’ve seen Me”
 5. Judas (Jude)
 - a. **John 14:22–23** (NASB95) — 22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?” 23 Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.”

- b. Jesus: “Not only will I disclose Myself to you, but I will live in you by My Spirit and make my abode in you”
- 6. In other words, no matter what question the disciples asked, the answer was always, “Jesus”

II. **Questions of Human Need**

A. It all started with Adam

B. **Communion with God**

- 1. First we have communion with God
 - a. When Adam sinned, he immediately recognized there was a problem between him and God
 - b. He and Eve hid themselves behind some makeshift vegetables so God wouldn't see they were naked
 - c. But the precious fellowship with God was already destroyed
 - d. God had been the supreme object of their affection; they longed to embrace His presence, enjoying the light of His countenance
 - e. But once they sinned God became personae non grata; their chief enemy; the kind of being you avoid by ducking into a spare room when you see them coming down the hallway
 - f. They would rather see a snake than God
- 2. And eventually that broken fellowship was enforced
 - a. The place of delightful fellowship was now off limits
 - b. **Genesis 3:24** (NASB95) — 24 So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.
 - c. That's right – to guard the way to the tree of life
 - d. And we might add, guard the way to the presence of God as well
- 3. The trouble with that is that human beings were made in the image of God
 - a. Made with the capacity for communication, love, affection with the Almighty
 - b. A capacity that no other animal has
 - c. A capacity for self-awareness, for understanding
 - d. A capacity for moral inclinations, for thoughtful actions, and intentional willful decisions
- 4. But now that image is marred, corrupted
 - a. We were made to be fulfilled only by the God who made us and in whose image we were made
 - b. Augustine: Thou made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in Thee.
- 5. The great need for humanity is communion with God, fellowship with the divine
 - a. And we will never be satisfied, and will always have souls disturbed by chaos
 - b. Until we can find a way back to God
 - c. In which God is no longer kept at arms length (or longer), no

longer an enemy

d. But in which God becomes once again our most treasured friend

6. We need a way back to communion with God

C. **Truth**

1. But how did Adam find himself (along with Eve) in this awful predicament?

2. Because in spite of God's plain instruction, Adam and Eve listened to the lies of God's chief enemy

a. Satan appeared in the form of a serpent

b. And in spite of the fact that God gave them permission to eat from any tree in the garden except one – the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

c. They listened to the lie of the serpent

d. Who tried to make the lie sound plausible; make it sound like the truth

e. Serpent: "Did God say you couldn't eat from any tree in the garden?" – impugning God's reputation and character, implying that He was unloving and unmerciful

f. Eve: "We can eat from any tree in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil – but we can't even touch that one, or we would die" – Eve succumbing to the serpent's lie about God's character, misrepresenting God's word in her response

3. So the serpent lies, gets Adam and Eve to lie along with him

a. And from that time on human beings have been liars and susceptible to lies

b. Humans can no longer distinguish the true from the false

c. Even the very concept of truth has been cast overboard into the sea of relativism

d. A relativism in which there is no such thing as truth, or that everyone has their own truth

4. The mind is thus corrupted; thinking has been slaughtered on the altar of sinful self-expression

a. God having given them over to a depraved mind (Romans 1.28) and humans became futile in their thinking and foolish in their speculations (Romans 1.21)

5. The sin of Adam and Eve plunged us all into an escape from reason (Francis Schaeffer)

a. With minds corrupted and degraded

D. **Life**

1. If there is anything worse for the human being than loss of communion with God and the loss of our minds

a. It's the loss of life

2. Because God, in establishing the terms of probation in His covenant with Adam and Eve, told them that the consequences for disobedience would be that they would die

3. And die they did

- a. Immediately, they died spiritually
 - b. And eventually they died physically
 - 4. And death is the current state of the human condition
 - a. Every single human being dies physically
 - b. And every single human being is spiritually dead – by nature – unless the Spirit of God makes you alive
 - 5. But the human spirit is dead in trespasses and sins
 - a. And as every week, month, and year passes
 - b. This generation knows better than any other generation
 - c. That in spite of all the magnificent medical breakthroughs
 - d. We are all dying physically
 - 6. And yes, I used the term “medical breakthroughs” intentionally
 - a. Name of the lecture series presented by Legacy at SP
 - b. In which gifted and accomplished medical experts share the latest of the amazing developments in the medical world
 - c. But don’t be fooled
 - d. As amazing as some of those accomplishments are, we still all lose that battle eventually
 - 7. We are dead and dying
- E. Regardless of the character of the age
 - 1. Regardless of the stages of human development and accomplishment
 - 2. The human condition has been the same ever since Adam and Eve
 - 3. We are alienated and separated from God
 - a. Desperate for communion and fellowship with our Creator, in whose image we were made
 - b. We need a way back to fellowship with God
 - 4. We are adrift on a sea of lies
 - a. And we all contribute to the disingenuous self-deception so characteristic of our age
 - b. Because we can’t discern the true from the false
 - c. And even call the false true, and the true false
 - 5. And we are dead
 - a. Physically and spiritually
 - b. Living as we are in a necrotic culture
- F. That is the state of human need
 - 1. Whatever humans sense as our “felt needs”
 - a. “Felt needs” are a diversion, a distraction
 - 2. Because the real human needs are
 - a. A way for communion with God
 - b. Truth about ourselves and about God
 - c. Life in all its robust dimensions
- G. Those are the real questions
 - 1. The only real questions
 - a. The only questions worth asking in the final analysis
 - b. The only questions which can satisfy the human soul

- c. The only questions which, when finally answered, solve every seemingly intractable human problem
 - H. And so Jesus comes along and says,
 - 1. “I am the way...
 - 2. ... and the truth...
 - 3. ... and the life...”
 - I. The answer is always Jesus
- III. **Jesus is the Way**
 - A. So how is Jesus the way?
 - 1. The way to God
 - a. The way to communion, to fellowship, with the Father
 - B. It is our sin that separates us from God
 - 1. **Reconciliation** depends on having our sin atoned for
 - a. The only way to restore our fellowship with God is for God Himself to provide for our atonement
 - 2. And a God who is just and righteous cannot just turn His back on sin
 - a. A holy God must judge sin in sinful humans
 - b. But how can sin be judged and humans forgiven?
 - C. Only through Jesus
 - 1. Jesus, the Son of God, became human
 - a. The incarnate Son of God became man
 - 2. And He alone lived as a human being without need of reconciliation and forgiveness
 - a. Because Jesus was without sin
 - 3. And Jesus lived a life we could never live – a perfectly sinless life
 - a. And then He died – taking upon Himself the just penalty for our sin
 - b. Experiencing not just physical death
 - c. But also spiritual separation from the Father
 - d. Experiencing the wrath of God in our place
 - e. The wrath that we so justly deserved
 - 4. So God would be both “just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Romans 1.26)
 - a. God has thus judged sin in sinful humanity
 - b. And God has demonstrated His forgiving love for humanity
 - c. All in Jesus Christ!
 - D. We need reconciliation
 - 1. We need our sin atoned for
 - a. We need one to pay the penalty for our sin
 - b. We need the forgiveness of God
 - 2. Only then will we find our way back to God
 - a. Back to communion with Him
 - b. Back to fellowship with Him
 - 3. And it all is possible through Jesus
 - E. That’s why Jesus said, “I am the way...”
- IV. **Jesus is the Truth**

- A. If our need for communion and fellowship is accomplished through reconciliation
 - 1. Our need for truth is accomplished through **Illumination**
 - a. Jesus alluded to this in one His other “I Am” statements
 - b. “I am the light of the world”
- B. And Jesus didn’t just come to tell us the truth about God
 - 1. Through which all other truth would be encompassed
 - 2. Jesus came not just to tell us the truth
 - a. He came as the truth
 - b. He said, “I am the truth”
- C. He said “I and the Father are One”
- D. Philip said, “Show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” (**John 14. 8**)
 - 1. **John 14:9–10** (NASB95) — 9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? ...
- E. In Jesus Christ, we come to know the Father
 - 1. We know His **personhood**
 - a. God is not just some prime-mover as Aristotle thought
 - b. God is not just an impersonal force governing the laws of nature
 - c. God is not just some cosmic clock-maker who sets the world in motion and then sits back and watches
 - d. No – God is personal
 - e. He cares
 - f. He thinks
 - g. He feels emotions
 - h. He communicates
 - i. He enjoys beauty
 - j. He loves
 - k. We know the personhood of God through Jesus who embodies all of those things
 - 2. We know His **holiness**
 - a. It was clear to Jesus’ disciples that Jesus was “other” – that He was unlike any other human they’d ever met
 - b. He was holy in His extraordinary power – power to do miracles, including raising the dead
 - c. He was holy in His moral character – living a life without sin
 - d. The world can be confusing – with its apparent chaos, disorder and disintegration
 - e. But not Jesus – He was altogether holy, altogether lovely
 - f. He spoke with authority
 - g. He spoke with moral clarity
 - h. There was never any doubt about Jesus’ holiness
 - 3. We know of God’s **mercy**
 - a. He ate with tax collectors and sinners
 - b. He loved the unloved

- c. He cared for the downcast
 - d. He healed the lepers of His society
 - e. Those who would never be touched, He touched
 - f. Those who the world would ignore, He lifted up
 - 4. And in the cross of Christ and in the resurrection of Christ we see
 - a. The **love** of God
 - b. The **justice** of God
 - c. The **mercy** of God
 - d. The **grace** of God
 - e. The **power** of God
 - f. The **sovereignty** of God
- F. Jesus is the truth
 - 1. The truth about God
 - a. The truth about all things in God
 - 2. And just the truth period
 - a. He is the embodiment of truth
 - b. He is the incarnation of truth
- G. That's why Jesus said, "I am the truth"
 - 1. Our minds are corrupted
 - a. We cannot rightly discern the truth
 - 2. The great human question is, "How can we be illumined? How can we know the truth?"
 - a. So Jesus said, "I am the truth"
 - b. Only through Jesus can we be illumined
- V. **Jesus is the Life**
 - A. Finally, Jesus is the Life
 - 1. Only through Jesus can we have our spiritual lives restored
 - a. Only through Jesus can we have the hope of eternal life with God in His presence
 - b. Only through Jesus can we have the hope of a resurrected life
 - c. In which our bodies are new and everlasting
 - d. Never again subject to the decay and disintegration that we all experience these days
 - B. The spiritual life comes through **regeneration**
 - 1. In which the Spirit of Christ makes us alive in Him
 - a. So that which was dead in us is revived
 - C. And our physical life comes through the **resurrection**
 - 1. Our glorious hope affirmed by Christ's own resurrection
 - D. We spiritual corpses need life
 - 1. And Jesus is our life
 - a. By His Spirit we are quickened – made alive by being born again, born of the Spirit
 - E. The great human question is, "How can we have life?"
 - 1. Jesus says, "I am the life!"
 - a. He alone is the answer to this question

- F. And He alone is the answer to every question
- VI. **Jesus – the Only Answer**
- A. Finally...
- B. I know I said “finally” already
1. But somewhere in my contract as a pastor, it says I’m allowed several “finally’s” in every sermon
- C. So one final word
1. **John 14.6:** ... “no one comes to the Father but through Me.”
- D. Jesus is not a way, a truth, a life
1. He is the way, the truth, and the life
 2. That’s the positive expression of Jesus exclusivity
- E. Here’s the negative
1. And you need both the positive and the negative to make the argument definitive and decisive
 - a. To leave absolutely no doubt
 2. “No one comes to the Father but through Me.”
- F. “No one” allows for no exceptions
1. It’s Jesus, or nothing
- G. And you say, “What about the innocent native in Africa? You know, the innocent one who never has heard about Jesus.”
1. That is the exception
 - a. The innocent native in Africa gets a pass
 - b. The innocent native in Africa goes straight to heaven
 - c. Doesn’t have to pass go and collect \$200
 - d. The innocent native in Africa is saved without Christ
 2. The innocent native in Africa is saved in the same way as the innocent native in America is saved
 - a. The same way the innocent native in Europe is saved
 - b. The same way the innocent native in Asia is saved
 3. How many innocent natives are there in Asia? In Europe? In America? In Africa?
- H. **Romans 3:23** (NASB95) — 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...
1. **Romans 1:18–20** (NASB95) — 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.
 2. God has given information to every human being
 - a. Every human being knows about who God is
 - b. It is evident within them
 - c. It is evident in the creation
 - d. His eternal power and divine nature are clearly seen

3. So unbelief in God is inexcusable
- I. "No one comes to the Father except through Me."
 1. There are no innocent natives in Africa, America, or anywhere else
 - a. They all need Jesus
 2. They all need reconciliation
 3. They all need illumination
 4. They all need new life
 - a. And only Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life"

Benediction

Hebrews 13:20–21 (NASB95) —

20 Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord,

21 equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.