

Nobody Like Jesus Part 1

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[0 : 0 0] John chapter 14. Very familiar passage, verses 4-6. And you have to blame Pastor Y. Plummer.

! I made the mistake of telling him, I'm going to preach this passage all, it's powerful, I'm going to do it all in one week, one Sunday. He says, what? That's three, four sermons!

Well, it won't be that many, but it won't be one. So blame him. Hear the word of the Lord. This is Jesus, our Lord, speaking.

He says, let me back up so you can hear this more clearly. 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.

[1 : 0 6] Now our text. And you know the way to where I'm 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.

The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of the Lord remains forever. This is the word of the Lord. Thank you, God. Please be seated. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you, Praise Team, once again. Appreciate your service to us, to our Savior.

in Lewis Carroll's classic work, Alice in Wonderland, there is an important scene.

[2 : 1 2] One day, Alice came to a fork in the road and saw a Cheshire cat in a tree. Which road do I take? She asked.

Where do you want to go? Was his response. I don't know. Alice answered. Then said to Cat, It doesn't matter. That was supposed to be funny.

Carol thought it was funny. But, if you don't know where you are going, you can't get there from here.

This quote by Carroll suggests that if you lack a clear destination or purpose, it doesn't matter which path you choose, as you are likely to end up somewhere unexpected or without a specific outcome.

Many people in this country will tell you that they want or expect to go to heaven or nirvana or paradise when they die. Some joke about wanting to go to hell because that's where all their friends are going to be.

[3 : 2 3] They say that because they don't know what hell means. And they don't really believe it exists either. But even those who say they want paradise or heaven sometimes don't have a clear understanding of how to get there.

I'm a real, I'm a poker player sometimes. Here's my whole card. The path is Jesus. Because there's nobody like him. As I read, I backed up so you could just keep that context in your mind.

Jesus is going away. He told the disciples this is the night before the crucifixion. He's going away. And they're full of anxiety. They believe they need him.

Hmm. So the Lord comforts them by saying he's going ahead of them to prepare a way for them. At the proper time, he'll come and get them that they may always be with him.

Jesus is telling us there's life after death. Life after death with God and with him. But the question remains, how do you get there? First of all, notice that Jesus responds to an honest question.

[4 : 41] human beings are funny about asking questions, aren't we? Sometimes we ask questions and we really don't want an answer.

Sometimes we ask questions and then reject the correct answer. But a lot of times we just refuse to ask questions because we don't want to look like the only one who doesn't know.

We're afraid that others will think we're stupid or at least not as smart as the room. That's why I love Thomas. Sometimes called Doubting Thomas.

He got a bad rap. It's not good, but amen. He asked a question that most of them were thinking. Jesus said, you know where I'm going.

Thomas looks around. Everybody's nodding and smiling. The lights are on, but nobody's home.

[5 : 53] slowly I can see Thomas raising his hand. Lord, we do not know where you are going. And how can we know the way if we don't know where you're going?

Boom. I love him. I don't know. We don't know, Lord. You keep talking about this way thing and I just don't.

I'm lost. You think we know, but we don't know. Hmm.

You know, God doesn't always answer your questions. But when he does, you should rejoice. When he does, first of all, notice this, because we know he does answer our questions sometimes, first of all, don't be afraid to respectfully ask God questions.

Please. That's how I do Bible study. That's how I prepare my sermons. I'm asking questions of the text. I'm asking God. Why is that there? Why did he say that?

[7 : 06] Look at that. I'm always asking questions. So don't be afraid to respectfully ask. And I had to put respectfully in there.

Forgive me if that seems a bit redundant. You don't need that. But, you know, there's a lot of ways of talking to God today that just doesn't seem very respectful to me.

Now, again, maybe I'm old school. I'm a boom ex. And, you know, I'm just, you know. But I just, I mean, Thomas didn't say, man, you crazy. We don't know what you're talking about, fool.

He didn't say that. Lord. Notice that. Lord. Now, he didn't know the full meaning of that term.

He didn't know Jesus was God in human flesh yet. He's going to know. He didn't know yet. But he knew he was a great one. Lord. We don't know. He knew he was speaking to someone greater.

[8 : 11] He spoke with respect. We should certainly speak with deep reverence. We should especially speak with deep reverence because we know who Jesus is.

We are approaching the majesty on high. doesn't mean we have to speak King James language. Oh, thou great and mighty.

We don't have to do that. But we are approaching our creator and savior. And he taught us to pray. Our father in heaven hallowed holy be your name.

He taught us to respect God. And so we should even as we ask questions we are sincerely we surely want the answer to. Second, don't ask God questions if you don't want the answer.

You know, come on. How many times have we done that, right? In prayer, Lord, I want to know your will. No, you don't. You might already know. I've been there in times when I knew the will of the Lord and I just didn't want to do it.

[9 : 22] So you stall. You use prayer to stall. You use seeking counsel to stall.

Or you just procrastinate in doing what he's called you to do. We stall, but listen, so if you're determining in your heart that when God speaks to you the answer, you will believe it and obey what he says.

I kind of think our Lord might have smiled a little because he makes one of the most important statements in the entire Bible and in all of literature in this passage.

He's making it to comfort his disciples concerning his leaving and so he reveals himself. What do we need more than anything else that Jesus will reveal himself to us?

He reveals himself profoundly and we have to ask the question, again, who is this Jesus? Who is this Jesus? Now, I'm going to put the word only in my points here out because that is what I believe the article the implies.

[10 : 36] So here we go. Well, before we get there, Jesus once again identifies himself as God. Yeah, I was amazed, I said that this before, but it amazes me when people say Jesus never claimed to be God.

Oh my gosh, he did it everywhere, all kinds of places. Here, once again, he does it. I am the way. I am. Another one of those beautiful I am statements that John preserves for us.

And not to belabor the point, I'll just say this, the I am of the burning bush. Moses said, who, you sent him to Egypt, who should I tell them sent me?

What is your name? God because he knew him as El Shaddai, that's Abraham, you know, and all the fear of Isaac he was also called, but Moses wants to look, he's getting personal.

Who should I mean, all the Egyptian gods have names. What's your name? And God just simply says, tell them I am that I am.

[11 : 37] I am has sent you. God that speaks of God being the self-existent one, the one who always was and is.

No beginning, no end. He's the uncreated, he's the uncaused cause. Everything exists because I am. Jesus says, I am, and in the Greek language it's very strong.

He emphasizes it, that's how we know he's making an I am statement. He actually says, I am, I am. I am.

And these next, that statement and these next statements are either true or Jesus is evil or insane.

Thomas, Jesus talked, fellas, how do you get to where I'm going? Let me tell you. Jesus is the only way. I am the way.

[12 : 41] He told them he's returning to the father's house. Now he says he is the way to that place. It's interesting that followers of Jesus, before we were called Christians, we were called followers of the way.

The way. The term Christian, meaning belonging to or following Christ, may have begun in the church or it could have just been a slur.

We're not totally positive, but it could have been an insult from the culture, there goes those followers of Christ. But the first time we were called Christians was in a city in Syria called Antioch.

It was the early center of the faith and mission to the Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas actually taught there for an entire year. This is Acts 11, verse 26 in particular. They taught there for an entire year.

Can you imagine having Paul and Barnabas teaching Bible study and preaching for an entire year? My goodness, that must have been beautiful. But understand, this idea is common.

[13 : 52] The way or the path was a common idea in the Old Testament. Deuteronomy 5, 32, and 33, Moses speaking, you shall be careful, therefore, to do as the Lord your God has commanded you.

You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land that you shall possess.

Deuteronomy 31, 29, Moses speaking again. This is near the end of his life. He says, for I know that after my death you will surely act corruptly and turn aside from the way that I have commanded you.

And in the days to come evil will befall you because you will do what is evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger through the works of your hands.

The prophet Isaiah comes along and says in Isaiah 30, you. Though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your teacher, capital T, will not hide himself anymore.

[15 : 01] But your eyes shall see your teacher and your ears shall hear a word behind you saying, this is the way. Walk in it when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.

You see, this way or path is supremely important. So much so that David cries out in Psalm 27, teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies.

The way is a common theme. It seems to suggest a lifestyle that obeys and pleases God. Jesus says, I am the embodiment of that way, that path.

In the culture of Jesus' day, the Jews certainly believed in only one God, right? We know that. But they were odd. Everyone else in the Roman Empire believed in multiple deities, idols we call them.

And they didn't just believe in many gods, they believed in many roads to the many gods. And Jesus says, that's all wrong.

[16 : 20] There is one God. And if you want to know how to please him, Jesus says, follow me. That was offensive then.

And Pastor Billy, I want to tell you, it's offensive now. It's still offensive. I don't want to offend people. That's not why I get up in the morning. But sometimes when you tell people the truth, they don't like it.

So maybe we should just keep our mouths shut. You know, Bruce, we don't want to offend people. Nobody in this room wants to go around offending people. We want a good life, an easy life, a chill life, you know.

So why should I tell people what Jesus says here when I know some of them are going to be mad at me about it? You know why?

Well, two reasons. One, Jesus said so. He revealed it. That's the ultimate reason. But the other reason is this, because you love people. You see, we speak this offensive message in love.

[17 : 36] love. If you can't say it in love, please be quiet. If you're going to say it in anger, if you're going to say it as a club to beat people over the head, if you're going to try to win arguments and debates, listen, let me pray with you for a little bit.

Let's talk. Because we're supposed to speak the truth in love. Our hearts should go out to people. That's why we risk their ire.

That's why we risk people not liking. That's why we risk making people uncomfortable. Because the house is on fire. You got to go out the exit.

That's how serious this is. Run for your life. There's the door. Everybody, this way, this way. That's what we're doing. One God.

But also the Jews thought that obeying the law was the way to please God. They thought keeping religious rules and ceremonies were the way, was the way. And they were not truly fulfilled in keeping those rules either.

[18 : 48] All those ceremonies, all those sacrifices, all the special clothing of the priest, all the incense, it didn't satisfy them. So they didn't keep it.

So what do you do now? If you're a religious person and yet you find that you're not satisfied, you've been baptized, sanitized, and, you know, you've been doing all the stuff, but yet you still find you're not satisfied.

What is wrong? Jesus is the way. Personally, Jesus is the way.

But he's more than a guide. The rabbis and the prophets before Jesus were guides, but Jesus speaks as one having authority because he is the path that we must walk on.

He's the only path one must take to get to God. And so Jesus now takes us by the hand and walks with us on the path so we don't get lost.

[19 : 59] I was in Walmart a little while ago, Wally World, Belly of the Beast. I'm joking. I was asking about, I went to this lady who had one of those vests on.

You look for the vests. I went, I told her I was looking for something. And she started to point and she was going, you go, did this? And as she was pointing, I'm going, oh my goodness.

Because I know I'm not going to be able to, you know, I'm a little thick. So I just knew I was going to get turned around and waste my time in Walmart. Didn't want to be there anyway.

Hate shopping. But then she stopped us. She said, I'll take you there. aren't you glad that God didn't just send us directions to get to heaven.

But instead he came. He came to us. And even more now, he is with us. He has come in the person of his son so you and I don't get lost on the way.

[21 : 11] But there's a further distinction. The way has been paid for us includes the cross. That's the part of the way.

That's his way. And he calls us to pick up our cross, as you know, to follow him. My Pentecostal brothers used to sing years ago, no cross, no crown, for the cross is the path.

Romans 8, 16 and 17, Paul writing, the spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Paul is making it clear here that the mark of the children of God is the suffering of Christ. Christ. He expects the people of God to bear this mark as we go on this path, this mark of suffering.

Suffering denial of self is part of the way. Hmm. And why is this so hard?

[22 : 29] Why has it got to be so hard? This won't be on the screen, so you can turn there. Matthew 7, 13 to 14. Matthew 7, 13 to 14. Jesus is the Sermon on the Mount.

It's toward the end of the sermon now. Jesus, our Lord, is speaking. He says to the people who are listening, to everyone who has ears to hear, enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction.

And those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life. And those who find it are few.

That's Matthew 7, 13 and 14. What Jesus tells us is that there are only two ways in life to choose from. There's the narrow gate, and by definition, narrow road, and the wide gate, and of course, the wide road.

The wide gate. Now, imagine. It makes sense, right? A wide gate is easy to get through. You can bring all your baggage.

[23 : 42] We have this little gate that we use on our steps to keep my dog Kobe from going upstairs. He wants to be everywhere we are. We have a little gate there.

You can open it, but when you open it, it's not very wide. And I'm trying to carry my suitcase upstairs, and I can't get through. So, what I had to do was take it down to make it wide enough.

Now, because it's wide enough, I can bring all my luggage, all my baggage, all my stuff. I can bring furniture, everything. I can bring it all upstairs. You see, that's what the narrow gate in life, the wide gate in life is like.

You can bring all your baggage, no change is required. Bring all your self-righteousness and selfish ambition, bring all your self-centeredness, your pride, your lust, your idols, bring all your stuff, your materialism.

That road is easy. It's wide and roomy, much room for diversity of opinions. My truth, your truth, it's all true.

[24 : 52] If it feels good, you do it. Don't let anyone tell you it's wrong. You can be spiritual but not religious. No rules.

Just right, baby. Follow your heart. That's the wide road. Room for everything. And anything under the sun, everything goes.

It's like it was in the book of Judges. Every man does what is right in his own eyes. That's the wide road. It doesn't end very well. It's the easy road, but it ends in destruction.

But it seems so right. But Proverbs 14, 12 says that's right. There is a way that seems right to a man, but is the way to death.

the wide road. It seems right to our intellect, to our desires, to our wants and ambitions.

[26 : 04] It seems right. It just makes sense. I'm following my heart, Pastor Kevin. can I suggest another road? And that's called the narrow road, Jesus called it, our Lord.

The narrow road, there's no space for deviation. And he said it's hard, it's not easy. The entrance on the narrow road is restrictive. Sometimes you have to look for this road, this gate, to find it.

It calls for repentance and faith. It means, that means leaving the old life and the old bag is behind. You leave your sin, you leave your rebellion. You may have to leave some relationships too.

The road is narrow because God has spoken and says, this is the way. If God never said anything, the broad path would be the obvious.

But because God has spoken in his son in particular, he has spoken and said, this is the way, walk ye in it. This is the way. So he hasn't left us to figure it out on our own.

[27 : 14] This way is hard, but it leads to life. And I don't know about you, I think it was one of the prophets, God speaking to one of the prophets, he cried out to his people.

He said, why will you choose death? Choose life. That's our message to the world. Don't you understand? That's our message to our neighbors. That's our message to people.

That's why we risk, that's why we risk offending. And we speak with respect. We speak with humility. Hello, people. Hello. We speak with gentleness, but we speak the truth.

Why? Because we don't want them to choose death. Choose life. I'm so glad with the gospel. The good news of the gospel is so good.

Because rather than God, rather than demanding that humanity find our own way to him, instead he has provided the way. And he's come to us.

[28 : 21] He's done all the heavy lifting. He enters our world, even our humanity, to show us how to live in order to please him and to be with him.

He came to save us. He came to make spiritually dead people alive, to be children of God. He didn't come to reform your life.

He didn't come to be your life coach. He didn't come to give good advice. He came to make dead people live, because we had chosen death.

And then even know it. Because we were on the wide road. And we're just having a good time. I love the wide road. Man, I had a great time on the wide road. And I would have stayed there, too, if God hadn't cut me off.

You know, it's the only time in my life I ever liked being cut off. I'm so glad he put his SUV in my path.

[29 : 26] love Lenore, he didn't ask my permission. He didn't even give me warning. He didn't even signal.

There was no horn. God put his SUV right in my path. Here I am flying down the road, doing 70, living life, going places, baby, on my way to Penn State University, hello, Jesus, to party and have all kinds of big fun with the wretched.

That's a quote from a TV show, don't worry. My wife gets it. I'm having big fun, and God, as I'm going down the highway in Pennsylvania, heading to Penn State, God pulls this big, beautiful, white SUV in front of me.

He does that 360 thing, you know, and blocks my path, and I'm like, oh my, who is that? And he said, I'm Jesus.

Listen, I didn't find this road on my own. I didn't want this road, but I'm so glad that God found me and put me on it.

[30 : 42] He came to save in all the major religions of the world. Listen, y'all, you must do things to make your way to God or to the path of happiness. You must find the way and keep yourself on the path, and if you do it, you will be rewarded.

The Jews have broken the covenant of God. They tried that. It didn't work. They broke the covenant. The Gentiles, who God says are strangers to his covenant, strangers to his law, they were all condemned before God and without hope.

They're like us. But in his way of death and resurrection, Jesus forgives our sins, transforms us so that we can walk the path.

Jesus says, trust me and I'll be your path to God and glory. But sadly, Jesus is often the road less traveled.

But by God's grace, he said, some will find me. have you? Have you? Have you found him? I know really he found you, but we're talking about a path, so I'm going to go with that.

[31 : 57] Have you? Some in this passage will see the echoes of the three offices of Christ in this passage. In this, Jesus as the way, he is the ultimate king.

The office of Christ, prophet, priest, and king. Jesus is the ultimate king here. He's the king of kings. So we must follow him. He's the king who leads us into battle.

He's the king who leads us to victory. He's the king who leads us to real prosperity, treasures in heaven. He's the king who has a destination for us, a home for us, and we call it glory.

He calls us into his kingdom that is not restricted by geography or nation or tribe or tongue. His kingdom will never end. It's a kingdom of joy and goodness, love and peace and suffering on this side of it.

In this life, we will be intruded upon. In this life, we might be persecuted. In this life, we will be made uncomfortable, but we rejoice because in this path, we follow our king.

[33 : 09] We bear his name. We bear his message. and we are not ashamed. Jesus is the way, the way, the only way, Jesus.

So let me ask you a question. Have you ever been lost? I mean lost. I mean so lost that even the signs you see don't make any sense.

you look at your GPS and series so told you you can't get there from here, bro. And when the realization finally hit you that you were truly lost, what'd you do?

I'll tell you what I do. I look for a gas station. I look for some business. Anybody else do that? Am I the only one? Come on, be honest.

When you're lost, don't you look for a gas station? Why do we do that? Because we know somebody in there is likely to be able to tell you how to get where you're going so you're not lost anymore.

[34 : 22] more. You're desperate. So you go to people you don't even know, who don't even look like you sometimes. I hate being lost in small town Georgia.

It scares me. But if I'm desperate enough, I'll pull in. And I pray there's no stars and bars on the side of the wall.

But I'll pull in because I'm desperate, I'm lost, and I'll ask for help. Let me tell you something. Are you that desperate? Have you come to the place that you know you are spiritually and emotionally and morally lost?

And you need someone greater than you, someone who knows the road to help you get on the right path, to have a life of true satisfaction, meaning, and purpose, someone who can help you die well, as well as live well?

If that's you, then you need Jesus. He's made a way for you. Maybe you're already a Christian, but you're at a crossroads in your life. Right now, you're at a crossroads.

[35 : 32] A decision needs to be made that's extremely important right now to you. Let me tell you something. Don't go to the gas station. Don't follow the Rafiki's of the world, to my Lion King fans.

Rafiki was an old eccentric mandrill. And he comes to Simba, the king, but doesn't know he's the king.

And he tells Simba, he says, Simba, do you know who you are? He said, no, I don't. He said, but I know who you are. And Simba's like, what?

He says, I knew your father. You what? And so Simba's all stuck and Rafiki says, you follow Rafiki. He know the way.

And so Simba goes after Rafiki. Brothers and sisters, don't follow the Rafiki's of this world. There are a lot of Rafiki's in this world telling you they know the way.

[36 : 35] There are a lot of Rafiki's in this world who are eccentric. Matter of fact, he was a shaman, by the way. There are a lot of Rafiki's doing special magic and horoscopes and all kinds of spooky things and reading your palms and just having great insights.

It would be sometimes some kind of psychology or something. Not all psychology is bad, by the way. Amen. But they want to tell you how to pull yourself up by your own boot straps, how you can be great.

And they are just as lost. And it breaks my heart when Christians listen to such things. Saints don't listen. Go to Jesus.

Listen to Jesus. Open the book and let Jesus speak to you. Get around godly people and ask for godly counsel from people who know Jesus and know his word.

It won't be easy. It might not be easy. But it's right. For Jesus and Jesus alone is always the way.

[37 : 46] His way. His way. Not Kevin Smith's way. His way. And you will be blessed. Father, thank you for sending Jesus the way.

Thank you for sending the eternal son, the I am, to be with us. Thank you that he didn't just give us some good advice, but he told us that he was the way we are to follow.

Help us, Lord. Help us, each one of us, under the sound of my voice, help us to follow Jesus. Lord, thank you that when we do slip and fall and turn right when we should have turned left, thank you that you don't kick us out of the family.

Thank you that you come and get us and bring us back onto the path. And sometimes that's painful, but thank you that you don't let us go, because you love us. Help us to love you.

Help us to love you for everything we have, for you are worthy of our love, and you are worthy of our praise and our lives. May Jesus be glorified, Father, speak to your people in Christ's name.

[38 : 58] Amen.