

# Lifegroup

March 21 & 22, 2020

“I AM: The Way, The Truth & The Life”

Scripture: John 14:1-7

## OPENING

Throughout the season of Lent, we are looking at the “I AM” statements Jesus makes in the Gospel of John. Each one of these statements says something significant about Jesus’ identity. Who is Jesus and what does it really mean for us? In the final week of this series, Easter, we’ll take a look at the final “statement” that was made in the resurrection of Jesus. This week we explored the I AM statement: I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life.

## PRAYER

Open your time together with a moment of prayer. Invite the Holy Spirit into your conversation and ask God to give you wisdom and discernment as you read Scripture and discuss your faith. Trust in him to guide you.

## INTO THE WORD

Take a few moments to read the Scripture verses shared during the worship service, along with a few others listed below. You can read these passages out loud as a group, or silently to yourselves.

*“Jesus Comforts his Disciples”*

**Read John 14:1-4**

### **John 14:1-4 (NLT2)**

1 “Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. 2 There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? 3 When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. 4 And you know the way to where I am going.”

In verse 3, Jesus says “I will come and get you so you will always be with me where I am.” What is the significance of Jesus telling us this? When in your life has Jesus met you where you are to help you through a struggle or challenge? How would it have been different if you had to meet Jesus where he was instead?

*“Jesus the Way to the Father”*

**Read John 14:5-7**

John 14:5-7 (NLT2)

5 “No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?” 6 Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. 7 If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!”

What does it mean to you to hear Jesus say the words, “I am the way and the truth and the life?” Jesus says, “No one can come to the Father except through me.” With such a simple, loved based invitation to the Lord do you have a hard time accepting this without feeling guilt?

## APPLICATION

This week remember Jesus meets us where we are no matter the struggles we are facing. Pray that your heart can accept this from Jesus and trust him fully. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life and

has shown us the way to the Lord. Let this invitation bridge that gap between reality and your hopes, promises and dreams.

New Commentary on the Whole Bible - New Commentary on the Whole Bible – New Testament: Based on the Classic Commentary of Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown.

**1 Let not your heart be troubled**—speaking to Peter and all the other disciples.

**2 In my Father's house are many mansions**—lit., "abodes." The first portion of John 14 traditionally has been interpreted with the understanding that verse 2 refers to God's house in heaven. Accordingly, many commentators think that Jesus was speaking about his Father's house in heaven, to which he had to go in order to prepare some rooms and from which he would return one day to take back his believers to be with him in heaven. The day of that return usually has been designated as the second advent (or perhaps the Lord's personal visitation to each believer when they depart this world—a favorite homily at funerals).

The traditional exegesis has serious problems. First of all, heaven is not mentioned in John 14. Second, the going away and coming again according to the context of John 14-16 would be but for "a little while" (see 14:19, 20; 16:16-23), not two or more millennia! Indeed, 14:20 and 16:20-22 make it more than evident that "that day" would be the day of Christ's resurrection, the day in which the disciples would realize that they had become united to the resurrected Christ. Third, John 14:4 and 6 indicate that Jesus was talking about the believers coming to the Father through him, the unique way. Surely this access to the Father is not reserved for the second advent or for the time of each saint's departure from this world. Jesus came to provide believers with a way to approach and indwell the Father here and now (see Eph. 2:18). Fourth, John 14:2, 3 reveal that Jesus' intention was to bring the disciples to be with him "where I am," not "where I will be." Where was the Lord then and there? Jesus repeatedly indicated that he was in the Father (10:38; 14:10, 11), and he prayed in John 17 that the disciples would also be with him in the Father (17:21-24). Of course, the Lord also indicated that he was going to the Father (14:12; 16:28) and that that ascent would take him to heaven. As such, it could be inferred that he was going to heaven, and that was where he wanted to take his disciples. But this seems to miss the mark. The goal of Jesus' mission, according to the Gospel of John, was to express the Father to mankind and to bring the believers to the Father. John 14:6 says it so clearly: "I am the way and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me."

Since the traditional exegesis of John 14:2, 3 has serious defects, some modern commentators have attempted to resolve the problems by suggesting that this passage could indicate: (1) the Lord's second advent and the believers' ascent to heaven; (2) the believers' ascent to heaven at the time of death; or (3) the believers' immediate access to God the Father through the Son. Of the three possible meanings, the first is not very Johannine, although possible, but the second is highly unlikely (the Scriptures nowhere speak of the Lord's coming again and again for each deceased believer). Only the third seems valid. Nevertheless, most commentators think Jesus was talking about going to a place (heaven) and not to a person (the Father). **I go to prepare a place for you**—When Jesus said that he was going to prepare a place for the disciples in the Father's house, could he not have been suggesting that he himself was that house? Did not the Father dwell in him, and he in the Father? Then, the way for the disciples to dwell in the Father would be for them to come and abide in the Son. In other words, by coming into the One who was indwelt by the Father, the believers would come simultaneously into the Indweller, the Father. Clearly, this was the Lord's desire and design (see 14:20; 17:21-24). Therefore, when he said he was going to prepare a place for them, does it not mean that he, through the process of death and resurrection, was going to make himself ready to be inhabited by his disciples? In short, Jesus was (and is) the Father's house that needed to be prepared to receive the believers. The same expression, "Father's house," appears in John 2:16, in which it is clear that the temple in Jerusalem was the Father's house; yet in the next few verses (2:17-21) Jesus likens himself to the temple, a temple that would be destroyed and raised again in three days. Thus, the Son, through the process of crucifixion and resurrection, would become the temple, the Father's house, prepared to receive the believers. He, as the temple, the Father's house, would be the

means through which the believers could come to dwell in the Father and the Father in them (see MacGregor). In other words, the Son would become the common abode of the believers and God.

Other commentators prefer to see "the Father's house" as being the church, the dwelling place of God (see 1 Cor. 3:16, 17; Eph. 2:20-22; Heb. 3:2). As such, the promise in 14:2, 3 is then thought to relate to the corporate fellowship that would be possible through Christ's departure and return in the Spirit (Gundry). In this view, the "many abodes" would be the many members of God's household. Christ went to prepare a place for each member in God's household (cf. 1 Chron. 17:9)—the preparation was accomplished by his death and resurrection. If, however, the "many abodes" must be connected with Christ or God's house, the explanation is more difficult.

For how could the Lord contain many abodes? Answer: the same way in which the vine incorporates many branches. Note, the Lord does not say, "In my Father's house, there will be [future tense] many abodes." This was spoken proleptically, as also was John 15:2. The believers are viewed as having already inhabited the Son, or as having already been joined to him. Yet this could not be actualized until after the Lord's death and resurrection. It required preparation. Therefore, though the believers are viewed as already being abodes in the Father's house, a place needed to be prepared for them. Once the Lord was resurrected, God's house would be enlarged from one individual abode (i.e., the Father and the Son indwelling each other) to many abodes (i.e., the Father and the Son indwelling many believers and vice versa). The word "abodes" is used only twice in the entire NT, both places in John 14 (verses 2 and 23). Could the "abodes" be different abodes? According to John 14:23 each believer becomes an abode of the Father and the Son, and since there are many believers, these must be the many abodes in the Father's house. In verse 2, the abodes are spoken of as already existing; but in verse 23, we see how these abodes actually come into existence.

**3 I will come again** [lit., "I am coming again"], **and receive you unto myself**—Notice, the Lord does not say, "I am coming again and will receive you to *heaven*," but, "I am coming again and will receive you to *myself*." A person, not a place, is the destination. The present tense Greek verb (I am coming") shows the immediacy of the Lord's coming back. His coming to them again would be realized in a short while. (This is confirmed by 16:16—note the similar use of "again.") When the Lord said, "I am coming again," that "coming again" came on the day of his resurrection. However, many commentators say this is the parousia.

**4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know**—It should be pointed out that several modern translators of 14:4 offer expansions based upon the traditional exegesis explained previously (14:2). The translators of NIV, TEV, and NEB added words which indicate that the Lord was going *to a place*: NIV ("the way to the place"), TEV ("the way that leads to the place"), and NEB ("my way there"—a little less conspicuous). But, in context and in accordance with Johannine thought, the Lord was preparing the way through himself to the Father. The destination is not a place but a person. Thomas Merton said, "Where is this place? It is not a place, it is God."

**6 God is the destination, and the Son is the way to him. I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by [except through] me.** Christ is the way to the Father; Christ is the truth (or reality) of all we find in the Father when we get to him; and Christ is all the life that shall ever flow to us and bless us from the Godhead.

**7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also**—In the first six verses of John 14, Jesus has revealed the great truth that he is the unique way to the Father. In 14:7 and following, he will begin to unveil that he is the visible manifestation of the Father. If the disciples were to realize that coming to dwell in the Son was equivalent to coming to dwell in the Father, they would have had to realize that the Son was the Father revealed, the manifestation of the Father (see John 1:18; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3). If they had come to know the Son, they should have perceived the Father also. Another manuscript reading yields a translation like the one in TEV: "Now that you have known me, ... you will know my father also." But the entire context of this portion seems to assert the opposite. It is not that the disciples *will* come to know the Father as they have known the

Son, but that they should have already known the Father as manifest in the Son. The Lord was reproofing them, not promising them some future knowledge of the Father. If he was making a promise, how could the Lord say in the very next sentence: **And from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.**

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