

I AM THE WAY AND THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

Chuck Swindoll tells this story about R.D. Jones. It had to do with a typographical error in the classified section of a small-town newspaper and the subsequent disastrous attempts to correct it. Things went from bad to worse to horrible. *Monday*: FOR SALE – R.D. Jones has one sewing machine for sale. Phone 948-0707 after 7 p.m. and ask for Mrs. Kelly who lives with him cheap. *Tuesday*: NOTICE – We regret having erred in R.D. Jones' ad yesterday. It should have read: One sewing machine for sale. Cheap. Phone 949-0707 and ask for Mrs. Kelly who lives with him after 7 p.m. *Wednesday*: NOTICE – R.D. Jones has informed us that he has received several annoying telephone calls because of the error we made in his classified ad yesterday. His ad stands corrected as follows: FOR SALE – R.D. Jones has one sewing machine for sale. Cheap. Phone 949-0707 after 7 p.m. and ask for Mrs. Kelly who lives with him. *Thursday*: NOTICE – I, R.D. Jones have NO sewing machine for sale. I SMASHED IT! Don't call 948-0707, as the telephone has been disconnected. I have not been carrying on with Mrs. Kelly. Until yesterday she was my housekeeper, but she quit.

When was the last time you had a really bad day? Today we are continuing in our series looking at the I Am statements of Jesus. We have looked at Jesus the Bread of Life, the one that satisfies our deepest hunger. Last week we talked about Jesus the Resurrection and the Life, the one that helps us in our fears. Today we turn to Jesus the Way and the Truth and the Life, the one who helps us to trust.

John 14:1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going." 5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" 6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

When was the last time your whole world just seemed to be falling apart? When it seemed that everything around you just came crashing down? That is the way the apostles are feeling as we come to this chapter. Their week had begun gloriously. Just before this Lazarus had been raised from the dead. Jesus had His triumphal entry into Jerusalem with people waving palm branches and shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel!" (John 12:13) Everything seemed to be going so well.

Even the Pharisees and the chief priests who had been plotting against Jesus had cried out in despair, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after Him!" (John 12:19)

However, Jesus had not come to establish an earthly kingdom. He repeatedly refused the crown. Disappointed in their dreams of a Jewish kingdom with Jesus as their miracle working king, the fickle crowd began to change. Soon the priests were once again seeking someone to betray Jesus into their hands. As the 14th chapter of John opens, we see Jesus and His apostles in the upper room where they have eaten the Passover meal together. Jesus knew exactly what the next few hours would bring.

He knew Judas would betray Him. He knew He would be arrested. He knew about the trials and the beatings. He knew He would die on the cross.

In light of all of this He tried to prepare the apostles for what they were about to endure, so He begins to comfort them.

When times get tough and your heart is broken sometimes it is hard to trust again. A few weeks ago I went to Kuwait to help the church I used to pastor. When I left the church in 2009 it was growing and thriving. In the last few years it has gone through many trials. A long time pastor died of cancer. A new pastor took the church in a new direction. This past fall the church was forced to fire all 5 of its pastors. It is now less than half the size it was. The church has gone from a place of complete trust to almost complete distrust. It was for this reason that I went back to visit, to remind the church of its foundation and to remind it of its mission. Because I had served there for many years I had a degree of trust, but still there was so much fear.

Is there anyone who needs comfort here this morning? Perhaps someone that has been hurt in the past and is having a difficult time trusting again these days? In this life we face many trials. People lose jobs. Some have physical problems. Others are lonely & depressed. We experience all kinds of troubles. Jesus says that part of the solution to a troubled heart is trust. He tells His apostles to trust in 3 things.

1. Trust in my PRESENCE – Jesus is the life

John 14:1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.

Jesus is saying, "I know you trust in God. You can trust me as well. Remember, even when you can no longer see me, don't stop trusting in me." All of us seem to have a much easier time trusting in things that we can see and touch. It is the things we cannot see often that we have the hardest time trusting in.

Story of leaving Petra and taking down the garbage. I tried to tell her I would be right back but it did not help. We all have a little bit of Thomas in us, don't we?

John 20:24-25 Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

Because of this Jesus comes and shows him;

John 20:26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." 28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

The Bible teaches us that the things we can see are only temporary. All of it will one day be gone. The automobile in which you rode to church today is temporary. This building, the pews on which you are sitting, all are temporary. All are subject to decay. All of this will someday be gone.

We need to learn to trust even when we do not see the substance of our faith.

This is especially difficult when things do not seem to be going according to plans. e.g. Pickrel in the tank with and without the glass - starving to death.

2. Trust in my PROMISES – Jesus is the truth

John 14:2 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you...

Jesus is saying, "I'm going to take you to My Father's house, and it will be your home, too. You'll be a part of the family. You'll be home where you belong." The word that Jesus used comes from the eastern custom that when a son grows up & gets married, he brings his bride back home again. And the father adds another room onto His house for them.

Then when another son grows up & gets married, they add another room. The house just keeps getting bigger & bigger, as the family stays together.

A few weeks ago Joshua talked about heaven. The Bible uses many different words to describe heaven. It is called a COUNTRY indicating the vastness of heaven. It is called a CITY indicating the large number of inhabitants. It is called a KINGDOM indicating that there is a governmental structure to it all. It is called PARADISE indicating its beauty and desirability. Of all the words to describe heaven, Jesus says here that it is MY FATHERS HOUSE. That means that it is home.

Home is a where you can be yourself. Home is where you can take off your tie and kick off your shoes. Home is where you can say what you are thinking. Home is where you're always accepted & loved. You're not just a guest. You are a resident. You live there. That is home.

Marian Anderson, the great singer, was once asked, "What is the most memorable moment of your life?" When she answered, she didn't mention the time she sang before the president. She didn't mention the time that she was invited to sing before the king and queen of England. She didn't mention when she sang before 76,000 people on Easter morning in Washington, D.C. She said, "The most memorable moment of my life was when I came home to my mother and said, 'Mama, you don't have to take in laundry anymore.' That's the most memorable moment of my life."

Stop and think about heaven. So much of me is already there. My name is written there. My citizenship is there. My God is there. My Saviour is there. My inheritance is there. My grandparents and one of my parents are there. So much of me is already there. Soon His promise will be fulfilled, and we'll be in our Father's house. We'll get new bodies, and we won't have to worry about getting old and sick and all the other things that plague us here. We can trust Jesus. He has promised us a new home.

1 Sam 15:29 He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind."

Num 23:19 God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfil?

God does not change. He will do what He has promised. You can trust Him knowing that He will never leave you or forsake you. Where in your life is the Lord saying to you "trust me"?

3. Trust in my PATH – Jesus is the way

John 14:2 ... I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

Jesus is saying here that we need to trust His path. Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?' Jesus answered, 'I am the way & the truth & the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'

What a wonderful promise! Jesus is saying, "I'm not just going to show you the way, or tell you the way, or write out the instructions on how to get there. I am the way. I will take you by the hand and bring you to My Father's house. Then you'll be home."

One person said: Man's life is made up of 20 years of his mother asking him where he is going, 40 years of his wife asking him where he has been and one hour at his funeral when everyone wonders where he has gone.

Do you have burdens this morning that you think you cannot bear? Are you troubled? Are you worried or anxious? Do you feel empty inside? Do you feel lonely? Do you feel lost? Confused? Jesus has a plan for your life. He has laid out a pathway for you to walk. Trust Him. No matter what the situation in your life, you can trust that Jesus will never leave you or forsake you.

I read the story of a soldier who returned from Viet Nam. His parents were wealthy and had lots of friends and threw big parties. It was near Christmas, and they were getting ready to go out to the first of the round of parties of the Christmas season. Just then the phone rang, and it was their son on the phone. "Mom," he said, "I'm back in the States." She said, "That's wonderful! Where are you? Will you be home for Christmas? Can you get here in time for the parties? Everybody will just love to see you."

He answered, "Yes, I can be home for Christmas, but I want to ask you something first." "What is it?" she asked. "Well, I have a friend with me from Viet Nam. Can he come?" "Oh, of course," she answered. "Bring him along. He'll enjoy the parties, too." "Wait a moment, mom," he said, "I need to explain something about him. He was terribly wounded, & lost both legs & one arm. His face is disfigured, too."

There was silence on the phone for awhile. Then the mother said, "That's all right. Bring him home for a few days." "No, mom, you don't understand. He has nowhere to live. He has no one else. I want to bring him home so that he can be part of our family. I want to let our home be his home." The mother was quiet again. Then she said, "Son, that just wouldn't do. What you're asking would be very unfair to us. Why, having someone like that around would disrupt all our lives. I'm sure there are government agencies that would be more than glad to take care of him. Look, just you hurry home for Christmas now, and then maybe you can visit him once in a while." "Darling, I'm sorry, but we've got to rush or we'll be late for the party. Call us again as soon as you know when you'll be home. Goodbye."

When the parents returned home from the party that night, there was an urgent message from the California police asking them to call. They telephoned, and the officer said, "I'm very sorry to have to call you, but we have just found a young soldier dead in a motel room. His face is disfigured, and he has lost both legs and one arm. From the documents on him it would appear that he is your son."

Whatever your burdens are this morning, the solution to a troubled heart is still the same, to trust, to trust in His presence. "I'll never leave you," He said. "I'll always be beside you. Don't forget My presence."

Secondly, "Trust My promises. When everything seems dark and gloomy, when everything seems to be falling apart, remember My promises."

"Then trust my path. You won't get lost. You won't go astray. I'm the way, and I'll take you by the hand and lead you to My Father's house."

The communion table is a reminder to us of God's promises. God so loved the world that Jesus came to die for us. His death and resurrection show once and for all that God has the power to do what He has promised for us.