***Big Questions: Looking to God’s Word for Answers
“…always being ready to make a defense…” I Peter 3:15***

**Is Jesus Christ Really the Only Way to God?**

**I. A Sample of Jesus’ Claim to Exclusivity**

* Matthew 11:25-30
* Mark 8:34-38
* Luke 10:21-22
* John 14:1-6

**II. A Sample of the Disciples’ Testimony to the Exclusivity of Jesus**

* John 3:35-36
* Acts 4:12
* Romans 10:9-10
* I John 5:12-13

**III. Salvation History for those outside the Full New Testament Gospel**

* Abraham
* David
* Nineveh
* Faithful Jews before, during and immediately after the resurrection all over the world
* Others?

**IV. Regardless of the Narrowness or Wideness in His Salvation Gift through Jesus, We Should Take This Message to the Entire World Because…**

* It is the greatest news anyone could ever hear and the sooner they hear it the better
* We share Jesus as not simply a heavenly Savior, but as the most precious gift a person could ever receive. He is our joy, our hope, our liberation from sin, our entrance into the fellowship of other believers, our participation in His great calling, our adoption into His family, and our ever present help.
* We must err on the side of greatest protection for the greatest number of souls
* We are called to proclaim to all people and nations that Jesus Christ is the only means of right standing before God and that this message of everlasting hope is worth living and dying for.

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**Is Jesus Christ Really the Only Way to God?**

**I. A Sample of Jesus’ Claim to Exclusivity**

* It is appropriate on a day when we will celebrate the Lord’s Supper that we discuss this question, “Is Jesus Christ Really the Only Way to God?”
* The world hears our claim that Jesus is the only way to God and they respond by “How can you believe in a God who is so narrow minded that He would provide only one way of salvation?” “That God is not virtuous, but evil.”
* There is nothing more provocative in a free and pluralistic society, nothing more offensive in a multicultural environment, than the claim to exclusive truth
* I want to contrast two sets of attributes, two attributes that the world loves in themselves and others and two attributes the God loves in us
* The greatest virtues, it seems in our culture, are tolerance and sincerity – not the tolerance that says “I think you are wrong, but I will treat you with respect while still holding to my firm conviction that you are outside objective truth.”
* Instead, a tolerance that says “All worldviews are equally valid.”
* Sincerity that is void of any reference to objective truth that says “It doesn’t matter what you believe, as long as you believe it with all your heart.”
* When we combine tolerance and sincerity in this question of access to God or eternal salvation or access to heaven, the world says this to the Christian, “all ideas are equally valid and the key to the effectiveness of whatever worldview you hold is the sincerity in which you believe in this worldview.”
* When people say things like that, they don’t really mean it
* Did the 9/11 hijackers sincerely believe their religious worldview that killing 3,000 individuals in the name of religion would guarantee their pathway to God?
* If so, were they right or wrong in their belief? If you say they were wrong, you are being intolerant and you are claiming some type of exclusivity.
* “How about Nazis?” Was Adolf Hitler sincere in his beliefs? Was he wrong?
* The question for us is this, “who gets to decide how many ways there are to God?” “Who gets to decide which way or ways are legitimate?” “me, you, congress?”
* It is ironic, isn’t it, that we are intolerant when we say there is only one way, but others who pick and choose which worldviews are valid and which ones are not valid, they are tolerant and enlightened, but on what basis can a person decide
* How about we submit to the authority of the One who created the universe?
* How about the approach that we submit to the One who lived a sinless life?
* How about we submit to the will of the One who died and rose again?
* Now we have a legitimate source of power and authority to determine right and wrong, salvation and lostness, access to God or separation from God
* If Jesus rose again from the dead, by virtue of this divine sign of authority, He gets to determine how we have access to God
* Let’s read just a couple of statements by Jesus with reference to His claims to exclusivity. Does Jesus really claim to be the only way to God?
* I put 4 references, 1 from each Gospel, in the notes. We will look at 2 of these.
* **Read Matthew 11:27 (Slide 2)**
* That is a mammoth statement by Jesus, that is over the top, crazy, ridiculous, outrageous, narrow minded, and the most exclusive statement ever spoken
* **Read Matthew 11:28-30 (Slide 3)**
* To whom has He chosen to reveal the Father? Notice the virtues of the person to whom the Son reveals the Father
* Faith – come to Me, follow Me, come after Me!
* Humility - Take my yoke upon you. Why? learn from Me for I am HUMBLE
* What then is the difference in this exclusive relationship between Jesus Christ and His access to the Father? No burdens? All religious systems, all religious claims to God have burdens. Islam – burdens, Buddhism – burdens, Hinduism – burdens
* So is the difference that Jesus offers a religious system with no burdens? No
* He says here, “My burden is light”
* John Piper makes the observation about Jesus’ burdens this way
* You remember the critique Jesus had of the Pharisees in Matthew 23, “They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with *so much as* a finger.”
* What is the difference then between the Pharisees and Jesus? No burdens?
* Fingers. One divine finger to take the burden and carry it for you.
* No one else can do it. No religious system can carry the burden for you.
* And the implications are not just for daily living, but are eternal in importance
* Consider what Jesus said to His disciples in John 14
* **Read John 14:6 (Slide 4)**
* You may not like what Jesus says here, but we cannot deny that He is making a very meaningful claim, again, this statement by Jesus is over the top, crazy, ridiculous, outrageous, narrow minded, and incredibly exclusive

**II. A Sample of the Disciples’ Testimony to the Exclusivity of Jesus**

* Again, I listed just a sample of statements from the testimony of others about Jesus. I listed 4, we will look at just 2 of those, one now, one at the Lord’s Supper.
* **Read John 3:35-36 (Slide 5)**
* I don’t know why God limited access to Him through just one way
* But even if He had provided more than one way, let’s say He provided five ways to Him, we would complain that there were only five ways
* Consider the biblical claim – creation, rebellion, rescue mission, rejection or belief
* If tolerance, meaning the acceptance of any human viewpoint, is the highest virtue, who gets credit for that?
* If sincerity of the person is the highest virtue, who gets the glory in that?
* If humility before God and faith in God’s Son are the highest human virtues, who gets the glory? God does and as Creator that is exactly what He intends
* I so want my life to matter. I so want your life to matter, to really matter.
* Graduation yesterday and all the accolades are fine to celebrate, but human centered accolades will go away. All successes in academics, in careers, in sports, in family, in hobbies, all of it will go away.
* When it all goes away, the only thing that will remain is faith in Christ and the good works humbly done in His name.

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**Lord’s Supper**

* **One verse, Acts 4:12 (Slide)**
* I want to challenge you today, to consider the faith in Jesus Christ and humility before God that is demonstrated in this one act
* We humbly confess that we are completely dependent on Jesus Christ for life
* We, by faith, receive this great salvation
* The Lord’s Supper give physical expression to this humility and faith