

“I am the Way the Truth and the Life” - John chapter 14, verses 1 – 14

During our time in Argentina we came to know a church Lay Preacher who rejoiced in the name of Juan Quatorze - in English that translates as ‘John Fourteen’! This was the name he gave to the authorities when they were enrolling the Indian peoples as citizens of Argentina. Why did he choose that name? It was already the name he was known by among his people. A “nickname” really because it was his favourite Bible passage which he would preach on given the least opportunity! The words the Lord Jesus Christ had spoken to the heart of this lovely Christian brother should speak to our hearts as we read and study scripture – the Word of God.

The context:- To understand the concern and questions of the disciples at this time, we need to read John 13, verses 31 – 38. The Lord Jesus had warned his disciples that he was to be betrayed (John 13, verse 21). That this would be his “Last Supper” with them – the last time he would drink wine with them (Mark 14, verse 25). Jesus knew what lay ahead and was preparing his disciples for the pain and distress to come. He gives specific encouragements to counterbalance his departure, the defection of Judas and the predicted failure of Peter. Everything seemed on the verge of collapse!

Verse 1 - “Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me”:- This “heart trouble” was experienced by the Lord Jesus himself – John chapter 11, verse 33; chapter 12, verse 27 and chapter 13 verse 21. He shared fully in the experiences of our humanity. The word “believe” can be read as an imperative in both cases. A renewed faith in God was necessary in the face of trials and temptations to come.

Verses 2 - 3 - “In my Father’s house . . . I go to prepare a place for you”:- The Temple at Jerusalem with its vast courts and numerous chambers, familiar to the disciples, could be seen as an ‘anti-type’ of the heavenly dwelling place of the Lord God. Just as Peter and John had gone ahead to prepare the Upper Room for the supper (Luke 22, verse 8), so Jesus was going ahead to prepare the “Upper Room” for his own. The promise is that “*where I am there you may be also*”. This must be the most satisfying definition of Heaven there is for a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. It includes past, present and future – read Ephesians 2, verses 4 – 10.

Verses 4 - 5 - Thomas said . . . “Lord we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” Thomas had a double problem. Since he, along with the others, did not understand the destination, how could he possibly work out how to get there! To begin to understand the answer Jesus gives, we need to look at it in its entirety.

Verses 6-7 - Jesus said to him, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father but by me” Jesus himself is “the Truth”. Because this is so, his teachings should not be ignored, or changed to mean something different to what he said! Pilate, a representative of the world, asked “what is truth?”. That is exactly the question which can be asked when reading many public statements. Prince Harry said quite openly - “I want to tell my truth”. So truth seems to be changeable depending on the the viewpoint of the narrator! Since Jesus is indeed one with the Father (verses 10 – 11 see also John chapter 1, verses 1 – 5; chapter 17, verse 21 and 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verses 17 – 19) then his word is the true Word of the Creator God himself. That Word is not “my truth” or “your truth” but comes “*from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow of changing.*” (James chapter 1, verse 17 – 18). Since the Lord Jesus Christ is the embodiment of the truth of God the Father and we are enabled in his love to be one with him (again 2 Corinthians 5, verse 17 and John chapter 17, verses 20 – 24) we already are possessors of his promise of eternal life. We have already been “*. . . raised up with him and made to sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus*” (Ephesians chapter 2, verse 6).

This is the truth of our salvation! We have come to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, confessing our sins and trusting in him for redemption. He is the Door – the gateway to salvation. He is the Way – in him we journey through this life to be where he is. His Word is Truth! Trust in him and be content amid the chances and changes of this troubled world!

*Who would true valour see,
Let him come hither;
One here will constant be,
Come wind, come weather;
There’s no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent
To be a pilgrim.*

*Whoso beset him round
With dismal stories
Do but themselves confound;
His strength the more is,
No lion can him fright;
He’ll with a giant fight;
But he will have a right
To be a pilgrim.*

*Hobgoblin nor foul fiend
Can daunt his spirit;
He knows he at the end
Shall life inherit,
Then fancies fly away,
He’ll fear not what men say;
He’ll labour night and day
To be a pilgrim.*

The original words of John Bunyan 1684. These reflect spiritual reality far better than the modern version! “*We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*” Ephesians 6, verse 12.