

"Why is Jesus the Only Way to God?" (John 14:1-11 + Q&A;)

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[0 : 00] let's turn to John chapter 14, and we're going to be reading verses 1 to 11. So John 14, verse 1 to 11.

Jesus comforts his disciples. Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. My father's house has many rooms. If that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?

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. You know the way to the place where I am going. 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 and the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my father as well.

From now on, you do know him and have seen him. Philip said, Lord, show us the father and that will be enough for us. Jesus answered, don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time?

[1 : 10] Anyone who has seen me has seen the father. How can you say, show us the father? Don't you believe that I am in the father and that the father is in me? The words I say to you, I do not speak on my own authority.

Rather, it is the father living in me who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the father and the father is in me, or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. Thank you, Kenneth.

And yeah, let's welcome, William, for the sharing today. So just remember, guys, jump into the Jamboard if you have any questions that you want to ask.

We'll have a slightly smaller panel today. But yeah, feel free to either message me or directly. Actually, just message me. Yeah. Just DM me if you have any questions and I'll chuck them up onto the Jamboard.

All right. And we'll answer those questions at the end. But without further ado, William. Awesome. Thanks so much, Isaac. Yeah. And thank you so much for Kenneth and Erica.

[2 : 17] Yeah. I've been sitting in the baptism classes with them and definitely really excited to be able to celebrate what God has been doing in their lives for each of the five. Hopefully soon, COVID permitting.

And yes. Yeah. Don't worry about the Q&A; panel. That's just me. I did try to invite Ashley Bloomfield, but he declined. So, yeah. But why don't we pray and we'll see how God can speak to us today.

Heavenly Father, we thank you. We thank you that because you did not stay distant from us, because in Christ you came down to live among us, to love us, to die for us, that there is a way to God.

One that is not hidden, not mysterious. One that is as clear as the tomb is empty. One that is powerful.

One that is uniquely for us. We thank you that Jesus claims to be God in the flesh. And he cares and knows our troubled hearts. So, Father, as we hear from this passage, would you help us to be more bold in our faith?

[3 : 32] And would you help us to be sensitive to those of us around us who share our faith or maybe have different faith as well, whether it be atheism, whether it be Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, whatever form it takes.

Father, we pray all these things in the name of your son, Jesus Christ. The most powerful name there is. Amen. All right.

I'm going to ask a very easy question. I want you to maybe in the chat type in your favorite firework. Right. It was Guy Fawkes last weekend. So your favorite firework. Make sure it's a legal firework in New Zealand.

But what is your favorite firework? Sparkles. Yes. Sparklers. Yep. Lots of sparklers. You guys are very tame. Anyone else like Roman candles, Buzzy Bees?

Yep. I had a very interesting chat with Isaac and his more godly younger self about how to turn Buzzy Bees into not Buzzy Bees, something more explosive, perhaps. Well, it was Guy Fawkes recently.

[4 : 34] And so as the good father of four, I went out and, you know, for some reason, the laundromat in Highland Park was selling fireworks of all places to find them.

And so, yeah, I bought some. And on the fireworks, you know, obviously, I was the good dad. I had to read the warning signs, you know, read the instructions.

And so this warning was printed on the Roman candles, right? Warning. Shoots flaming balls and reports. Only use outside. And so no surprise when later on on Guy Fawkes night, when I'm lighting the fireworks, I was trying to persuade our kids to keep a safe distance.

That's what we do, right? When we love someone, we'll persuade them, okay, out of love. No surprise, right? If a friend said to you, COVID isn't real, okay?

Maybe they just, yeah, they just don't really believe it. You try to persuade them. Actually, can you see? Have you seen the news? It can kill people, right?

[5 : 41] And if you spot a family, maybe swimming at a beach, and there's a sign that says, warning, sharks, the loving thing would be to warn them. Author Rebecca McLaughlin once said it this way.

When questions of truth carry life and death consequences, we see persuasion as an act of love. When what you believe is a matter of life and death, we're motivated to persuade people to change what they think and believe out of love.

And here in John 14, we listen in on a conversation, right, between Jesus and 12 of his closest friends on the night of his arrest before he is handed over to be killed on a cross.

And there's actually a sense of urgency in this kind of upper room conversation, which we read actually starts from John 13 and goes all the way through to John 17.

Several chapters of Jesus talking with his disciples. Jesus' words in this conversation, they carry life and death consequence. He too is persuading them out of love to think differently about him.

[6 : 51] But of course, the most famous line, right, is the one that's on the screen, the one that stands out most to us, maybe to our non-Christian friends. This claim in verse 6, he says, I am the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. And yet when it comes to religion, I think it's safe to say that many Kiwis do not believe persuading someone to change their beliefs is a loving thing to do.

You and I should be free to worship your own faith, but keep it to yourself. Don't bring it to work, to school, or to the backyard barbecue. So is it unloving to say to an atheist colleague, I'd love you to consider Christianity.

Is it disrespectful to suggest to your relatives that ancestor worship and Christian worship can't always coexist? Would it be bad parenting for me to pass on my faith to my children?

And at the back of all this, the question often is this, why should Jesus, why should Christianity be so exclusive? Why is he the only way to God?

[8 : 09] And so for a few minutes in the sermon, I just wanted to zoom in briefly on this conversation here in John 14, with these kinds of questions in mind. And hopefully you and I will come away with some thoughts about what is distinct about Christianity and whether it's even a good thing to believe and to tell people Jesus is the only way to God.

So if you have your Bibles, maybe on your phone or just your paper one, just keep them open. We're going to look at John 14 a bit more closely. So I'd like us to look at just those 11 verses that Kenneth so kindly read for us.

And I want to suggest that we see three C's in our passage, and that's how I'll divide up the sermon. There's three C's. There's a caring word. There's a confronting answer.

And then a compelling reason. I'll say that again. So we'll see a caring word right in the first four verses. And then we get a confronting answer to Thomas from five to seven. And in verses eight to 11, we see a compelling reason.

So let's look first at the caring word from Jesus. I'll read that again. Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me. In my father's house are many rooms.

[9 : 24] If it weren't so, I would have told you. I'm going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me so that you also may be where I am.

You know the way to the place where I am going. These are the words of our risen Lord Jesus. We often call this scene where Jesus and the disciples talking the last supper, don't we?

But I wonder if John actually presents to us the confused supper. You see actually early in chapter 13, Jesus does a very unusual thing, right? He washes their feet during dinner.

That's a pretty confusing thing for the disciples. And then soon they're at a loss and staring at each other when Jesus says one of them is going to betray him. And then later on when Jesus says, no, you can't follow me now.

But later, Peter ends up asking, why? Where are you going? There's a lot of confusion in this last supper. And it's only after all of this confusion and uncertainty that Jesus says here in verse one, don't let your hearts be troubled.

[10 : 38] You believe in God, believe in me too. Right? And then he gives that assurance, those wonderful words that we hear at funerals sometimes. He's not leaving them forever.

What he's going to do is prepare a place for them to be with him. And he assures them, look, you already know the way there. I don't want us to gloss over these words because I think the sequence, the order Jesus goes about this matters, doesn't it?

It's only after Jesus kind of draws out kind of the fears and the confusion that his friends have, that he then comforts them and teaches them.

He doesn't shortcut the process. You see. Before Jesus is going to claim to be the way, the truth of life, the only way to God, he first offers words of love and comfort.

Chapter 13 comes before chapter 14. He reassures his friends who feel lost and uncertain. They're not ready for him to go. He says, look, I'm going to leave you.

[11 : 45] Right? But verse 34 of chapter 13 says, look, love each other in the way that I've loved you. Words of comfort.

Right? He invites them then here to trust what he's doing, not to test them, not to answer a debate, but because he cares for their troubled hearts. And so we need to remember this is the context of where these words come from.

The context of Jesus's exclusive claims comes from a heart that wants to comfort people. I mean, have you ever wondered why most people walk straight past that guy preaching on the street with a megaphone at the street corner?

I know some of you have seen him, maybe at the bottom of Queen Street near the McDonald's or somewhere else. Do you wonder why most people just walk past? Or do you wonder why people, when you ask them to join church on Zoom, they'll just say thanks, but no thanks.

I think perhaps one reason is because maybe we've shortcut the process. Maybe we haven't actually understood their hearts and their troubles. But then on the flip side, have you ever wondered why some people, when they do hear a street preacher, do stop and listen and have an amazing change in their conversations?

[13 : 04] Have you ever wondered why someone does come to church to read the Bible with you? Perhaps some of you may think it's your amazing persuasive ability. You invite someone and they always come. You always have a good answer.

But actually, usually a lot has happened beforehand in someone else's heart and life before they take the first step to church. Isn't that true? Perhaps they had a crisis moment.

Maybe they've just had years of patient teaching from their parents. Maybe they have seen quietly how Christians that they know serve humbly like Jesus. Maybe they've eaten meals with Christians and engage in some of those deep questions.

You see, likewise, well before people hear a sermon or a truth claim from you or your pastor, they will usually want to know you care for them. That you know their name.

That you hear and care about their struggles. And some of you here, you've been struggling, right, with the sadness and pain of lockdown. Or maybe you've been struggling with just sadness and pain in general.

[14:12] Life under alert level three, it's been hard enough in itself. But, I mean, lockdown has also amplified problems at home, problems at work, problems at school.

And as much as we try to mask it up, many of our friends and family are troubled, perhaps even scared of disease and death. We are afraid of dying. We live in a culture that only thinks of pleasure and pain.

What happens after our last breath scares us? You see, it's when our hearts are troubled that Jesus is able to speak to us.

That we become even open to whether Jesus is the only way to God. So it's important to remember that this chapter starts with a caring word. Jesus starts with a caring word.

But, of course, it is what Jesus says next, right, that offends many people. So let us just read it. And verse five, it says, Thomas said to him, Lord, we don't know where you are going.

[15:16] So how can we know the way? And Jesus answered, I'm the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

And here you see Jesus moves from a caring word, right, to quite a confronting answer. It's confronting. It's confronting because for us, we see it as a very exclusive claim.

I'm the way, the truth, and the life. No one else. Nothing else. But remember, you might have picked it up from how I just read it. There's actually two groups of people Jesus speaks to here.

All right? Who's actually the first person he talks to? It's not us. He's speaking to Thomas, right?

Verse five. So again, first and foremost, Jesus' claim here in verse six is not a statement to just throw around.

But actually, it comes firstly as an answer to a close friend, right, who's already shared his doubts, who admits he doesn't know the way. That's the context.

[16:29] But verse six also does say this. No one comes to the Father except through me. And so here's the point where what he says becomes more of a universal truth claim.

This is more than just an answer to doubting Thomas, but also something that we all need to take into consideration. And if you don't consider yourself part of the body of Christ, right, a follower of Jesus, this idea that Jesus is the truth, the way, the life seems foreign, perhaps offensive.

I think of the one time when I was hanging out at the Fu Guang Shan Temple, right? It's the big one in Flatbush on Stankham Road and just chatting with the Buddhist monk there who said to me, she said, you know what?

It's good that you decided to become a Christian, William, because all religions have some good in them. That seems better, right, than saying Jesus is the way, the truth, the life.

Or perhaps you might resonate with the American poet, Michael Franti, who sings these lyrics. He says, life's too short to just make one decision. And God is too big for just one religion.

[17:41] Would you agree? But then many people would find these words here, this verse, not just foreign or not just, you know, whatever.

They would actually feel very offended by it. How dare you say there's only one true faith, they might ask. And they might even call you to stop being so exclusive.

You might need to hold back a bit. You might need to respect people a bit more. Look, all religions are equal, aren't they? But remember, what Jesus says here in verse 6 comes from a more respectful place than we give credit for.

I think because we've seen Jesus care for Thomas. He's washed his feet. He's eaten with him. This statement in verse 6, if we think about it closely, cannot be coming from a place of intolerance, but of love and respect.

So I think to say, I believe you are wrong about something, it doesn't have to be hurtful or unkind. Look, if Jesus calls us to love even our worst enemies, right, on the Sermon on the Mount, then surely we need the same attitude of friends and family we simply disagree with.

[18:53] I think of one seminary professor who put it this way, often it's said that you should respect other people's beliefs. But that's wrong.

What's vital though is that you respect other people. I think we can have a category where we do try to tell people our beliefs, but to do it with gentleness and respect.

But the question still remains, right, when it comes to different kinds of Christianity, to world faiths like Islam and Buddhism and Hinduism, even atheism.

Some would argue that aren't they just different paths to the same mountaintop? I would argue that there are more like roads to different countries altogether.

And the only way you'll see this is if we focus our attention on the most important issue that Christianity is built upon. Christianity is mainly built upon the person of Jesus.

[19 : 58] And in particular, whether Jesus was physically raised from the dead. When Jesus says, I will come back in verse 3, that is what he's hinting at, his death and his resurrection to his friends.

And we see, right, at the end of John's gospel, we see that fulfilled. And even the apostle Paul puts it this way. He says in 1 Corinthians 15, verse 17, he says, If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

So you see, Jesus, right, in the Christian faith, Jesus has a very exclusive claim. He claims to die for sinners and to physically be raised again.

And on this point, many other religions do not agree. Islam may mean peace and submission. That's what the word means.

But when it comes to Jesus, Muslims believe he did not die on the cross. But he only fainted and was later just taken straight to him as a prophet.

[21 : 08] Buddhism, depending on the different kinds, they may call itself the middle way. But when it comes to Jesus, right, in the world of Buddhism, there is no deity.

Jesus is just a noble person, but cannot be the way. Other faiths and worldviews such as Judaism, atheism, they believe Jesus died and stayed dead.

And so even on this point, I hope you can see that not all religions agree. A couple of weeks ago, we spoke about how biblical and non-biblical sources even, I think, give us and give me at least good reasons for us to trust that Jesus did die and rise again.

And for me, I'm convinced that when you observe the incredible growth of the early church and how it grew not through violence, but through persuasion, how it grew against all odds as a persecuted group.

There must have been an incredible spark that truly happened on Easter Sunday. But whatever you believe about this, ultimately, either the resurrection of Jesus happened or it didn't.

[22 : 23] Either Jesus rose from the grave or he didn't, right? Either he is the way, the truth, and the life, or he is not. And so on this point, not every religion can be right about this. And so we do need to sometimes gently push back.

There are certainly things we can learn from friends and family, neighbors, men and women from different faith backgrounds. Perhaps they share and believe in truths that actually we would, as Christians, believe too.

But on the question of Jesus, not every religion can be true. And here in our passage, Jesus claims that apart from him, there is no other way to the Father.

He is the way, the truth, and the life. And if we want to know God truly, we must know him. But the only way that Jesus could claim this crazy, bold claim is if he had the very authority and nature of God himself.

And that is exactly what he talks about now in verse 8 to 11, right? First, he gave his confronting answer. And I think now he gives a compelling reason. And he says this, I am in the Father, and the Father is in me.

[23 : 43] I mean, what we see in verse 8, right, is, again, another of his disciples, this time Philip, making a suggestion. And let's have a look what he says briefly. Philip said, verse 8, Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.

But then to Philip, how does Jesus respond? I think it's quite startling, right? Verse 9, Jesus answered, don't you know me, Philip, even after I've been among you for such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.

Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? The words I say to you, they're not just my own. Rather, it is the Father living in me who is doing his work.

This is a bold and compelling claim. But this is Jesus' reason for why he can say he's the way, the truth, and the life. Because here he is claiming the same divine nature as God the Father.

Here, Jesus claims that the Father is living in him. And he says that by the evidence of the miracles, did you see that phrase? We too can believe.

[24 : 54] That's what he says in verse 11. And for a bit of context, remember that at the time that John wrote this gospel account, okay, we need to transport our minds a little bit to a different culture where people didn't just believe in one God or no gods.

But actually, the default belief was that there were many gods and demigods. Think of Zeus and Hera and Artemis. The place and the culture that they lived in was a bit more like Hercules, you know, the movie, rather than what we live in today.

You see, if Jesus had said, I am our way, our truth, our life, actually, Jesus, he could have fit right in into the religious world of his time. It would be like, oh, Jesus, you're a god too?

Sure. Let's put you on the shelf. But what shocked people in Jesus' day and age was that he claimed to be God. Not just to be a god, but to be God in the flesh.

And then he does things to back that up. Think of how he looks at the paralyzed man and says, son, your sins are forgiven.

[26 : 05] It's a claim only God can make. That's why the Pharisees got so upset. And Jesus showed, right, his power and ability to heal the paralyzed man and therefore to forgive sin as God can.

And this claim actually still offends Jews and Muslims today. Well, what about Jesus saying another one of his I am statements, right? A few chapters back in John 11, he says to Martha, I am the resurrection and the life.

He who believes in me will live even though he dies. And whoever believes and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this? Friends, whatever you believe about Jesus, this is not the talk of just a good man or a helpful teacher.

As the author C.S. Lewis, who wrote the Chronicles of Narnia, as he famously put it here, Jesus is either a liar, a lunatic, or he is Lord.

And as we saw, right, as we walked through Matthew's gospel in the last term, Jesus, he just kept doing things only God could do. And so no surprise that here in his final conversation with his disciples, he urges them, trust and believe me who I am, God in the Father.

[27 : 27] Trust me because you've seen my miracles and the works I've shown you. That's what verse 11 tells us. And this obviously is a preview, these miracles of the greatest act of God that they're about to see when he goes to his death and is raised again for sinners.

And perhaps this is where each of us are faced with a choice. Perhaps some of you are listening, but you're not convinced.

I want to thank you for your time. I want to thank you for how respectful you've been with the claims of Christianity, even up till now. Jesus claims some outrageous things.

He presents himself as the way, the truth and the life. According to him, there is no other way to God. And so you might choose to believe him or not.

But you cannot say, I cannot say he's just one of many ways to God. Because at the heart of the Christian faith are truth claims about God different to every other major religion or worldview.

[28 : 41] Right? I mean, to the atheist, God is a delusion. To the Buddhist, God is irrelevant. To the Muslim, God is distant. He's unknowable.

But only the Christian God says this. The word which was with God and was God. This word, what does John 1 say? Became flesh and pitched its tent among us.

Dwelt among us. This is the difference. What we have in the Bible and in no other religion is a God who has not left us alone. Who makes himself known to us.

Who comes to seek and to save the lost. Look, to most other religions, the way to God must be earned. It could be earned, perhaps, through the five pillars of Islam.

Or the eightfold path. Or penance and confession. Or some other expression of holiness and piety. Right? Most other religions are like a piano exam or uni assignment where our performance comes before our acceptance.

[29 : 42] But only the Christian God says, Ephesians 2 verse 5. While we were dead in our sins, God made us alive in Christ.

That's the gospel. That is the good news of Jesus. Only in him can we say our acceptance comes before our performance. And look, if you really believe atheism is true, as some of you do, then as Alex Rosenberg states, then actually there's no moral difference between right and wrong, good and bad.

Anything goes. If Buddhism is true, then our entire life is suffering. And we should escape it by running from any desire or attachment to this world.

But if Christianity is true, and we can believe what Jesus says here, then we have a Christian God who offers an honest answer about why there is good and bad in the world.

And yet a hopeful explanation, too, because he provides a remedy for it in Christ. So, friends, PCBC, Jesus is the only way to God.

[30 : 57] Let us hold on to that. Why? Because only he claims to be God in the flesh. Only he can be the way, the truth, and the life. And actually, he says all this because only he truly knows and cares for our troubled hearts.

And even though many of us have ignored and rejected him, yet he comes for you. He comes for me. And he takes our cup of judgment for us.

And on the cross, he invites us. Run to me. Come to me and no one else for forgiveness of your sins, for peace in anxious times, for lasting eternal hope.

The word skeptic originally meant in its original language to observe something from a distance. And you know what?

If you're a skeptic today, it's a handy thing to be, right? We should be skeptical when we're trying to evaluate a situation at first. But I want to suggest to you sometimes to see clearly you need to come closer.

[32 : 09] You can't observe from a distance. And because what we believe about Jesus is a matter of life and death, I want to plead with you in love to come closer, draw near to Jesus.

Only he is powerful enough. But only he is loving enough to say, believe in me. Believe in God. Believe in me. So will you do this?

Let's pray. Father, just as Thomas doubted, just as Philip was unsure, just as Peter was confused, we've confessed that we often come to you with our doubts and confusion still.

Perhaps we've even been in church for many, many years. We have not really comprehended the true Jesus, the one who comforts our hearts. The one who makes a bold, exclusive claim about himself.

And yet the one who can be the only person in this world who can truly speak for you, God. So, Father, help us turn to him. Help us at least walk closer to him and draw near.

[33 : 25] Father, I pray for every skeptic to continue to draw close, to continue to wrestle, but to be open to the fact that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and that no one can come to God except through him.

Father, would you help us all with this? And in your son's name we pray. Amen. All right.

Thank you for that pre-recorded, Rachel. We've only got a couple of questions here today, but feel free to keep sending them through.

Yeah, just on the Zoom chat. I'll be checking that. Yeah, or if there are any other questions that you have, remember you can always ask your leaders, and we can cover off those next week if there is time or if there's anything outstanding.

Or we can post them on socials and stuff as well. So feel free to just, yeah, flick those questions through to me afterwards as well, right? So why don't we welcome our panelist, William, and also our host, Isaac.

[34 : 33] Basically, that's me. So, yeah, our first question says, what about other religious texts? How accurate are they? So, e.g. the Koran or the Book of Mormon.

Yeah, anything you'd like to say about that, William, about the accuracy of other texts? Yeah, I think one thing to just be careful when we jump into, it depends on who I talk to.

So if I'm talking to someone who is a follower of Islam, I don't think jumping into how accurate their text is the first place to start. Yeah, so on. I think within the Christian, you know, just as a church, I think we can have great confidence that what we have in our Bibles is, you know, an accurate and inspired and infallible and errant word.

Yeah. So I think this, and in comparison, actually, the earliest, the oldest Koran we have is dated 8th or 9th century BC, which is about 100 or 200 years after Muhammad lived on this earth.

I actually have a tourist photo of it. Let me try and bring it up to you. I don't know if you can see that. So you have to line up in front of some, so it's in a sealed case because it's so old.

[35 : 57] You have to line up in front of some really interesting smelling Pakistani men to get a look at the Koran. That's the oldest one, right? It's in Central Asia.

And one of the fascinating things is that actually the reason that was produced, it was because the person who authorized the production of this Koran was getting really worried that there were so many different versions of the Koran coming about.

So actually, he was trying to, you know, kind of like say this is the definitive edition. And so this was one of seven, I think, or six that he produced. So, yeah. So I think we can.

Yeah. So the Koran actually comes later. And I think even in its production itself, there's definitely a sense of we're trying to edit it and make it the one thing. So if you read the Koran, like some of my friends have from start to finish, they tell me that a lot of it is based in the Bible rather than the other way around.

So and there are obviously many changes from it. Yeah. So those are things to note. The Book of Mormon, similar. So Joseph Smith claims that he found some golden plates that were shown to him by an angel and in a very by himself in a secret room, he transcribed it out.

[37 : 14] And it turned out to be the Book of Mormon. So they hold that the Old and New Testaments are part of the Bible. But then that there was this extra another testament of Jesus Christ.

And they hold to the Book of Mormon. And actually, I do have a Book of Mormon. And reading it with one of their missionaries, actually, we could point out that actually there were some passages that directly contradict or are almost the opposite of what it says in the Bible.

For example, 2 Nephi chapter 3 says, by grace you are saved after all you do, which is quite different, obviously, right? It's the opposite of by grace you're saved and not a result of works in Ephesians 2.

So I think those are some things we can say about those two books. But again, I think you want to talk about it gently and also do it in a way that you're asking questions rather than just saying, no, it's not accurate.

Yeah. Yeah. Thank you for that. That's a really good point. I think, yeah, just being confident in our Bible and knowing that that is the truth is probably the greatest thing that we can do.

[38 : 20] So, yeah, cool. I'll go to the third question first. So what was the way to God before Jesus? So maybe for the Old Testament Jews.

So how did they, yeah, how did they reach God? So a great passage in your Bibles to think about that a bit more was Romans chapter 4, where it says Abraham was justified by faith.

And so, you know, Paul's trying to connect that, you know, actually, it's not like the Jews and the people of Israel had one way to God. And then suddenly we have a totally different way.

There's actually continuity between the Old and New Testaments. Salvation is by faith, but by faith in what God has revealed at that time point and kind of the history of salvation. So whatever they knew about the Messiah or the promised one, and there are lots of different words, you know, depending on where you are in the history.

Right. If you believed in that, that was the way to God. Yeah. And if you believe in it by faith, right, and responded in obedience to God, I think you would be saved.

[39 : 24] Yeah. So, I mean, you can hear it says, what does the scripture say? Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. And this is quoting Genesis 15.

Right. So very early on, it's just that pattern that, yeah, that these are people who believe that God would keep his promises, would do what he said he would do. And ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

Yeah. All right. And I think that kind of leads to our last and final question. And, yeah, maybe you can speak to a little bit about the difference between Catholics and Christians.

Yeah. And if you want to try to touch on the Catholic saved as well, but I understand that might be a bit more of a contentious issue for some people. But, yeah, what are your thoughts on that? Yeah. One of my first primary school teachers, yeah, she's still a committed Roman Catholic. And I think, yeah, that's a lovely person. And so I honestly mean no disrespect. But to point out that although there are many similarities between the Roman Catholic Church and what we would call the Protestant Church, which is everyone who's not Catholic, there are big differences as well.

[40 : 39] Yeah. And so it didn't start out that way. So early in church history, actually, there was really just everyone was part of the Catholic Church. Catholic just really means universal all. But over time, what happened, and particularly in what we call, it sparked something called the Protestant Reformation.

There's a guy called Martin Luther who kind of kicked things off, but there were others before him. And so I think that's a good thing. And I think that's a good thing. And I think that's a good thing. And in fact, if you were looking at what the Catholic Church at the time, the Roman Catholic Church was teaching, was not salvation by faith in the Messiah and Jesus.

but it was, you were saved because you did particular sacraments, rituals that were part of the official church, or you paid money and bought something called indulgences to relieve yourself or your family from sins or from purgatory or other things.

There were lots of doctrines that were not based on the 66, any of the 66 books of the Bible that we have as scripture, as God's scripture. So the official church, I think still teaches that, you know, that salvation is not by faith in Christ alone. Yeah.

And so we need to remember that. But that being said, I've actually met Catholics or people who are part of the Catholic church who actually do believe that Jesus is the only way. And so if they hold to the same thing, right, that they sincerely believe that they are in Christ and that is alone what saves them. Yeah. I remember a guy called Daryl that I worked with.

[42 : 09] And I think, I think I'll see him in heaven. Yeah. So I've heard one person put it like, you know, in the Catholic church, there may be true Christians, but the institution itself is not a true church, but individually, there are many people who really reflect the love of Christ and, and also follow Jesus in a sincere way as well that I think we can, yeah, we can resonate with, you know, we can be friends with too.

Really. Thank you for that. And I said, that was the last one, but this is, I think a little bit applicable to some of us as well. We might have friends or we might know some people that are in this situation.

So just the final question, we'll close off questions for now. How do you talk to people from Christians cults who say they're Christian, but use our terms differently? Yeah. Yeah. This is a live issue.

There's obviously a very big cult called that we talked about last year in church and there are others, you know, Jehovah's witnesses, Mormons also. Cult sounds really offensive sometimes people, but the technical term for a cult is someone who says that they are Christian, but teach something very importantly wrong about Christianity, usually around who Jesus is. Yeah. And so, yeah, I think the best thing to do is to actually in the same way as people of other religions to be compassionate, to sympathize with them as we read in this passage, right.

And then to ask them questions, I think, what do you mean by grace? What do you, is it okay to lie if you're doing God's will? Are you sure that your church is the only, what makes you sure that your church is the only true church? Yeah.

[43 : 49] Yeah. And I think having confidence in the word of God is, is something that we can understand ourselves. God has given us a revelation that we can understand about Jesus, who he is, I think helps as well. But yeah, I think, yeah, all the normal stuff you do with your friends who have, you know, worship other religions or believe other views of the world.

Yeah, definitely. But anyways, if you have specific questions, you can always ask. Yeah. Awesome. I think that just, yeah, once again, a reminder to really know the words to be in a daily, to be confident in, I guess, yeah, the what's in the word, but when you know, what's in the word, I think, you know, what is not of the word as well. You know, what the false things in there, if you already know the truth. So yeah.

Thank you for that.