

## **The Road and The Roots**

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Have you ever noticed that almost everybody has an opinion about Jesus?

Some say He was a great moral teacher.

Some say He was a prophet.

Some say He was a revolutionary.

Some say He was simply a historical figure.

If you ask different religions who Jesus is, you'll get very different answers.

Judaism generally sees Jesus as a teacher, but not the Messiah.

Islam honors Jesus as a prophet, but denies that He is the Son of God.

Culture often reduces Jesus to nothing more than a symbol of love, kindness, and acceptance while rejecting His authority.

And honestly, even many people who claim to follow Jesus create a version of Jesus they are comfortable with.

A Jesus who never confronts sin.

A Jesus who exists to make life easier.

A Jesus who fits into their plans instead of demanding surrender.

But the real question is not:

“What do people say about Jesus?”

The real question is:

### **Who did Jesus claim to be?**

Because Jesus did not leave room for us to simply call Him a good teacher.

Good teachers do not say:

“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” And “I am the Vine”

That is an unbelievably exclusive statement.

Jesus does not say:

- “I am one of many ways.”
- “I am a possible option.”
- “I am a path you may consider.”

He says:

“I am the way.” “I am the Vine”

Exclusive.

Absolute.

Clear.

And our culture struggles with that because we live in a world that celebrates personal truth.

Culture says:

- “Live your truth.”

- “Do what feels right.”
- “All paths lead to God.”
- “As long as you’re sincere, it doesn’t matter what you believe.”

But sincerity does not determine truth.

You can sincerely take the wrong exit and still end up lost.

And spiritually, Jesus makes it clear there are not many roads to God.

There is one.

And if Jesus truly is the Son of God,

if He truly died and rose again,

if eternal life is only found in Him,

then nothing could be more important than listening to Him.

Because this is not merely religious information.

This is eternity.

This is life and death forever.

And what is amazing about Jesus is this:

He does not just tell us how to come to God.

He also tells us how to continue with God.

Because many people know how to begin spiritually,

but they never learn how to walk with God daily.

Some people have a spiritual moment,  
but never develop a spiritual life.

And that is exactly what Jesus addresses in John 14 and John 15.

### **The “I Am” Statements of Jesus**

Throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus repeatedly makes these incredible “I Am” statements.

He says:

- “I am the Bread of Life.”
- “I am the Light of the World.”
- “I am the Door.”
- “I am the Good Shepherd.”
- “I am the Resurrection and the Life.”
- “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”
- “I am the True Vine.”

These are not random metaphors.

Every statement reveals something humanity desperately needs.

Every “I Am” statement points to one massive truth:

He is essential to life.

And this morning these passages will answer life’s 2 most important questions:

**How do we come to God?**

**And how do we continue with God?**

**The first important question is...**

**1. How Do We Come to God? : I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life**

**John 14:1–6**

**“Don’t let your heart be troubled. Believe<sup>[a]</sup> in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also. <sup>4</sup> You know the way to where I am going.”<sup>[b]</sup>**

**<sup>5</sup>“Lord,” Thomas said, “we don’t know where you’re going. How can we know the way?”**

**<sup>6</sup>Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**

Let’s start with our I Am Statement. What does 14:6 say?

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except

through Me.” Just like we’ve seen with the other I Am Statements, Jesus here

goes out of His way to take on the OT Name of God— I Am. It’s redundant in

the original, but He’s is saying it 7 times and is doing it on purpose. And here we see He claims,

“I Am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

At first, it seems pretty straightforward. And in some sense it is. I want to make sure we first hear it as the disciples would have heard it. Context is only going to help us understand the big claim Jesus is making here!

We pick up during the last supper. This is the last night before Jesus dies. And it is here that He began what theologians call the “Upper Room Discourse”— His last major teachings before His death. This leads us right into chapter 14. And what command does Jesus give the disciples in verse 1?

“Let not your hearts be troubled.”

Why would the disciples have been troubled? The atmosphere is heavy.

The disciples are troubled for several reasons.

1. They had just learned that one of the 12 would betray Jesus.
2. They had just heard that even Peter would deny Jesus that very night.
3. Primarily, they are troubled because Jesus has just told them that He will only be with them for a little while longer and then He is going away to a place they cannot come. With all the recent allusions to His death, and after having been with Him for the better part of three years, this would have been deeply troubling for these guys who left everything to follow Him. Their whole life was oriented around Him! They left careers. Families. Comfort. Security. Everything revolved around Him and now He was going away. This would leave

them with all kinds of uncertainty and unanswered questions.

These guys were troubled that they were about to be separated from Jesus. And now Jesus is saying: “I’m going away to a place you cannot yet come.” Imagine the confusion, fear, and uncertainty. Their hearts are overwhelmed. And into that moment Jesus says: “Do not let your heart be troubled.” He redirects their trust. Instead of being troubled, Jesus gives them another command. What is it?

“Believe in God, believe also in Me.” So the way that Jesus is telling His disciples not to have a troubled heart is instead to believe, to trust in God, and in the same way, to believe or to trust in Jesus. He knows what He is doing.

Then in verses 2-3, Jesus begins to give reasons why they should trust or believe Him and not be troubled. He gives one of the greatest promises in all of Scripture: What does He say?

“In My Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would have I told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”

What is Jesus saying here?

“Here’s why you don’t need to be troubled. I’m going to My Father’s house, where there are many rooms— many dwelling places, plenty of space for each of you. And I am going there to prepare a place for you. And be sure, if I’m going to prepare a place for you, I’ll come back and bring you to Myself! You do not need to fear separation from Me because this is not the end of the story.”

Jesus is preparing the way for an eternal reunion. The greatest promise of heaven is not simply the place. It is the presence of Jesus.

But why do we even need a way to God in the first place? Because sin has separated us from Him. **Romans 3:23** says, “**For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**” Every one of us has rebelled against God. Every one of us has fallen short of His perfect standard. Sin is not just something bad we do. It is a condition of the human heart.

And the consequences of sin are serious. **Romans 6:23** says, “**For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**” Sin earns death. Separation from God. Judgment. We could never save ourselves or work our way back to Him. This is why Jesus came.

In verse 4, Jesus then tells them they know how to get where He is going. Thomas asks

“Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” They

knew, but they didn’t know they knew. This question prepares the way for His I Am statement.

How does Jesus answer Thomas?

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except

through Me.” Jesus is intentionally taking upon Himself the divine “I Am.” He is not merely saying: “I know the way.” He says: “I Am the way.” Exclusive. Absolute. Clear. In this verse,

Jesus answers both where He is going and how to get there, and while also making another major claim of exclusivity and deity.

In answer to Thomas’ question: first, Where is Jesus going?

“to the Father.” Earlier, to His Father’s House. To the place where God is.

What's He Claiming?

His identity is He is One with the Father. To be the Only Son of the Father. That to know Him is to know the Father. To see Him is to see the Father.

In the first part of this section, verses 2-3 in particular, what does He claim?

To be preparing a way to the Father's House, to heaven, for those who belong to him! He is speaking about being in the presence of God.

How did he make a way? Through His death, resurrection, and ascension. By going to die on the cross the very next day, Jesus would take on all the punishment for our sin. By rising on the third day, He would defeat sin and death. And by presenting Himself on our behalf before God, nothing now can keep us from God.

**Acts 4:12, "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved."**

Likewise, **1 Timothy 2:5** says, **"For there is one God and one mediator between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus."** Jesus is not one option among many. He is the only mediator between sinful man and a holy God. Looking again to His claim, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

What is He saying?

"I don't just make a way to God, I am the Way to God. I don't just tell the truth about God, I am the truth about God. I don't offer life. I am life. Eternal life

comes when you're in a relationship with Me!"

Jesus reinforces this again in Gospel of **John 10:9** when He says, **"I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture."** Jesus is saying He alone is the entrance into salvation, security, and eternal life.

This claim emphasizes two things: the exclusivity of coming to

God is only through Jesus and 2. It provides great comfort. In the midst of major loss and major

Change for the disciples here, Jesus was securing their future. Jesus is the Way and the Truth and the Life. And He has gone to prepare a place for you. And if He has done that, He will come back to get you. You can be sure about where this whole thing ends up. So this claim brings comfort, but it can also bring some discomfort to the world.

How so?

It can seem narrow. It can raise questions. What about all these people all over the world who worship other gods? What about those of other religions that are sincere? What about my neighbor who doesn't know Jesus as Lord but is the nicest guy you'll ever meet? This can seem difficult. But understanding what comes after and what comes before really helps us make sense of it! First, who does Jesus claim to be?

God Himself!

What about the people who claim that this way is just one of many? And our culture struggles with that because we live in a world that celebrates personal truth.

Culture says:

“Live your truth.”

“All paths lead to God.”

“As long as you’re sincere, it doesn’t matter what you believe.”

But sincerity does not determine truth. Jesus makes it clear there are not many roads to God.

There is one.

They might claim that they have information or practices that lead to a good life or even to God Himself. They might claim that their teaching is the right teaching and their methods the right methods. And using basic common sense, all these religions contradict one another on all the major questions— where we came from, what our biggest problem is, how that problem is solved, how we ought to live our lives here and now. They can’t all be true anymore that's like me saying  $2+2=3$  and Andy saying  $2+2=4$  and Marinus saying  $2+2=5$  and us all being right. But Jesus is doing something altogether different. He is claiming to be God. Surely if that claim is true, surely if He is God, His position is authoritative. This can be illustrated by a mountain. Lots of people think that the different world religions are different paths up the same mountain, where the One God of them all is at the top. Christianity paints an entirely different picture. Christianity says that God is so far above us that we could never reach Him through our attempts. If we are ever going to know Him, He must come down the mountain. That is just what the one, true God has done in Jesus Christ. He has come down the mountain to us to make a way for anyone to be saved if they will accept His terms. That is the gospel!

And what are His terms?

We are to believe and surrender ourselves to Him. The passage starts this way and it finishes this way!

And note, we are not to simply believe what Jesus teaches, but as the Son of God, we are to believe in Him!

**John 3:16–18 says:**

**“For God loved the world in this way: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. Anyone who believes in Him is not condemned, but anyone who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God.”**

**Ephesians 2:8–9 says, “For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift— not from works, so that no one can boast.”**

**Titus 3:5 says, “He saved us— not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to His mercy.”**

And why would Jesus do this for sinners like us?

**Romans 5:8 gives the answer: “But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”**

That is the beauty of the gospel. Jesus did not wait for us to clean ourselves up. He came for us while we were broken, sinful, lost, and separated from God.

Through faith in Him— His death and resurrection— we can be brought back into a relationship with God.

In this passage, Jesus claims to be the way, the truth, and the life, and the only way to the Father. This is comforting and clear. And it demands our belief.

## 2. How Do We Continue With God?

Gospel of John 15:1–8: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.”

**“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 Every branch in me that does not produce fruit he removes, and he prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me. 6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. 8 My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples.”**

Context

We see here that these are still in the final days that Jesus had walked with the disciples and encouraged them with His final words and teachings. This is the last night before the cross. Jesus and the disciples had just finished the Last Supper, and now they are on their way out of Jerusalem toward the Mount of Olives where Jesus would soon be betrayed and arrested. Along the way, Jesus gives His seventh and final “I Am” statement in the Gospel of John.

And what are the first two words of verse 1?

“I Am.”

Just like we’ve seen with the other “I Am” statements throughout John’s Gospel, Jesus is intentionally identifying Himself with the divine name of God revealed in the Old Testament. He is making it clear that He is not merely a teacher or prophet — He is God in the flesh.

He says...

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.”

Jesus now teaches His disciples about bearing fruit and remaining faithful to Him. He reminds them who they need to be connected to. In the middle of fear, uncertainty, and the reality that the cross is only hours away, Jesus gives them one central truth: stay connected to Me.

The vine was a common symbol for Israel in the Old Testament. Throughout passages in the Old Testament, Israel is described as God’s vine. But every time the image appears, Israel is shown to be fruitless and failing in their mission to honor God. In other words, where Israel failed, Jesus succeeded. He perfectly obeyed the Father. He perfectly fulfilled God’s purpose. And now, being part of God’s people is no longer about simply being born into a nation or ethnicity. The way someone becomes part of God’s people is by being connected to Jesus.

Jesus is telling the disciples that the way to belong to God is through Him. He is the true vine. He is the true source of life. There are so many things and distractions we connect ourselves to in this world — success, relationships, sports, popularity, money, achievement — but Jesus alone is the true vine who gives life and salvation.

And then Jesus says the Father is the gardener, or the vinedresser. So we have the Father as the gardener, Jesus as the vine, and then we as people are the branches.

Verse 2 says:

“He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.”

The branches are people. Those who claim to belong to God but bear no fruit reveal they are not truly connected to Him. But the branches that do bear fruit — those who truly belong to Christ — God lovingly prunes so they can bear even more fruit.

And pruning can hurt.

God removes things from our lives that hinder growth. Just like a gardener cuts away what keeps a plant from flourishing, God cuts away pride, sin, distractions, selfishness, comfort, and anything else that keeps us from becoming more like Jesus.

But what’s comforting is this: God only prunes living branches.

The pruning proves you belong to Him.

Jesus says in verse 3:

“You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.”

The word “clean” here is connected to the same idea as pruning. Jesus is telling His disciples they have already been cleansed by believing His Word. If you want to be welcomed into the people of God, the answer is to receive the Word of Jesus — believe who He is and what He has done.

And then Jesus moves into the heart of the passage.

Verse 4 says:

“Remain in me, as I also remain in you.”

Some translations say “abide.”

That word means to remain, to dwell, to stay connected, to make your home in Him.

Jesus says:

“No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”

A branch disconnected from the vine has no life in itself. It cannot survive alone. It cannot produce fruit alone. And spiritually, neither can we.

That is why **Colossians 2:6–7** says, **“So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in Him, being rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith.”**

The Christian life starts with Jesus, and it continues with Jesus. We don’t move on from Him after salvation — we remain rooted in Him daily.

We must humble ourselves and realize we cannot bear fruit through our own strength, effort, or ability. Only through Jesus do we have the power to live the Christian life.

That’s why **Galatians 2:20** says, **“I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”**

And because of that, **2 Corinthians 3:5** reminds us, **“It is not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God.”** Our strength does not come from ourselves. Our sufficiency comes from Christ alone.

In fact, **Philippians 2:13** says, “**For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to His good purpose.**” God Himself is actively working inside believers, shaping our desires and empowering our obedience as we abide in Him.

Then Jesus says again in verse 5:

“I am the vine; you are the branches.”

Who is the vine? Jesus.

Who are the branches? We are.

“If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

That statement is so important.

Apart from Jesus, we can do nothing of eternal spiritual value. We might accomplish things in the world. We might gain success or recognition. But apart from Christ, we cannot produce lasting fruit for the kingdom of God.

So what is fruit?

Fruit is what is shown in our lives that points people to Jesus. It is the evidence that we are connected to the vine.

Fruit includes inward transformation and outward impact.

**Galatians 5:22–23** calls this the fruit of the Spirit: **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.**

It’s obedience to God.

It’s love for others.

It's effective prayer.

It's evangelism and leading people to Jesus.

It's spiritual growth and Christlike character.

And here's the important thing: fruit is not something we manufacture ourselves. It's something God produces in us as we abide in Him. The branch simply stays connected to the vine, and the life of the vine flows through it. That's why Jesus says our job is to abide. When we remain close to Him, He works through us. And honestly, that should take pressure off some of us. Sometimes we think Christianity is about trying harder and performing better. But Jesus says fruit comes from connection, not perfection.

### **Why Fruit?**

Why does Scripture call these qualities the "fruit" of the Spirit?

Why not the meat of the Spirit or the bread of the Spirit?

Because fruit has characteristics that beautifully picture the Christian life.

Fruit is healthy. Fruit is sweet. Fruit is living. Fruit is whole.

Fruit is healthy because a life connected to Jesus brings spiritual health and life.

Fruit is sweet because the life of Christ changes how we treat people and how we live.

Fruit is living because it comes from something alive. Fruit grows from living trees and living plants. In the same way, spiritual fruit comes from being connected to the living Christ.

And fruit contains seeds that produce more fruit. A believer bearing fruit often leads others to Jesus who then begin bearing fruit themselves.

Fruit is also whole. It grows naturally from the life of the tree. In the same way, spiritual fruit is the natural result of abiding in Christ.

A branch doesn't strain to produce grapes. It simply stays connected to the vine.

And the same is true spiritually.

Jesus makes fruit-bearing the mark of a true follower.

That's exactly what **Matthew 7:16–20** teaches when Jesus says, **“You'll recognize them by their fruit.”** Healthy trees produce good fruit, and unhealthy trees produce bad fruit. Fruit reveals the root.

A lack of fruit reveals a lack of Christ.

An abundance of fruit reveals an abundance of Christ.

And **Philippians 1:11** says believers should be **“filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.”** The goal of fruit is ultimately the glory of God.

**James 1:2–4** says we should **“consider it a great joy”** when we face trials because the testing of our faith produces endurance and maturity. The pruning seasons are painful, but they are purposeful.

Verse 6 gives a warning:

**“If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers.”**

Just like dead branches are gathered and burned, those who reject Christ and remain disconnected from Him face judgment and eternal separation from Him. That's why abiding in Jesus matters so deeply. Eternity depends on it. And even in the difficult seasons of abiding, God is still working. Romans 5:3–5 reminds us that suffering produces endurance, character, and hope. God uses trials to grow His people.

Jesus gives incredible motivation for why we should remain connected to Him.

Verse 8 says:

“This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”

When we abide in Christ and bear fruit, God is glorified.

Our lives become reflections of Him.

And the only way we endure and continue faithfully is by fixing our eyes on Jesus. **Hebrews 12:2 says we must keep “our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.”**

Have you ever had someone in your life that you deeply respected and wanted to make proud?

Maybe a parent, coach, teacher, or mentor?

How amazing is it that through abiding in Christ, we have the opportunity to bring glory and honor to God Himself?

That's incredible that God chooses to use us! He prunes us, shapes us, grows us, and works through us so that our lives can reflect Him to the world.

So the question becomes:

Are you connected to the vine?

Not just around Christianity. Not just familiar with church. Not just calling yourself a Christian.

But truly abiding in Jesus? Because life, growth, joy, strength, and salvation are found in Him alone. Jesus says: "I am the true vine." And apart from Him, we can do nothing.