

“THE WAY TO THE FATHER”

Our postmodern, post-Christian society has been infiltrated by the enemy in very subtle ways:

Pluralism -- in the general sense, the affirmation and acceptance of diversity.

Religious pluralism is loosely defined term concerning peaceful relations between different religions, and is used in a number of related ways:

- **Religious Pluralism** often describes the worldview that one's religion is not the sole and exclusive source of truth, and thus recognizes that some level of truth and value exists in at least some other religions.
- **Religious pluralism** often is used as a synonym for ecumenism. At a minimum, *ecumenism* is the promotion of unity, co-operation, or improved understanding between different religions, or denominations within the same religion.
- **Religious pluralism** is sometimes used as a synonym for religious tolerance, which is a condition of peaceful co-existence between adherents of different religions or religious denominations.

Relativism¹ -- Relativism is sometimes identified (usually by its critics) as the thesis that all points of view are equally valid. In ethics, this amounts to saying that all moralities are equally good; in epistemology it implies that all beliefs, or belief systems, are equally true. Critics of relativism typically dismiss such views as incoherent since they imply the validity even of the view that relativism is false.

Although there are many different kinds of relativism, they all have two features in common.

- 1) They all assert that one thing (e.g. moral values, beauty, knowledge, taste, or meaning) is relative to some particular framework or standpoint (e.g. the individual subject, a culture, an era, a language, or a conceptual scheme).
- 2) They all deny that any standpoint is uniquely privileged over all others.

In relativism, truth is relative and not absolute.²

Tolerance -- Religious tolerance means to extend religious freedom to people of all religions, even though you sincerely disagree with their beliefs and/or practices.³

Tolerance is a social, cultural and religious term applied to the collective and individual practice of not persecuting those who may believe, behave or act in ways of which one may not approve.⁴

¹ Emrys Westcott (Alfred University), *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <http://www.iep.utm.edu/r/relativi.htm>

² Matthew J. Slick, “Relativism,” *Dictionary of Theology*. <http://www.carm.org/dictionary.htm>. Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry.

³ B.A. Robinson, Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance. <http://www.religioustolerance.org/> Copyright © 2004 & 2005 by Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance. Originally posted: 2004-NOV-14. Latest update: 2005-AUG-22

⁴ Jimmy Wakes, editor. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tolerance>

"Tolerance" has thus become the social term of choice to define the practical rationale of permitting uncommon social practice and diversity. One only tolerates people who are disliked for their differences. While people deemed undesirable may be disapproved of, "tolerance" would require that the party or group in question be left undisturbed, physically or otherwise, and that criticism directed toward them be free of inflammatory efforts.

"there's only one thing I can't tolerate - and that's intolerance" illustrates that there are limits to tolerance. In particular, a tolerant society cannot tolerate intolerance, which would destroy it.

Universalism -- refers to concepts and issues which are said to be "universal" in appeal—i.e. transcending any existing localizing boundaries. In comparative religion, **universalism** is the belief that true and valuable insights are available in many of the religious traditions which have grown up in various human cultures.

(Universalism) distinguishes itself from the view that there is only one true faith, one uniquely chosen people, or one final prophet superseding all others. The name **Universalist** refers to certain religious denominations of universalism, which as a core principle adhere to standards and rituals which are convergent rather than divergent, often espousing themselves as alternatives to denominations based on dogmatic or factionalized differences.⁵

"Christian Universalism" is the position that all of mankind will ultimately be saved through Jesus whether or not faith is professed in him in this life. It claims that God's qualities of love, sovereignty, justice, etc., require that all people be saved and that eternal punishment is a false doctrine. Salvation is not from hell, but from sin.

There are two main camps in Christian Universalism:

- Those who teach that the unrepentant will be punished in a future state, and that their punishment will be proportional to the degree of sin committed in the mortal state. They generally hold that the punishment is moral and not physical. There is no hell. They do not maintain that salvation is merited through these sufferings.
- Those who teach that all the punishment for sin occurs in this life and that God's discipline in our lives is for the purpose of purifying us, though this purification is not our merit for salvation. In eternity, there will be a loss of reward for those who did not trust in Christ in this lifetime.⁶

People disagree about how to get to heaven: (1) all God requires is "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God;" (2) you must believe & be baptized in water; (3) you must go to church.

Considering that ppl have different ideas about how to get to heaven, it's a bit surprising thta He would say.... ^{NAU} **John 14:4** "And you know the way where I am going."

Word study: "know"

⁵ Jimmy Wakes, editor. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universalism>

⁶ Matthew J. Slick, "Universalism," *Dictionary of Theology*. Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry. <http://www.carm.org/uni/christianunie.htm>

oida strictly *have seen*; hence *know*. If you see it you know it because it's more obvious.

URD -- 14:4f; 15:15, 21; 16:18, 30

ginosko suggests that though it is less visible or obvious, a discerning person can know it intimately.

URD -- 14:7, 9, 17, 20, 31; 15:18; 16:3, 19

Different level of knowing (think in terms of knowing a person):

1. perception – “I’ve seen them.”
2. acquaintance -- “I met them.”
3. intellectual understanding – “I understand they have a musical background....”
4. experiential understanding – “We shared a lot of time together and grew to love them.”

NAU **John 14:4** "And you **know** the way where I am going." ⁵ Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not **know** where You are going, how do we **know** the way?" ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. ⁷ "If you **had known** Me, you **would have known** My Father also; from now on you **know** Him, and have seen Him." ⁸ Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and *yet* you have not come to **know** Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how *can* you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰ "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. ¹¹ "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.

In v.4, Jesus said that the disciples knew 2 things: 1) The Way; 2) The Destiny

They knew bcse Jesus just told them – 2) going to Father’s house; 1) the way there – He will come again and take them there.

But v. 4 looks 2 directions: to preceding context, and provides basis for more teaching on these 2 things. He deepens His teaching on “the Way” in response to Thomas’ quest. He teaches more about “the Destiny” in response to Philip’s remark.

The Way

"And you know the way....."

Melancholy Thomas was discouraged.

THOMAS (v.5) "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?"

JESUS IS THE WAY TO THE FATHER, 14:6-7.

⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. ⁷ "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him."

Word Study: “Way”

- 1) literally – “a road, path”
- 2) metaphorically --- “means of access,” here, to the Father.
- A. Access to the Father comes only through (14:6): the One who is the Way, Truth, and Life.

Note what this verse does NOT say:

not a single idea -- “the true way of life” or “the true and living way.”

not: “I make a way, I reveal the truth, I give life.”

JC **is** these 3 terms.

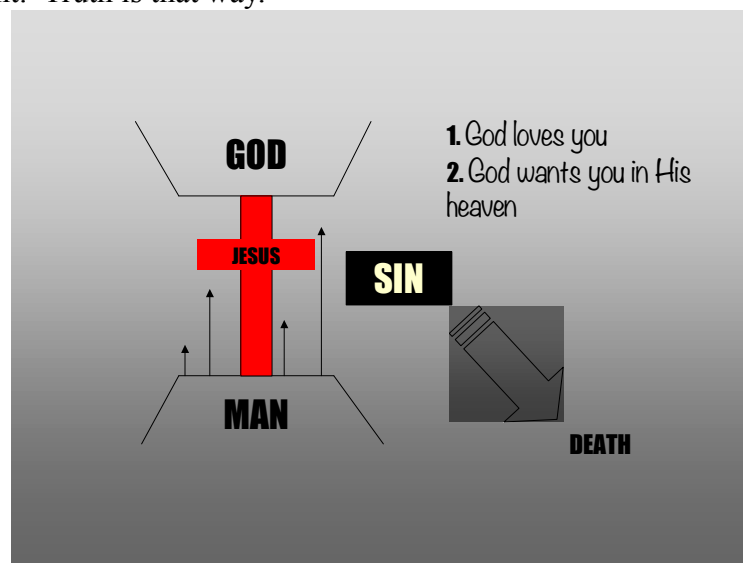
Note the meaning of these three terms:

TERM	DESCRIPTION	SCRIPTURE
Way	God accessible	Jn. 10:9; Eph. 2:18; 3:12
Truth	God revealed	Jn. 1:1, 14, 18; 8:31-36
Life	God appropriated	Jn. 1:4; 6:48, 57

Adam lost at least three things when he sinned in the garden of Eden:

Access to God	Will of man	rejects God's Way
Knowledge of God	Mind of man	rejects God's Truth
Spiritual life with God	Heart of man	rejects God's Life

- These three terms do not have equal force in v. 6. The "way" dominates (3x in 4-6).
- The central issue in Christianity is to know God through His Son, Jesus Christ.
 "The Christianity of Christ is intensely personal, in the sense of having directly to do with Persons. Heaven is not the end proposed, nor is a creed or method the way prescribed. The Father Himself is the end; Jesus Himself is the way"⁷
 Not: "by fulfilling God's commands"; or "by likeness to Jesus" or "by following His example."
 It is "by Me." --- faith in the Person & Work of Jesus Christ.
- Note the narrowness of Christianity.
 "no one comes to the Father but through Me." ILLUS: phone #; web address.
 Point: Truth is that way.



⁷ Thomas Bernard, *The Central Teaching of Jesus Christ.*, p. 142.
 Dr. John Wecks 2021

⁷ "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and

- B. To know the Way is to know Jesus.
To know Jesus is to know the Father, 14:7

Word Study: "know" here not mere acquaintance, but experiential knowledge in relationship to JC.

4 classes in school –

Freshmen – those who don't know, and don't know that they don't know.

Sophomores – those who don't know, and know that they don't know.

Juniors -- those who know, and don't know that they know.

Seniors – those who know, and know that they know.

On that basis, the disciples were Juniors in the school of faith!

"You have seen the Father." Lit: "you have become beholders of God!"

The Destiny

".....where I am going."

"Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."

What Philip really wants:

A visible showing of the Father. To him, that would be proof. He sincerely thought that a supernatural display of G would help their faith.

Today too: "Lord, give me a sign."

JESUS IS THE REVELATION OF THE FATHER, 14:9-11.

- A. Jesus visibly manifested the Father, 14:9.

⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and *yet* you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how *can* you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

"Let Me introduce Myself, Philip. I am all the revelation you need."

The need was not more revelation, but faith in the revelation already given.

APPL: we don't need additional revelations from God. When we read & obey the revelation we have in the Bible, then we will come to know God.

(Jesus was amazed that they lacked faith to believe the revelation already given. So to encourage them to believe His words...)

- B. Jesus claims essential equality with God, 14:10.

¹⁰ "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.

Jesus said, “I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me” (v. 10).

2 witnesses to the deity of Jesus Christ here:

1. Words -- what He said
2. Works -- what He did

(Because He is God,)

C. Jesus commands our trust, 14:11.

¹¹ "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because

1. Highest faith trusts Jesus because of His word.
2. Acceptable faith trusts Jesus because of His works.

CONCLUSION:

- 1) Believe His word without wavering.
- 2) Don't be impressed w/ miracles as the proof of something from God. Dt. 13; Mt. 7

Next Session: “Powerful Prayer” John 14:12-14