

LIFE GROUP LESSON

Hot Topics— Study of Ephesians • Week of September 6

Introduction

Is Jesus the only way to God? In a recent message series, we recall Jesus saying: “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me” (John 14:6) ... a claim Jesus makes on the night before his crucifixion. Jesus Christ *is* God’s way to heaven. This claim is offensive to some people, yet various religions and cultures in the world, are trying to go their own way and go around God’s way. This is as foolish as taking a dead-end street the NC DOT has clearly marked ‘NO OUTLET’ and continuing as though it leads to the destination. Jesus is not just a way to God, Jesus is God in the flesh! This is unique in the Christian faith. Most major religions in the world have humans trying to get to God, yet in Christianity God became human in Jesus Christ.

- Why is the claim that Jesus is the only way to God offensive to many people in the world?

Background

Within hours after the Lord Jesus spoke the words, as recorded in John 14:6, he lived into the mission for which he was sent into the world. He carried the weight of humanity’s sin and died a criminal’s death on the cross. Three days later, God raised his Christ from death, proving Jesus Christ is exactly who he says he is. When Jesus revealed his identity to individuals who were seeking truth (e.g. John 1:51; 4:26; 9:35-38) prior to laying down his life (John 10:18), he shared the foundational truth that from before the beginning of time, as the Lamb of God, his life would be made a ransom for many (1 Peter 1:19-20). Upon his bodily resurrection after appearing to his disciples (Acts 10:39-43), the risen Jesus appeared to Saul of Tarsus on his way to persecute followers of *The Way* (Acts 9:1-4). Christ stopped Saul from harming his sheep (the church) and his glorious presence blinded Saul for three days, giving him time to repent of his pursuit of destroying Christ followers. As soon as Saul’s eyes were shed of scales, he believed, was baptized (Acts 9:18-19), and began to proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ. He went from persecutor to preacher within days, and as a result, his life was suddenly at risk (Acts 9:20-25). Jesus had given Saul, now Paul the apostle (Acts 13:9), a heart to share Christ across the Mediterranean world.

Paul arrives in Ephesus, the fourth largest city in the Roman Empire and the capital of the province of Asia Minor, at the end of his second missionary journey

(Acts 18:19-21). Upon Paul’s third journey, he returns to Ephesus on the heels of Apollos having been in Ephesus preaching the baptism of John (Acts 18:24-26). When Paul arrives, he asks: “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” ... to which they replied, “No, we haven’t even heard that there is a Holy Spirit” (see Acts 19:1-7). Thus, Paul has his work cut out for him and faithfully rises to the task to lead the new church in Ephesus for three years (Acts 19).

Read Ephesians 1:1-14

It’s no wonder the forces of hell are stirred when many individuals in a pagan, polytheistic city like Ephesus believe in Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life (for further background, read/study Acts 19 ... utterly fascinating). Men and women were being set free from sin – idolatry, sexual worship practices of Artemis of the Ephesians, the occult, dark magic arts – and having the veil of darkness lifted.

- Why does the devil not want us to know the truth about what Jesus said in John 14:6?
- Perhaps you have experienced enemy attacks that try to keep your mind under a veil of illusion. We can counter the lies by remembering what Paul shares in Ephesians 1:7-8. Read aloud these words now –

“He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding” (Ephesians 1:7-8)

God wants to shower us with kindness, along with all wisdom and understanding. A.I. has nothing on the living God! The devil does not want you to know the truth. But Jesus does. As you begin to take steps of faith into the light, you will begin to see your sin against the backdrop of God’s holiness and love. You have a God-given purpose bigger than you and your heavenly Father has gone to great lengths to redeem you. He gave his only begotten Son to save you. No other religion in the world can make such a claim. The apostle Paul says to the church in Ephesus: “... now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago” (Ephesians 1:13).

Read Ephesians 1:15-23

God did not have to provide a way for us to know him and be saved. He could have let us die in our sins ... But he didn’t. God could have let the Israelites, Jacob’s descendants, die in their slavery ... But he didn’t. From the beginning, God knew the great price that great sin requires, sin from free will gone bad.

Just as the Israelites in Egyptian bondage applied the blood of a spotless lamb over the doorposts of their homes, the Lord calls us to apply the blood of his Son, the perfect spotless Lamb of God, over the doorposts of our hearts and homes, marking us as his children. "...When I see the blood, I will pass over you. This plague of death will not touch you when I strike the land of Egypt" (Exodus 12:13b).

- Why was the message preached first to the Jewish people?
- Who were the Ephesians?
- How are we much like the church in Ephesus?

When a woman takes wedding vows at the altar she is saying that she is committing herself only to her husband and excluding 3.9 billion men on planet earth. We are Jesus' bride and his body the church. When you accept Christ's gift of salvation you and I are exclusively committing to Jesus Christ alone.

- Have you committed to Jesus exclusively?
- What idols do we need to be aware of so Jesus always gets our fidelity, first place in our lives?

At the right time, Christ will bring everything under his authority in heaven and on earth. **Read Ephesians 1: 21-23** and think again of Jesus as God in the flesh and Savior.

To know Jesus personally is to be set apart for a greater purpose in the world. Knowing him means an assurance of living with him now, and one day, being with him forever. Paul says, "I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he has called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance" (Ephesians 1:18). The message of the cross is offensive, and the claim that Jesus Christ alone is life, has a way of suddenly making enemies. Yet Jesus set a new standard for those who believe and follow him. We love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us; we are being made holy and perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect (see Matthew 5:43-48).

Close in Prayer: Pray for the unchurched, Pray for Vision 2:28, Pray for group requests.

One Year Bible Reading

Sept. 6: Song of Solomon 1:1-4:16, 2 Cor. 8:16-24, Ps. 50:1-23, Prov. 22:22-23
Sept. 7: Song of Solomon 5:1-8:14, 2 Cor. 9:1-15, Ps. 51:1-19, Prov. 22:24-25
Sept. 8: Isaiah 1:1-2:22, 2 Corinthians 10:1-18, Psalm 52:1-9, Proverbs 22:26-27
Sept. 9: Isaiah 3:1-5:30, 2 Corinthians 11:1-15, Psalm 53:1-6, Proverbs 22:28-29
Sept. 10: Isaiah 6:1-7:25, 2 Corinthians 11:16-33, Psalm 54:1-7, Proverbs 23:1-3
Sept. 11: Isaiah 8:1-9:21, 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, Psalm 55:1-23, Proverbs 23:4-5
Sept. 12: Isaiah 10:1-11:16, 2 Corinthians 12:11-21, Psalm 56:1-13, Proverbs 23:6-8

HOT TOPICS

STUDYING THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

Text: Ephesians 1

PLAIN TRUTH

Jesus is the _____ way to God, King of _____, Lord of _____ with all _____ to _____ you, his body of _____.

**Two Insights here to answer the question,
Is Jesus the Only Way to God:**

1. Jesus is not only the _____ to God, Jesus is _____ in the _____.
2. Jesus does not _____ Simon's _____.

Recommended Reading:

The Case for Christ (Lee Strobel)
Mere Christianity (C.S. Lewis)
Reason for God (Timothy Keller)
Simply Christian (N. T. Wright)
Who is This Man? (John Ortberg)

September 6, 2026