

Curious – Is Jesus the Only Way?

4/18/21

John 14:6

Sunday AM

I read a cute story this week about a 5 yr old boy who asked his mom a serious question – “*Mom, where does poo come from?*” Uncomfortable w/ the question, the mom courageously gave her son an honest, biological explanation. W/ every word, the boy’s eyes grew bigger and his jaw dropped further as he stared at his mom in stunned silence. Finally, w/ his lip quivering in fear, he asked, “*Then where did Tigger come from?*”

This just goes to prove that when asking/answering questions – **context is critical**. This couldn’t be truer than regarding the question we’re considering today.

Last week, we began looking at questions people have about faith/culture. We discussed the worth of God’s existence as it relates to life – b/c what we believe (or don’t believe) about God will have a direct impact on every aspect of our lives. **WTM** – today, we’re going to look at the logical follow up question – *If God exists, can I know Him; and is Jesus the only way to God?*

**To say the least** – in our now pluralistic, post-modern, post-Christian, ***co-exist*** bumper-sticker culture, such a question is considered quite provocative. If you have not noticed, our culture is pushing hard towards ***inclusion*** on all fronts every day – and to do so, it has to eliminate anything which declares there’s but **ONE WAY** to anything – especially to God.

**I don’t say this to be hostile, but to be honest.** Truth is, if God exists, then man doesn’t get to decide what is or isn’t truth – only God does! Even more, if God exists, He also gets to decide if and how a person can know Him – which brings us to religion/faith. And this is w/out a doubt, as ***clear as mud***.

I        Is there a Way to **KNOW** God?

A recent report estimates, there are now some 4,200 different religions, churches, denominations, cults, and faith groups to which people have placed their faith and pledged their allegiance. ***Which one is right?***

**To not offend**, some have proposed an ideology that *all roads in some way lead to God* and that to say there is only one way, and that all other roads are wrong, is narrow-minded, bigoted, and prejudicial.

The big analogy claims that searching for God is like climbing a mountain. While we can all reach the top, there’s ***more than one way*** to get there. **IOW** – **all the ideas about God contained in the various religions of the world are just different ways to arrive to God.**

So, in our ecumenical, pluralistic, let’s not offend anyone culture, this sounds good – even correct, but such an idea is filled w/ flaws. **Let me explain:**

**First** – there’s a difference b/w what is true and what is a matter of taste or preference.

If I say, “I like seafood,” I’m making a claim about a matter of taste. Someone else may not like seafood. But if I say, “Jesus is Lord,” someone may not agree (and they’re welcome to), but the claim, “Jesus is Lord” is not a matter of taste to be preferred but a statement of truth that must be validated.

**Why?** It’s b/c Jesus is known reality. He isn’t some legend/fable, He was a historically proven individual who claimed to be God and who was believed (w/ credible evidence) to have arisen from the grave.

**Second** – the reason all roads led to God isn’t plausible is b/c of the **Law of Non-contradiction**.

The Law of Non-contradiction is one of the basic laws of classical logic that states something cannot be both true/untrue at the same time in the same context.

**Example** – This building we’re sitting in can’t have a roof and not have a roof at the same time. I can’t be physically here and not be physically here simultaneously – this would be a contradiction.

When applying this principle to spiritual/religious beliefs, w/ over 4,200 different religions/cults w/ fundamentally different perspectives/conclusions about God and how to get to Him – the Law of Non-contradiction tells us that **while we can all be wrong – we absolutely, cannot all be right.**

All religions are not the same; nor do they all point to God. Furthermore, all faiths don’t say they’re the same – w/ most relishing their uniqueness. This is b/c at the heart of every religion is an uncompromising commitment to a particular way of defining who God is and what is the purpose of life. Making every faith practice in some way exclusive at its core. *McDowell*

**Meaning** – **All roads do not lead to God!** All religious roads can’t end at the same destination. No matter how many “*co-exist*” bumper stickers we tag to our cars; no matter how many PC speeches we espouse touting tolerance or universalism – no pastor, priest, president, pope, or potentate – will ever change the fact that every religion, at its core, is uniquely different from the next – and therefore in contradiction.

**Example** – DYK the differences b/w Hindi/Islam? Hindus believes in many gods (polytheism) whereas Muslims strictly believe in one God (monotheism). For Hindus, Jesus is one of many gods, while for Muslims, He is a prophet, but less than Mohammed. Even more, in Muslim doctrine, to believe in more than one God is to commit the sin of shirk which destines one’s soul to hell for eternity.

So, if Islam is the way to God, then Hinduism and Joseph Smith, Charles Taze Russell, and every other way, is wrong? If the Pope is God’s true messenger, then Krishna/Buddha’s teachings miss the mark? If Jesus is the only way, there are no other ways to God.

What we see in this comparison is *we can all be wrong but we can’t all be right.* Which raises the question – is there a right way to God?

II Is Jesus the **ONLY** Way to God?

Obviously, we don’t have the time to review every religion in the world but I do know a really great place to start – with the very words of Jesus.

Consider first that in the Bible, Jesus said – *I am the only way, only truth, and only life, no one (not even one) comes to the Father except thru Me.* John 14:6.

**In this statement,** Jesus clearly expressed that He is not a way, as in one of many – but that He is the one and only way – and that there are no other ways.

In referring to Jesus, Peter said – *Salvation is found in no one else, for there’s no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.* Acts 4:12

**But this is so narrow/exclusive...** It might appear so on the surface, but in actuality – a single way to God is not *exclusive* but *inclusive*. **Let me explain...**

Jesus didn’t go out and make grandiose crazy claims about his identity and then ask people to blindly accept Him; He backed up His claims w/ compelling examples such as the performing miracles, fulfilling prophecies, and ultimately returning from the dead.

**Listen** – God, thru Jesus, did for mankind what no man could do for himself, He made a way for everyone to be rescued, redeemed, and reconciled to God by the way of an old, rugged cross and empty tomb. He stepped into flesh and provided the very means for all who were lost to be rescued if they would by faith believe/receive His act of grace.

**Does that sound exclusive?** Absolutely not! This isn't intolerant, exclusive, or mean-spirited but generous, gracious, inclusive, and kind-hearted.

**DYK** – Of all the major religious figures of the world thru-out history – Mohammed, Confucius, Buddha, Smith, Russell, Eddy, and Krishna, only one – Jesus – is reported to have foretold/fulfilled returning from the dead – and this report is backed up by compelling historical evidence. **Not so much any of the others!**

**Here's what you can't miss.** Jesus didn't step out of heaven and into flesh to be the Savior of the world to **EXCLUDE** anyone. He came to meet everyone at the point of their need to reconcile them to God. He gave His life to seek and to save the lost.

In fact, Jesus makes no human distinctions, He has no bias towards anyone in spite of their gender, skin tone, religious heritage, nationality, or past indiscretions – He entered time/space to die on a cross and arise from the dead so that ALL people (everyone) could have a personal relationship w/ the living God.

So, the question is not about whether this is a narrow-minded position but whether it's a TRUTHFUL claim.

I'm trying to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Jesus: "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God." That's the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on the level w/ the man who says he's a poached egg – or else he'd be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon, or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord/God, but let us not come w/ any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us; nor did He intend to. C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

What does this mean in relation to Jesus' claims? It means the road to knowing God might be narrow, but it's open to anyone who will believe Jesus is God's ONE solution to the problem of sin. **Listen** – If there's another way to find God and have your sin forgiven other than by Jesus, then why did Jesus die on a cross?

**It's b/c there is no other way.** Jesus is the gate – He is the Bread of Life, the Resurrection and Life, the Good Shepherd – the way, truth, and life. **He's not a way but the only way!** Jesus is God's one/only solution to the problem of sin.

I like to think of the difference b/w Christianity and other religions is the difference b/w DO vs DONE. In every other religion, it's all about following lists of do's and don'ts. **IOW** – Religion is about what we can DO for God to be good enough to get into heaven.

But the problem is we never know when we've done enough. It's like being a salesman who knows he must make a quota but is never told what the quota is.

Christianity is about what God has DONE for us thru Jesus and not what we can do for Him thru our own abilities and goodness. God did for us what we could have never done for ourselves. While we are sinners, Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life and died on the cross to pay in full for all of the wrongs we've committed or ever will commit.

To become a real Christian requires that we stop trying to **DO**, and by faith, humbly receive what God has **DONE** for us. When we do this, God adopts us into his family, and begins to transform our lives from the inside out.