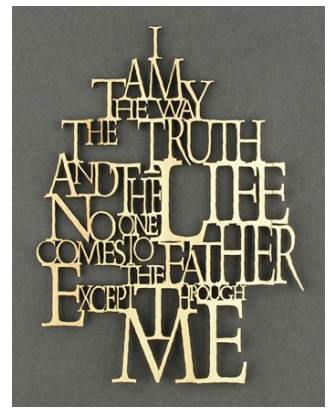


**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church-WELS**  
**Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz**  
**May 22, 2011 Easter 5 John 14:5f**



**Jesus the Way to the Father**

<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” <sup>6</sup> Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” <sup>8</sup> Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” <sup>9</sup> Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup> And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

I drive hundreds of miles every month! We are going to my God-child’s high school graduation soon. It is 500 miles one way – almost to the tenth – from our driveway to my parents’ driveway. That ends up being more than 1,000 miles in just a three day weekend. I was down to Rockford, Illinois to St. Anthony’s Hospital. I made it down there just fine and was the better part of the way home – when I took the wrong exit off the interstate by Janesville. Suddenly I am hurtling down the country highway many miles an hour – into the darkness – with absolutely no idea where I was. I don’t mind asking for directions – but there was no gas station to get a Mt. Dew and say, “Oh, by the way – how do you get from here to – I don’t know – Fort – Jefferson – Johnson’s Creek – Watertown?” After 15 minutes into oblivion – I made a safe U-turn and went 15 minutes back in the opposite direction – not a little frustrated!!! I hate that feeling. I have bought more than one Mt. Dew – and then told the Kwik-Trip worker – I know the way to Heaven. I just don’t know the way to Watertown! We are here in God’s House – because we know the way to Heaven. We know the answer to this most fundamental question:

**Who Is Jesus?**

- 1. Jesus is the Way**
- 2. Jesus is the Truth**
- 3. Jesus is the Life!**

The part of God’s Word we are concentrating on today is from the Gospel of St. John – the disciple Jesus loved. If your unchurched – your *unshepherded* friend asked you – so – what’s with four Gospels – what’s the difference? Would you know what to say? Would you say – let me think. The Gospel of Matthew is special – beginning with a genealogy – Jesus’ family tree. Matthew mentions women – **Tamar** – do you remember her? Tamar – and her father-in-law Judah? What a sordid chapter! Matthew mentions--**Rahab** – who sold “hugs and kisses” in

Jericho – **Ruth** and the **Bathsheba** – who had been the wife of Uriah the Hittite! Who would publish their family tree – listing people who had led *painfully* sinful lives? The Gospel of Matthew says again and again, **“Thus was fulfilled what was spoken by the Prophets!”** Jesus fulfilled hundreds of prophecies – made over literally thousands of years! The Gospel of Matthew uses again and again – the *“extreme case”* to make its point – the poorest, the sickest, the weakest, the most terrible! The Gospel of Mark is unique! Do you know how? The Gospel of Mark uses the word *Gospel* some 7 times. Matthew – which is much longer uses it only 4 times – Luke and John not at all. The Gospel of Mark – written down by John Mark – is teaching about the Good News. In Mark Jesus says, **“Whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospel’s will save it.”** Mark 8:35. The Gospel of Mark is closely connected with the preaching and teaching – the Gospel ministry of Simon Peter! The Gospel of Mark – is a Gospel of action – what Jesus did – as he lived the Gospel. It is filled with Simon Peter’s bold confession. Remember we heard it last Sunday? Jesus was by Caesarea Philippi – a place of pagan worship and hot springs – and sin – and Jesus asked, **“Who do people say I am?”** They replied, **“Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others one of the prophets.”** But what about you?” he asked. **“Who do you say I am?”** Peter answered, **“You are the Christ.”** Mark 8:27-29 Jesus is the Word made flesh – come to save us! The Gospel of Luke – is special, too! It is a letter that a Physician named Luke wrote to his friend Theophilus! It’s kind of like a term paper. **Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.** Remember last week – we heard a wonderful song about the Prodigal Son. Where do you look to study Jesus’ parables? Luke has lots and lots of parables – the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son. The Gospel of Luke has lots of miracles of healing – where the disease is given its technical name – the symptoms are meticulously explained – the healing announced! The Gospel of John was almost certainly written last – by many years. It’s different from Matthew, Mark and Luke especially in this – it isn’t so much about what Jesus did – as it’s about what Jesus said. Chapter 13 Jesus washes his disciples’ feet. Jesus explains how he will be betrayed. Jesus explains how Simon Peter will deny his three times before the rooster crows twice!

Chapter 14 begins with familiar words. Even as Jesus knows he is only hours away from being arrested – scourged and beaten bloody and then literally crucified – Jesus’ concern is for his disciples. Jesus said, <sup>1</sup> **“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.** <sup>2</sup> **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?** <sup>3</sup> **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.** <sup>4</sup> **You know the way to the place where I am going.”** Again and again God’s Word says, <sup>4</sup> **Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!** <sup>5</sup> **Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.** <sup>6</sup> **Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.** <sup>7</sup> **And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.** Philippians 4:4-7 Only the Holy Spirit – filling your heart – can give you a new attitude – a child like confidence that your Heavenly Father is watching out for you. Only the Holy Spirit – filling your heart – makes sheep safe in the powerful arms and nail marked hands of the Good Shepherd. In heaven there are many rooms – countless mansions – places with your name beside the door! We have confirmed reservations – we have a place in Heaven! Thomas – who was always concerned to

understand said: **“Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”**  
**6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life.”**

Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Way – the only way to Heaven! Jesus said, **“No one comes to the Father except through me.”** This is certainly not politically correct! Park almost anywhere in Watertown and you will see the coexist- bumper sticker. The message is painfully simple. Everyone should simply get along. They would have you believe it’s just as good to believe in Allah as it is to work for world peace – to work for equal rights for gays, lesbians, bi-sexual and transgender people. It’s just as good to practice Judaism – or to be a Wiccan – a witch or warlock – to worship the devil or mother earth – to practice Taoism or to be a Christian! It’s all the same – as long as you are sincere – they would have you believe! And that all sounds nice! It’s nice to be nice to the nice! It is certainly God-pleasing to show people respect. To respect their right to believe as they want! But the simple Bible truth – spoken by Jesus the night he was betrayed is – **“No one comes to the Father except through me!”** Jesus is the only Way to Heaven. The Bible truth is – suicide terrorists – who blow themselves up crying, “Allah Akbar!” Allah is great--will not find themselves in paradise with 70 virgins. They will find themselves in the unquenchable fires of Hell! And how eternally tragic is that?

**6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life.”** We live in a sin spoiled – sin corrupted world. Lies and deception are everywhere! A mommy and daddy in a March 2009 episode of "Extreme Makeover" claiming that their little daughters--Molly and Maggie, suffered from combined immunodeficiency disease. The family was given a specially equipped mansion to help them better care for the girls. They were given a very fancy kitchen, an elevator, a solar-heated swimming pool and a very expensive air filtration systems so they wouldn't have to wear surgical masks to guard against getting sick. Come to find out – the little girls weren’t sick at all! Their mom made them take all kinds of medicine – which can’t be good for you! It was all a lie – a horrible, hurtful lie – to get what? Sympathy and “things and stuff” – attention and pity? How sad is that! And yet it happens all the time – people telling lies – people living lies – people doing things they know are horrible and hurtful – yet they tell more and more lies – to cover up their original lies! Pontius Pilate scoffed at the thought of truth – absolute and unchanging truth. Jesus is the Truth! God’s Word is the truth – law and gospel that will not pass away – even though Heaven and Earth will pass away – God’s Word will never pass away!

**6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life.”** A very famous and very successful actor was asked just the other day about his views on religion. He said he was brought up in a very religious family and found it all “very stifling!” They must have been doing something wrong. Again – remember last Sunday – *Good Shepherd Sunday* – Pastor Gartner read Jesus’ words--**9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture.** **10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.** Jesus did not come to stifle our life! Jesus came so that we might have an abundant life – a life where there is forgiveness of guilt and sin and mistakes. Jesus came to turn our houses of wood and brick and drywall into homes – warmed and lit by his forgiving unconditional love. Jesus came to give us patience and courage when we are tempted to be frustrated and upset. Jesus came to give us wisdom to know what to say and how to say it – when we are confronted by frustrated and thoughtless and rude and hurtful people. Jesus came to give us a spirit of contentment when everyone around us wants more and more and more. Jesus came to give us a heart that will wash feet in a world where so many are concerned about – what’s in it for me. Jesus came to give us a heart that perseveres when every part of us wants to quit. Jesus gives us a heart that is

concerned about helping others when so many are only thinking about themselves. Jesus came to give us an abundant heart – that is thankful for so many blessings we don't know what to thank him for first!

Who is Jesus? **Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life!** I read about Maria – the oldest living person in the whole wide world – who can prove how old she is. Maria is 114 years – 314 days on Thursday – 317 on Sunday! She lives in a nursing home in Brazil. Maria says she lived so long because she eats a roll of bread for breakfast – along with fruit – and sometimes a nip of wine. She likes to eat Brazilian stew – beans and salted pork – and she likes chicken empada pastries with a lot of hot sauce! Do you know the real reason Maria has lived so long? Because Jesus has been very kind to her. Her family says Maria has a stubborn streak and that she always made a habit of minding her own business. Being stubborn could probably be said about all of us – from time to time. Not meddling in the lives of our neighbors – not judging their hearts or criticizing their motives is very good. Loving our neighbors – forgiving them and helping them as much as possible would always be good. But long life is a gift of God – a gift of his grace and mercy that we cannot begin to earn or deserve. Who is Jesus? He is our Savior and Redeemer – merciful and gracious. **Jesus is the Way the Truth and the Life** – the only way to Heaven. Amen!

**To God alone all glory!**

**Rev. Anthony E. Schultz**