

“Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life” Series
Part 1—Analyzing Jesus’ Claim Acts 17:22-34

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Introduction: Along the way the way this year, I want to do some major teaching on our core values as a church. I have suggested that we adopt these four core values as a church.

1. We much preach the same Gospel.
2. We much declare this message to the next generation.
3. We must preach this same Gospel to all the nations.
4. Whatever we accomplish must be all for God’s glory.

So, in this year, I want to spend a specific amount of preaching time preaching through these four core truths that we hold. I begin today helping us to once again see the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the only true way to know Him. For the next five Sundays I want to examine this topic of Jesus as the only way, the truth, and the life.

Text: ²² Then Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus and said: "Men of Athens! I see that you are extremely religious in every respect. ²³ For as I was passing through and observing the objects of your worship, I even found an altar on which was inscribed:

TO AN UNKNOWN GOD

Therefore, what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it—He is Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in shrines made by hands. ²⁵ Neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives everyone life and breath and all things. ²⁶ From one man He has made every nation of men to live all over the earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live, ²⁷ so that they might seek God, and perhaps they might reach out and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. ²⁸ For in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring. ²⁹ Being God's offspring, then, we shouldn't think that the divine nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image fashioned by human art and imagination.

³⁰ "Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹ because He has set a day on which He is going to judge the world in righteousness by the Man He has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising Him from the dead."

³² When they heard about resurrection of the dead, some began to ridicule him. But others said, "We will hear you about this again." ³³ So Paul went out from their presence. ³⁴ However, some men joined him and believed, among whom were Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Some suggest that there are many ways to faith-- Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, or any number of other world religions or philosophies. Jesus said, however, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no

one comes to the Father but through me.” In light of today’s emphasis on religious pluralism, we need to be certain that Jesus is the way, believe that He is the only way, and be able to give a defense as to why He is the only way.

A Beginning Consideration: 1 Peter 3:15 “but set apart the Messiah as Lord in your hearts, and always be ready to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.”

Rabbi Shmuley Boteach (a popular rabbi with a modern following) captured the belief of many when he wrote, “I am absolutely against any religion that says that one faith is superior to another. I don’t see how that is anything different than spiritual racism. It’s a way of saying that we are closer to God than you, and that’s what leads to hatred.” My goal in this series of messages is to answer this question: **How do you defend against this kind of assessment of Christianity? We can make our defense with the help of two other questions.**

The Question of Unbelievers:

Here is the question of many unbelievers: Isn’t it offensive to claim Jesus is the only way to God?

- Christianity is not the only religion that claims exclusivity. Even those religions and philosophies who say there is some truth in all beliefs is making their own statement of exclusivity. They are saying that you are only right if you believe that there is no right.
- All truth is by definition exclusive. This is what makes something true. If $1+1=2$, $1+1$ cannot also equal 3. If I say that I-10 West will take you to Baton Rouge, I cannot also say that I-10 East will take you to Baton Rouge. Truth is always going to make an exclusive statement or else the statement would not be made as though it was true.

By simple logical assessment, if we believe that the claims of Christ are true, claims in opposition to Christ cannot also be true!

The Question for Believers:

If we are believers in Jesus Christ, if we are believing in Him for our eternal life, then we must ask ourselves a question.

Isn’t it hypocritical to trust in Christ and not believe He is the only way to God?

Failure to acknowledge that Jesus is the **only** way, the truth, and the life...

1. Dilutes the power of the cross. If there is another way, then Christ did not have to die.
2. Destroys the need for evangelism.
3. Dissolves any need for commitment.

I saw something in *Reader’s Digest* this month that I don’t quite understand. A company was advertising a service for those with no computer or who did like the computer to send and receive e-mails for them. The company sends the person by fax e-mails and the person can respond and the company will e-mail

the intended reply. Here's the part I did not understand. To access the service the ad said to go to www.myclery.com. Anybody see the problem there? The same could be said of those who want to follow Christ, but do not believe or insist that He is the only way. The claims He makes and the requirements to follow Him require that He be the only way.

An Example from Scripture: Acts 17:22-34

1. Being religious is not enough. (17:22)
2. Absolute truth about God can be discovered. (17:27)
3. The truth about Jesus is evident in the resurrection. (17:31)

Every other religion is a religion of "doing." Christianity is focused on the fact that it has been "done."