

The ONLY way COMBINED SERVICE

John 20:31

July 15, 2023

John 20:31 - But these are written that you may **believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have **life** in his name.

We live in a world full of options.

Take grocery shopping. Go to your local Safeway and walk down any aisle – say the breakfast and cereal aisle – and you will find:

- 101 – cold cereal options
- 95 – hot cereal options
- 157 – natural/organic cereal options
- 68 – granola/Muesli options

1 aisle ---- 421 cereal options – not including:

- Pancake/Waffle mixes
- Breakfast bars
- Toaster pastries
- Breakfast drinks
- Breakfast condiments, i.e., syrups, etc.

Lots of options, but which one is best? Which breakfast option is going to give you the very best experience for the most affordable price?

Hours could be spent and brain cells wasted trying to determine the answer.

But then another problem arises because the real answer likely depends on the person you ask:

- Some will only like natural and organic.
- Some will only like hot.
- Some will only like cold and sugary.
- Some will only like pancakes – with syrup.
- Some will only like waffles – without syrup.

We like the breakfast and cereal aisle because it allows us to choose our own path. We get to be the masters of our own breakfast experience. At the end of day, we all had breakfast, but we all took a slightly different path to get there.

Unfortunately, spiritual matters are viewed in very much the same way - listen:

- There is no one true religion, each religion has its truths and there are many paths we can choose to take that will lead us to God. All religions must be tolerated for every man must get to heaven in his own way - **Epictetus**
- God's greatest truth is that there is not one way only but many ways Home. There are a thousand paths to God and every one will get you there. Indeed all paths lead to God. This is because there is no other place to go - **N. D. Walsch**
- Each person is different and each one will reach God by his or her own path – **Paulo Coelho**

Truth be told, many of us like the *"many paths lead to God"* aisle because we get to be masters of our own spiritual experience. We get to decide how much access we will allow God in our lives. We get to decide to choose a different path if He gets a little too demanding. We like to keep our options open. This way of thinking sounds nice and friendly and inclusive, but it's dangerous because it plays right into the devil's master plan to derail you by thinking you don't need Jesus to be saved – that you can be saved on your own terms.

But listen to Jesus' own words:

John 6:38 - I AM the Bread of Life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.

Hunger is something God built into the human body, because without food we will die.

But Jesus is not claiming to be any old loaf of bread capable of sustaining life. He is claiming to be **THE BREAD** – the **ONLY** bread capable of satisfying the hunger in our hearts.

John 8:12 - I AM the Light of the World. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

Have you ever been in a cave? Being in total darkness can be unnerving. Physical darkness, however, is nothing compared with spiritual darkness.

Jesus is not claiming to be *"a light."* He is claiming to be **THE LIGHT**.

The promise Jesus makes is that the moment we come to Him – surrender our lives to Him – we will never walk in darkness again.

John 10:9 - I AM the Gate; whoever enters through me will be saved...

Jesus' listeners would have known what he was claiming because there is only one entrance to the sheepfold. There is no backdoor.

Jesus is not claiming to be one gate of many. He is claiming to be **THE GATE** – the **ONLY** Gate to Salvation.

John 14:6 - I AM the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Peter echoed this statement in **Acts 4:12** – *"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."*

Jesus is the road map – **THE WAY**.

He is **THE TRUTH** – not one of many truths to choose from.

He is **THE LIFE** – the Creator and Sustainer of all things.

- **Hebrews 1:1-3** - In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. ³ The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word....

John 15:5 - I AM the Vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Vines only produce grapes because they remain connected to their source of life. The only way to live an abundant and fruitful life is to be connected to Jesus. He is our **ONLY** source to a life that really matters.

Jesus is not the best option among many ---- He is the only remedy God has provided for our sin problem and there is no other way into the presence of God except through Him.

These claims made by Jesus are one of the reasons people don't like Christianity. Because this invitation allows no room for options, people claim it's not warm and friendly – it's not inclusive.

But let's remember that every man, woman and child on planet earth has received the same invitation:

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

We have 2 options: choose this path or choose a different path, but they won't get us to the same destination.

While it is true that each person's journey will be different, there is only **ONE WAY** to reach God = Jesus.

In the beginning was the Word..... not just any word, but the self-existent, eternal Word. Nothing exists without this Word. He is life and light and He came to shine light in the darkness.... That same Word became flesh and lived among us. We beheld His glory. He was full of grace and Truth And His name is Jesus.