



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS John 14:1-7

Read John 14:1-7

1. ***Discuss to what extent Thomas' question in verse 5 is a reflection of our society today and why it undermines the popular idea that when it comes to religion 'all paths are equally valid'.***
2. The actual logic in Thomas' question is faultless. However, Jesus has just said in verse 4 that the disciples *do* know the way. And Jesus is standing right in front of them! ***So what is it about Jesus that Thomas doesn't quite get that makes him say that he doesn't know the way even though Jesus has just said that he does? Compare Thomas' response after Jesus' death and resurrection in John 20:27-29.***
3. Verse 6 is one of the most magnificent things ever said, not just in the Bible, but in the history of this planet. Very few people can plumb the depths of the philosophical and theological weight of what Jesus says. ***What does this one verse say about Jesus' identity? Jesus' work? Jesus' words? And what Jesus offers?***
4. "No one comes to the Father except through me." ***Discuss why this is such wonderfully good news for the Christian.***
5. Jesus' words are not just for conversion. His words are also life. We are converted by Jesus' words and we live by His words. ***Discuss how these words, Jesus as the way, truth and life, continue to apply to the Christian life, not just at the moment of conversion, but as a way to live every day as a Christian.***
6. ***Spend some time as a group thinking about, discussing and praying for the upcoming move to Balcatta. Pray that we will not lose sight of the whole point of our move which is to allow for more and more people to come and hear clearly that Jesus Christ alone is the way, the truth and the life!***

Leaders Notes

1. This was said in the sermon on Sunday but the aim of this question is to get people to practice explaining these concepts in their own words – especially as they will come across religious pluralism everywhere. The main idea is that different paths can only be equally valid if (and it's a massive 'if') we all agree on the same destination. If the destinations are different, the paths cannot all be equally valid. Thomas' logic is faultless. If we don't know the destination we won't know the way. We can all agree that there are different roads to Albany. But that's only because we all agree where Albany is.
2. It is quite surprising that Thomas asks what he does. The only explanation must be that Thomas and the disciples keep missing the full weight of who Jesus is. Remember Jesus has not yet died and risen again and the Holy Spirit has not yet been poured out. We must not judge them too harshly. But it seems that they didn't quite grasp the full divinity of Jesus. If they really knew who Jesus was, fully God, they wouldn't say things like 'We don't know where you are going and we don't know the way.' Instead, they would have said exactly what Jesus says about Himself in verse 6. In other words, Jesus has to spell it out for them. Which means that if you don't know that Jesus is fully God, you will still keep wondering what the way is.
3. Jesus identity = God (I am); Jesus work = the cross (the way); Jesus words = truth (the truth); Jesus gift = life (the life).
4. This phrase 'no one comes to the Father except through me' is rightly viewed as a negative statement enforcing the truth that Jesus is the only way to God. True. However, the great positive of this verse is that there *is* a way! Islam will tell you that there is no way to God. Jehovah Witnesses will tell you there is no way to God – it is reserved for 144000 only. Buddhism, even though it has an 8-fold path, doesn't lead anywhere because Buddhism says there is no God. Jesus says there is a way and He is it. It is also wonderful news to the Christian because if you have come to Jesus then there is no room for doubt that you will get to the Father. Either Jesus is the way or He isn't. If He is, as He says He is, then every single person who has come to Jesus will most definitely get to the Father. Great news.
5. Jesus as the way = interestingly, Christianity was originally called 'the way', Acts 9:1-2. Every day we follow Jesus Christ as our way. His person, His thoughts, His words, His likes and dislikes, His ambitions, His Kingdom, everything about Jesus is our way. We say no to our ways, our persons, our thoughts, our words, our likes and dislikes, our ambitions and our kingdoms. In short, we die to ourselves and live to Him.

Jesus as the truth = we make sure that everyday we let Jesus' words shape our minds. Our minds are constantly renewed by what He says. This means everyday we learn something Jesus' says off by heart so that it can shape our thoughts. We work hard at spending less and less time listening to ourselves and more and more time talking Jesus' words to ourselves. And we spend less time saying to people what we want to say, and more and more time speaking Jesus' life giving words to others.

Jesus as the life = for us to live is Christ. Jesus shapes our lives in every conceivable way. No area of our lives are off limits to Him. We have no 'personal space'. Instead we surrender every area of our existence to Jesus. But more. He is real life, eternal life. John 10:10. We start to realise that we are 'living the dream' as a Christian. We stop daydreaming about some fantasy life somewhere else in another job or country or marriage. Instead we see our lives as revolving around Jesus and we are profoundly grateful and filled with joy. We wake up in the morning and we think, 'It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.'

No man comes to the Father except by me = we take the greatest comfort that God the Judge is now our Father because we have come to Jesus. Every day we are greatly assured that God loves us and is for us because He is our Father because of Jesus. We know with absolute

certainty that Jesus will get us home to the Father. We don't at all rely on our stickability or resilience. We rely solely on Jesus doing what He said He can and will do: take us to the Father.