

“SOLE SAVIOR.”

Rev. Robert T. Woodyard

First Christian Reformed Church

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Scripture Texts: John 14:6; Acts 4:12, 10:43; I Timothy 2:5-6

Prayer: Jesus, may you increase in the eyes of your people and may I decrease. May the proclamation of your Word be our true act of worship now, pleasing to you and edifying to us. Open our minds. Change our hearts. In your name, Amen.

Introduction.

Last week I proclaimed Jesus as our *Sin Savior*. Jesus came to earth to pay a bill, to cover a debt, to deliver a ransom. On Good Friday Christ wrote a check in His blood as full payment for all our sins. On Easter the check cleared. God accepted it as satisfactory payment for our sins.

I spoke of Christ as an unblemished Lamb, took our place, became our substitute, satisfied divine justice, and reconciled us to God. In Christ we are forgiven. He is our salvation, but is He our only way to salvation? Is He our *Sole Savior* from sin and death?

The Bible teaches Jesus is the only Savior, the only way of salvation.

Scripture teaches in no uncertain terms Jesus is the only Savior and our only hope for salvation.

Isaiah 43:11 I am the Lord, and besides me there is no savior.

Acts 4:12 There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

I Timothy 2:5 There there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

Before Him there is no salvation, apart from Him there is no salvation.

Why is Jesus the only way?

To say Jesus is the only way of salvation and the only way to heaven sounds un-American, it sounds narrow, closed-minded, bigoted, intolerant. But is it really?

First, Christianity is not anti-pluralism or anti-tolerance, in fact just the opposite. It was Christianity that most promoted religious liberty. When Christianity became the majority religion in 325 AD, it didn't try to eliminate all other religions.

The history of America has been a great experiment in tolerance and diversity. The intolerance in America today is against Christianity and its views. One of the most recent examples is the attack against Chip and Joanna Gaines, the hosts of the popular HGTV show Fixer Upper because they attend a church that doesn't support same-sex unions.

Second, what Christianity does oppose is what grows out of pluralism and tolerance, which is relativism, the idea that all religions are pretty much the same and it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere. This is the thinking behind the Co-exist bumper sticker.

Our world has totally bought into the notion that there is this huge mountain with God at the top, and that there are lots of paths up that mountain to God. Whatever path you chose is fine, it will get you to God and heaven. Who are we to say one path is better than another, or worse yet, that our path is the only right path and all the other paths are dead ends?

Any claim to exclusivity today comes off as fanatical or fundamentalist or even inflammatory, characterized as hate speech. At the mere suggestion of such accusations we start backpedaling.

But if we believe the Bible to be the Word of God, then we can stand firm that these claims are from God, and God's Word is true.

What these claims are affirming is that contrary to modern views about all religions, Jesus is utterly and absolutely unique. There is no one like Him in any other religion. And because Jesus is completely unique, Christianity is utterly unique. Its path really is different than all the others and doesn't lead to the same place as all the others.

In fact, we can't get there from here. There is no path from earth to heaven, to God. They are all dead ends. Believe me they have all been tried.

Bathe in this river, kiss that rock, pilgrimage to a certain city, do this work, perform that ritual, make a sacrifice, pray to the right saint, do certain acts of righteousness, live a good life. All dead ends.

Christianity is respectful of those who want to try those paths. Christians respect and treat with dignity others with whom they may disagree. What Christianity can never say

is those paths will get you to God in heaven. And for that reason Christianity will always be considered an offense.

We speak the truth in love, but we will not water down or change the truth. Don't be deceived. It is not hateful or bigoted to speak the truth. There was not a hateful or bigoted bone in Jesus' or Paul's body when they proclaimed the truth.

The only way to God and to heaven, is for God to make a path to us and He has done just that in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is utterly unique, there is no one else like Him.

How is He unique?

Jesus is the only mediator because He is the only one who can represent both sides perfectly. He is fully God. He is fully human yet without sin.

This alone puts Him in a class all by Himself. This alone sets Him apart from every person and religious leader who has ever lived. This alone qualifies Him to be our Savior from sin, this alone qualifies Him to be the unblemished sacrifice for our sins.

People like to compare Jesus to Buddha or Mohammed or Gandhi or Confucius. None of them ever claimed to be anything more than a mere man, mortals every last one of them. They were all sinful, fallible humans. Though they founded religions none of them are worthy of being named in the same breath with the Son of the living God.

Moses gave us the law, Buddha gave personal counsel, Confucius offered wise sayings. None of them claimed to offer atonement for the sins of the world.

Jesus' death puts Him in a class all by Himself. His death was a perfect sacrifice for the sins of mankind.

The exclusiveness of Jesus as the way of salvation is because He is the only one who has ever died for our sins. No one else has ever done that or could do that. Every other way negates all that Jesus went through and did for us.

It is folly to say Jesus is like other religious leaders.

It is foolishness to say Christianity is like other religions.

It is a terrible deception to say it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you believe something.

It robs God of His glory to give His glory to some other way or some other person.

To be sincere and wrong is still to be wrong. It is a fatal mistake.

All religion and all theology that does not lift up the name of Jesus is not only confused and empty, it is a labyrinth with no way out, it is a dead end of deception, it is a fraud, a counterfeit.

Mountain analogies obscure the truth about the differences between conflicting religions and belief systems. The differences and claims are vast. They really are not different paths with the same God as the destination. The gods are vastly different. They cannot all be true and in fact only one can be true.

The exclusiveness of Christ rests completely on the uniqueness of Christ. He alone commands absolute devotion because He alone is the only way, the only truth, the only life.

It is the mercy of God that there is even one way.

When people question why Jesus is the only way, they miss the real question, why is there any way? It was not necessary for God to do this. He didn't do it for the angels.

II Peter 2:4 ... God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment.

In the great flood God rescued only 8. At Sodom and Gomorrah He only rescued 4. In Jericho He only rescued one woman and her family.

He could have rescued no one or just a very few. Once God decided to provide a just way to save us from our sins, how many options were open to Him? Was Christ the only way or could there have been some other way to save us from our sins?

After searching out all possible scenarios, the only one that satisfied the righteous requirements of God and of His Holy Law was the death of His only Son.

Remember Jesus prayer in the garden of Gethsemane. Three times the Son of God:

Matthew 26:39 ... fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."

"Father, if there is any other way." But this was the only way that people could be redeemed and reconciled to the Father. Jesus later explained this to the disciples on the road to Emmaus:

Luke 24:26-27 “Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

There is no other satisfaction for sins, and there must be this satisfaction in order for man to be reconciled to God. Without the Christ and the cross there is no salvation and no heaven. That there is only one way is not narrow or close-minded, it is the pure mercy and grace of God.

Implications and application.

First, a call to courage.

In this age of pluralism and tolerance and relativism and syncretism, where it doesn't matter what you believe, the words of Jesus in John 5:23 hit us hard.

“Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.”

People who say all paths lead to God are wrong. The only path that leads to God is the path that leads through His Son Jesus Christ. If they don't honor Jesus they don't honor God. To not care about the truth is to not care about God. To love the truth is to love God. To be indifferent or say it doesn't matter is to perish. To know the truth is to be set free and to live.

May we never even suggest by our words or actions that what God has done is not enough or that we feel we must be apologetic.

May we boldly affirm and declare the gospel of Jesus Christ without the slightest compromise. The way to show His infinite worth to the world is not by apologizing or watering down or softening or accommodating or compromising but by declaring with clearest voice the greatness of His uniqueness.

This we must do with ***compassion***, patience, love, grace, respect, as Christ would do.

And this we must do with ***courage***. The uniqueness and supremacy of Christ is the cause of all Christian martyrdom. There is no point in dying for this if there are many roads and any road will do. What gets you persecuted and killed is saying this is only way and no other way will work, saying, “Jesus is Lord and Lord alone.”

The greatness of Christ's uniqueness for salvation and eternal life is the fuel for worship and for prayer and for evangelism and missions. Take courage, be bold.

Second, a call to comfort.

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Take heart, if you confess the name of Jesus as the Son of the Living God and your Savior and Lord then you are on the way, you know the truth and you have the life.

Be anxious and fearful about nothing. You belong to Christ, He belongs to you. You are one with the Father. You are dearly loved. He delights in you.

Glorify God for His great mercy and grace. He has made a way for salvation and He has revealed it to our hearts. Glorify God that at the name of Jesus every person, every power, every principality, every tongue will confess Him and all of this will be to the glory of the Father.

Love the uniqueness of Jesus. May the greatness of Jesus Christ's uniqueness fill your minds and hearts this season. May the Holy Spirit make Jesus infinitely more than a sermon or a Bible story to you today.

How does Jesus being our Sole Savior comfort us?

First, we have a Savior who is able to be without sin and save us from our sin, a Savior who is able to bear the eternal wrath of God and remain righteous.

Second, we have a Savior who has power and authority to forgive sins and raise us from the dead and to give us eternal life.

Third, we have a Savior who is worthy of our worship, adoration and obedience, who is worthy to be our Lord.

Fourth, we have a Savior who is our great High Priest in heaven to whom we can pray and who hears and answers and is powerfully able to do all we need and more than we can ask or imagine.

John 20:30-31 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Leave here this morning in confident assurance and absolute faith and full awareness of God's supreme love for you, shown in His making His Son your Sole Savior.

Prayer: Holy Father, increase our faith in you and our love for you, for there is no God like you, and there is no Savior like Jesus. Enable us to never be ashamed but have courage and boldness to confess Christ, even as He was not ashamed to name us and die for us. Make us lights to this great truth this season in our homes and families and community, for your glory.