

Prayer for Confession of Sin

Search me O God, and know my heart;

Test me, and know my anxious thoughts.

See if there is any offensive way in me,

And lead me in the way everlasting.

Have mercy on me O God, according to your unfailing love.

Wash away all my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

Create in me a pure heart O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

All **May the words of my mouth,
and the meditation of my heart,
be pleasing in your sight O Lord,
my Rock and my Redeemer.**

—Psalms 139:23-24; 51:1a,2,10; 19:14

What Wondrous Love Is This

American Folk Hymn

The Southern Harmony (1835)

①

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul,
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul!

②

To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing
To God and to the Lamb, I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb, Who is the Great I Am,
While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing,
While millions join the theme, I will sing!

③

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on;
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be,
And through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
And through eternity I'll sing on!

Jesus answered,

I am the
way and

the truth

and the life.

No one

comes to the

Father

except

through me."

—John 14:6

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 14, 2010 — 10:15 to 11:45 a.m.

Old Orchard Church

Descent to the Cross:

I Am the Way, the Truth, the Life

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life;
Such a Way as gives us breath:
Such a Truth, as ends all strife:
And such a Life, as killeth death.

—George Herbert (1593-1633)



Scripture Readings

Old Testament Lesson: Numbers 21:4-9
Gospel Reading: John 14:1-7

Sermon Series on Matthew

“Trial By The Jews: The Religious Manipulation of Jesus”
Matthew 26:47-68

Ron Lutjens, Senior Pastor, preaching

We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

Who Is He?

It would be easier, I sometimes think, if God had given us a set of ideas to mull over and kick around and decide whether to accept or reject. He did not. He gave us himself in the form of a person.

“Jesus saves,” announce the bumper stickers—imagine how ridiculous it would sound if you substituted Socrates or Napoleon or Marx. The Buddha gave his disciples permission to forget him as long as they honored his teaching and followed his path. Plato said, something similar of Socrates. Jesus, though, pointed to himself and said “**I am the way**”....

It is an uncontested fact of history that Jesus' followers, the same ones who were scratching their heads over his words at the Last Supper, a few weeks later were proclaiming him as the “Holy and Righteous One,” the “Lord,” the “author of life.” By the time the Gospels were written they regarded him as the Word who was God, through whom all things were made. In a later letter John took pains to point out “**That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.**” The book of Revelation describes Jesus as a blazing figure whose face “**was like the sun shining in all its brilliance,**” but always the author connected this Cosmic Christ to the actual Galilean man the disciples had heard and seen and touched.

Why would Jesus' disciples invent these notions? Followers of Mohammed or Buddha, willing to lay down their lives for their master, did not make such a jump in logic. Why would Jesus' disciples, so slow to accept it themselves, require of us a belief so difficult to swallow? Why make it harder rather than easier to accept Jesus?

The alternative to a conspiracy theory regarding Jesus himself, as the source of the audacious claims, only magnifies the problem. As I read through the Gospels, I sometimes try to view them as an outsider might, in the same way I read the Qur'an or the Upanishads. When I take up that perspective I find myself repeatedly startled, even offended, by the arrogance of one who says, “**I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**” I can read only a few pages before stumbling across one of these statements that seem outlandishly to undercut all his wise teaching and good deeds. If Jesus is not God, then he is badly deluded.

—Philip Yancey in *The Jesus I Never Knew* (1995).