



ENTER God's presence

For His merciful kindness is great toward us, And the truth of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD!

– Psalm 117:2

God, you are faithful and true. Send your light and truth to us, for we know that your Son Jesus will guide and lead us in a changing world. Lead us in your way, that fixed to the truth of who you are, we may experience the abundance of life you have given us in your Son together. In Jesus' name. Amen.



SHARE life together

1. **Where have you seen the life of Jesus at work in your life over the past week?**
2. **Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?**
3. **How tolerant a person do you consider yourself to be? Explain.**
4. **What is troubling your heart at this present time?**

Tolerance. In its original meaning, to be tolerant meant to 'endure' something. To endure views and opinions you may disagree with but to debate and reason with empathy for each other, to discover and discern truth. But in a post-truth era, tolerance has segued into meanings of acceptance and approval, where all lifestyles, viewpoints, and values are to be accepted and affirmed as equal. It has led to a non-judgmental indifference - a "be nice" and "do what you like" attitude because truth is seen as fluid, flexible and relative. It's ironic, that in an age calling for tolerance, we have become a society that is deeply intolerant - where legislation has to be passed on "hate speech", where "cancel culture" instils fear and removes freedom of opinion or contrary ideas, and 'zero tolerance' policies have had to be implemented across all sectors of society. In a changing world where truth is a moving reality, Jesus gives us a fixed, reliable, dependable and universal truth about ourselves, our lives and the eternal life he freely offers. It's a way, a truth and a life that enables us not just to 'endure' others, but to live with true love for all, true hope in every circumstance and true grace that transforms the fear and uncertainty of this world. We'll explore a life beyond tolerance today.

Week beginning:
Sunday 18th April 2021

Worship series:

Life Pulse



VERSE for the week

Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no-one can come to the Father except through me."

John 14:1-6



REMEMBER this week

The resurrection of Jesus is the fixed point that makes sense of our lives and launches us into a life that pulses with freedom, grace and truthfulness.



LISTEN attentively

Read John 14:1-14

5. What do you find challenging/confusing/comforting about this text?
6. Jesus says "Believe in God, believe also in me." What does that mean for you?
7. Jesus promises a place/room in the Father's house. How does it bring peace in the midst of those things that cause you to be anxious in heart?
8. How easy is it for the world to accept that Jesus is the only way to the Father? Why? How easy is it for you to accept that truth?
9. How are the way, the truth, and the life related?

What is truth...that's the question that Pilate asked Jesus in John 18:38. In this post-truth age, it is said, that nothing is true. Anything that claims exclusivity is seen as bigoted and intolerant. We are told that you must tolerate whatever the person next to you chooses to do. The net result is that we become so anxious and afraid about saying anything, in case we offend, that we sacrifice truth on the altar of our feelings. We don't say anything, we don't voice a contrary opinion. Our fear is such that even if we see someone about to metaphorically step out in front of a bus, we don't get involved because "Your truth is your truth and my truth is my truth." But the traditional definition of tolerance, "*a capacity to endure pain or hardship*" has the idea of opposition embedded into the meaning. A skyscraper's tolerance is its ability to withstand stress. A person addicted to coffee can drink a cup of coffee at 2am and fall asleep five minutes later because their body has produced a tolerance for caffeine and it no longer has the same effectiveness. When it comes to the realm of beliefs, you can tolerate views you do not agree with. You can still love someone and have a friendship with them, even if you cannot accept a belief and make it your own.

10. Share any specific ways the truth of verse 6 has impacted your life.
11. The word "believe" appears in verse 10, verse 11, and verse 12. Why is believing so important? What are we to believe? What is the outcome of believing—what can be accomplished?
12. What do you think Jesus meant by the words "greater things" in verse 12. What are the greater things that Jesus is calling us to here at LifeWay?

Jesus' absolute statement in verse 6 is from the contemporary definition of tolerance seen to be a highly offensive and exclusive statement. But remember, Jesus is talking to his disciples here. They are disoriented, anxious and troubled in heart, and Jesus speaks to reassure them that he is about to do everything necessary to give them access to the Father's house forever. Even those who betray him, deny him and even abandon him can find grace and have access to the Father's presence now and for eternity through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There is no other way to gain access to the Father's presence but through Jesus and his saving activity on the cross, confirmed in the resurrection.

13. In what way does the world see this as an exclusive and even divisive statement?
14. How would you respond to someone who says that "all roads lead to God"?

Unfortunately those who deny this truth in verse 6 on the grounds of you cannot make exclusive statements, miss the invitational and inclusive nature of Jesus' statement. That in a world of turmoil, when we have lost a sense of life or it is flipped on its head, Jesus centres us in the willing sacrifice he made for all people. When life is tough and we have to watch our loved ones in hospital suffer or we ourselves struggle to believe that God is real and with us, Jesus puts the stake in the ground and gives us the certainty of his presence with us, to give us freedom and life forever with him.

Even those religions and philosophies who say there is some truth in all beliefs are making their own statement of exclusivity. They are saying that you are only right if you believe that there is no right. **All truth claims are by definition exclusive.** If $1+1=2$, $1+1$ cannot also equal 5. But if nothing is true, if everything is fluid, if everything is shifting, we have no confidence, we have no certainty, we have no security, we have no peace because we don't have solid ground on which to stand. All that does is increase anxiety and depression which affects people's enjoyment of life.



Read John 8:31-36

Life is not just about enduring, but beating daily with the life pulse of Jesus. It's a life where we find true acceptance, true value, and true direction. The word "truth" in the Old Testament is

AMAN - it means firm and fixed...it's the stake in the ground that doesn't move; the anchor point which does not shift.

Another word that is used in Hebrew is:

EMETH - firm, solid, reliable, dependable. (An Ish Emeth is a person of truth whom you can depend on to tell you the truth in every circumstance, whether you want to hear that truth or not.)

Jesus is the fixed point **"who is the same yesterday, today and forever."** Hebrews 13:8. He's not a destination to arrive at. He's the one who comes and makes his dwelling with you, who walks with you in the darkest part of the tunnel and lights the path before you to lead you home (John :14). He's the fixed point that is constant, whose presence in our lives gives us a glimpse of and a place in the Father's house for ever. Jesus gives us a freedom to live!

15. How does knowing that Jesus is a fixed point of truth in your lives, give you a confidence to live boldly? What needs to change in your life to enable you to live with that confidence?



16. How does Jesus being the only way to the Father create urgency for the mission of the Church?

17. Who are the people you're praying for to find an eternal home in Jesus?

18. What is one truth from this study that you will 1. Hold on to/treasure (share it) & 2. Live by in the coming week? Share with the group for accountability.



- Praise God for revealing himself and his plans for us in Jesus. Thank Jesus for revealing the Father to us and for being the way, the truth and the life for all. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you to speak the truth of Jesus with someone this coming week.
- Pray for LifeWay Illawarra as they officially become LifeWay this weekend that God would use this site to reveal the way, the truth and the life of Jesus to the Illawarra community.
- Pray for LifeWay Cambodia and Pastor Vibol as they share the life of Jesus with a community in hard lockdown because of Covid-19; that the villagers may know a God who draws near to them in their suffering.



You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross in the air as you say...

[Name], Jesus is dependable and true for you. Amen