

**Half- Truth**  
**Week #1 (The Ascension)**  
**May 13<sup>th</sup> 2018**

**Half-Truth : *"It doesn't matter what you believe because there are many ways to God."***

Today is the start  
of a brand new message series.

**We are calling Half-Truth.**

So thank you for joining us today.  
It is going to be a great series,  
you will not want to miss.

Over the next five weeks  
we're going to look at some popular beliefs  
in culture that are half-true.

They are kind of right, but only kind of.

It's like having only the right street address,  
but the wrong town in your GPS,  
and I have done that a few times  
in my life.

if we fully embrace these half-truths  
they will bring us to the wrong destination.

A half-truth is a statement  
that includes some element of truth.

The statement might be partly true,  
but in leaving out the rest of the truth  
it brings about a deception.

Over the course of this series  
we are going to examine some  
of the half-truths of our culture.

This coincides over the next few weeks  
as we celebrate some feasts in the Church  
that clarify what we believe as Catholics  
and followers of Christ.

Today is the Ascension,  
when we celebrate that  
Jesus ascended into heaven.

Next week is Pentecost.

And the following week is Trinity Sunday,  
these feasts help us to refute  
some of the half truths of our culture.

So over the next few weeks,  
we will look at some half-truths such as...

All religions are the same.

You don't need a Church to connect with God.

God won't give you more than you can handle.

Today, I want to talk about one  
that might be the most controversial.  
Yes I have the difficult one.  
Here is the half-truth:

there are many ways to God.  
It doesn't matter what you believe  
because there are many ways to God.

When people say there are many ways to God,  
essentially they are asserting  
that the major religions have truth in them.

Many religions contain truth  
about the good,  
the true and the beautiful,  
which are all a reflections of God.

They are saying  
that we ought to respect  
and learn from other religions.  
That is true.

Often when people say there are  
many ways to God,  
they mean that there are many ways  
to experience God,  
which is certainly true.

You can definitely experience God  
in nature  
or in a community of people  
or in your own personal prayer time.

But here is the whole truth:  
there is only **one way to God.**

There is only one way

to have a relationship with God  
and that is through the person of Jesus Christ.

Now this isn't a popular statement.  
It seems narrow minded.  
In our culture, it seems intolerant.

Here is the deal,  
in saying that Jesus is the only way to God,  
we are not saying we are superior,  
but that Jesus is superior,  
that he has a special relationship with God  
because he is the Son of God.

Jesus said things like, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* John 14:6  
He didn't say,  
*"I am a way to God among many."*  
He said **I am THE way to God."**

There are not many ways to God.  
There is only one way to get home to God:  
through the person of Jesus Christ.

That is why Jesus said to disciples

with his parting words  
before he ascended into heaven,

*<sup>15</sup> ...“Go into all the world and proclaim the  
good news to the whole creation.*

Mark 16: 15

Tell everyone about the Gospel.  
Go out into the world because  
there is one way back to God  
and people need to hear about it.

Go on mission to spread the Gospel  
because there is only one way  
back into a relationship with God.

Then he says this,

*<sup>16</sup> The one who believes and is baptized will be  
saved;  
but the one who does not believe will be  
condemned.*

Mark 16: 15

That may be offensive.  
It may be startling in a pluralistic society

like ours  
but it is incredibly clear.

Anyone who hears the Gospel  
and believes it enough to be baptized  
will be saved

- will get home to God.

Whoever does not believe it,  
will be condemned.

Will not be saved.

Those words from Jesus sound extreme.  
So to help us embrace them,  
I want to go back to that word Gospel.

The gospel means Good News.  
What is the Good News?

To better understand the Good News,  
it is helpful to know the bad news.

The bad news is that something has gone  
wrong with the world.

The evil in the world:

wars, poverty, hunger,  
broken relationships, murder,  
disasters comes as a result of sin  
and our broken relationship with God.

We are separated from God  
because we have attempted to put anything  
and everything in place of God.

We have searched for everything  
and anything to be number one in our life  
instead of God.

The consequence of our sin is death.  
We are all sinners.  
all of us separated ourselves from our Creator.  
As a result of this separation,  
we have an insecurity about ourselves.  
We have a lack of purpose and meaning to life  
which often leads  
to a need to prove our value.

This is so important to know  
this bad news  
because it makes it easier then

to accept the good news.

So we have been separated from God  
and need to get back  
into right relationship with him.

How do we get back  
into right relationship with God?  
How do we get saved?

This is a question most religions  
try and answer.

The answer to that is there is a  
profound and fundamental difference  
between the way that other religions  
tell us to seek salvation  
and the way described in the gospel of Jesus.

For every other religion  
that tries to answer that question,  
the answer is some kind of performance.

Be good and then God will save you  
and get you into heaven.  
Be good and then you will be redeemed.

But that's not what Jesus proposed.

Jesus didn't claim to know  
the way of salvation  
**but to be salvation himself.**

Other religions operate on the principle  
that I obey God  
and strive to be good  
so God will accept me.

The Good News of the Gospel  
is that you and I  
are accepted by God,  
not because of our efforts  
or what we have done,  
but because of what Jesus Christ  
has done for us.

The Good News is that even though  
we are deeply flawed  
and messed up individuals,  
God loves us so much  
that he sent his Son to die for us.

The Good News of the Gospel  
is that I don't have to be good enough  
to be accepted by God,  
but that as I accept  
what Jesus did for me on the cross,  
God will make me good,  
which is one of the greatest desires  
for your heart.

The founders of every other major religion  
came as teachers.  
to show us the way to God  
through right moral teachings.

Jesus says, "I am the way.  
Come to me,  
live in relationship with me  
and I will give you life."

When we say that  
there are many ways to God,  
it lacks an understanding  
of what Jesus did for us on the cross.

Think about it,  
if there are many ways to God,  
if we could be put back  
into right relationship with God  
through some other way,  
then why on earth  
would Jesus have gone to the cross?

Jesus was beaten and bloodied  
and nailed to a cross.  
He suffered greatly to put us back  
in a right relationship with God.

Why in the world would God  
send his son to earth  
to suffer like that  
and to show his great love for us,  
if there were some other way back to him?

Jesus surrendered and laid down his life  
because it was the only way  
we could be put back  
in right relationship with our heavenly Father.

The assumption about there being

many ways to God is this:  
it assumes that we make the roads to God.  
It assumes that the way to God  
or right relationship with God  
is something we do.

If that was true,  
it would be very arrogant for us to say  
that there is only one way to God.

But God made the road back to him  
and he has only given us one road:  
the person of Jesus Christ.

Now this might raise a question in your mind:  
What about all the people  
who do not hear about Jesus Christ?

When you say there is only one way to God,  
are saying that all Buddhists,  
Muslims, Hindus and people  
of other faiths are going to hell.

**No we are not saying that.**

If they are saved,  
they are still saved  
through the person of Jesus,  
whether they know it in this life or not.

Jesus died for them.  
As stated on Christmas day  
and Easter Sunday...  
Jesus came for ALL PEOPLE

There is only one way to God,  
not many.

Let me tell you why it matters  
that you embrace this truth.

First of all it matters,  
because until you really believe  
**Jesus is your only way back to God,  
that he is your only salvation,  
your only hope to be healed and made whole**  
- your faith will only be a category.

When you believe  
you desperately need

a relationship with Jesus Christ  
to get back in a relationship with God,  
Church and prayer  
and spiritual disciplines  
will not be something you do  
in your leisure time,  
**but become very, very personal.**

Second, this matters because  
when we understand there  
is only one way back to God,  
only one way to be made whole,  
**it should intensify our commitment  
to connect friends, family members,  
co-workers to the person of Jesus Christ.**

If there are many ways to God,  
then it is ok if they go their own way.  
It is ok that they don't have  
a relationship with Jesus.

But if Jesus is THE Way back to God,  
if Jesus is the way back  
to being made whole,  
and having our sins forgiven,

**then out love** for the people around us,  
it is vital that we introduce people to the  
person of Jesus Christ.

If you had the cure for cancer  
or another major disease,  
you wouldn't feel arrogant in telling  
other people about the cure.  
It wouldn't be arrogant,  
it would be loving and serving others  
to share the cure.  
We know the cure  
to what most ails the human heart.

There is only one way to God,  
it is through the person of Jesus Christ.  
So here is what I invite you to do this week.

Would you pray that verse from John 14:6?

Every day tell Jesus,  
“Jesus, you are the way,  
the truth and the life.  
No one comes to the Father  
except through you.”

For some of you,  
it will be the first time  
you ever confessed that  
and it will make a change  
in your relationship with God.

You will pray that  
this week and it will be a breakthrough  
in your relationship with God.

**If you already believe that,**  
I want you to pray that prayer  
for someone this week  
who does not know Jesus Christ.  
Pray that God will use you  
to bring them into a relationship with him.