



*I've Been Thinking about . . . the Exclusivity of Christ*  
*by Pastor Chris*

“Jesus is not the only way, but he is the best way.” Like the sea anemone that seems harmless as it lies in wait to devour its prey, this generous-sounding claim is spiritually deadly.

“Jesus is not the only way, but he is the best way.” Perhaps a friend, acquaintance, or family member has said this to you. How should you respond?

The claim that Christ is one of many ways to God is rooted not in the eternal word of God but in the contemporary Zeitgeist of pluralism. Pluralism preaches an extension of tolerance that goes beyond the benevolent toleration of people to the pernicious toleration of all truth claims as equally valid. The claim that “Jesus is not the only way, but he is the best way” embraces pluralism and tolerance while attempting to affirm Christianity and honor Christ. This attempt to have it both ways fails, for it denies Christianity and dishonors Christ.

The faith once for all delivered to the saints upholds the exclusivity of Christ for salvation. The Bible clearly testifies that Jesus is the only way to God.

### **Christ is the only person who can give salvation**

The Apostle John, a credible eyewitness of Christ (Jn 21:24), records Jesus as saying of himself, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (Jn 14:6 NIV). Consequently, to say that Jesus is *a* way, or the *best* way, but not *the only* way is either to deny the credibility of John’s eyewitness testimony or to assert that Jesus is making a false claim about himself. To deny the credibility of John’s eyewitness testimony is baseless, especially since John proved the credibility of his testimony by suffering for Christ (Rev 1:9). To assert that Jesus is making a false claim about himself is to dishonor Jesus, who is full of truth (Jn 1:14), and to dishonor Jesus is tantamount to dishonoring God (Jn 5:23). Therefore, the credibility of the apostolic testimony and the honor of Jesus lead us to affirm that Jesus is the only way to the Father.

Speaking of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the Apostle Peter proclaims, “There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12 NLT). Peter, another credible eyewitness of Jesus, must have been convinced of the exclusivity of Christ for salvation, for it took steely courage for him to make this proclamation before the same court that had condemned Jesus (Acts 4:1-13).

The Apostle Paul affirms that Jesus is the only way to God. Paul writes, “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. . .” (1 Tim 2:5 ESV).

The apostles testify that Christ is the only person who can give salvation. Jesus points to himself as the only way to God.

## “Your Testimony”

Associate Pastor of Ministry Advancement & Adult Ministries  
Howard Lundeen

*“They overcame him (the accuser) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony;” (Rev. 12:11 NIV – parenthesis added)*

People can argue against or disclaim the authority of nearly any truth claim; however, they cannot argue against the validity of a person’s personal testimony. When a person shares his/her story of how Jesus Christ became real to him/her, and how they came to place their faith in His gift of salvation, we cannot honestly discredit the reality of their experience. It is well known that one of the most powerful tools we have in communicating the good news of Jesus Christ is our own personal testimony of how the gospel of Christ has impacted our life.

This month I have already shared with you in my quarterly report much of what is happening ministry wise; therefore, rather than repeating information, I would like to devote this article to sharing with you the testimony I recently received from Bruce VonEnde. He has given me permission to share it with you and I trust God will use it to encourage you as much as He did me.

### Testimony of Bruce VonEnde

*For the first 15 years of my life I grew up in the small town of Becker, Minnesota with my four brothers. Our parents divorced when I was very young. My father had weekend visitation so we hardly ever went to church.*

*My mother moved in with her boyfriend and she did send us to catechism classes, but they weren’t really anything I enjoyed. About all I got out of the classes were the basics. I lived with my mom until I was 14. My mother is a wonderful and strong woman, but life with my stepfather was anything but good.*

*So I moved in with my dad and stepmom. My dad didn’t go to church much, but after he was married we started to go on a regular basis for a year or two. My stepmom wasn’t a mean person but she tended to be a bit preachy, especially when my friends would come over. She also wouldn’t hesitate to tell us what an awful mother we had.*

*So I left my teenage years with a negative opinion of religion in general. When I graduated I was pretty much a partier, and figured church was for old people.*

*I enlisted in the Army and spent three years in Germany, pretty much drinking and partying in most of my free time. When I left the Army in 1989 I met my first wife. We moved in together for about 2 years and later got married. We spent the next 7 years moving around quite a bit. It wasn’t until my wife’s grandmother died that Jennifer decided she wanted to start going to church.*

*We picked a small church that met in a shopping mall. They had a congregation of about 30 people. Jennifer really liked it but I still felt more or less indifferent. We went for about a year and then moved to Arizona. We didn’t go out of our way to find a church right away. Then on New Years I made a really bad selfish decision, the results of which led to a turning point in my life. I repented of my sins and accepted Jesus as my Savior. We started going to church and really looked forward to the time spent studying the Bible. The Lord became the center point of our lives, and in the spring of 1999 we moved to Waseca. We tried a few churches but we fell back into old habits.*

*It wasn’t long before our marriage ended. The next 3 years were really hard. That’s when I decided to renew my relationship with God and started coming here to Christ Community Church.*

*Things started to turn around and I could sense God working in my life again, but I didn’t really get the fact that God wanted my whole life, not just the portion of my life that I wanted to give Him, and it wasn’t too long before I was back to the drinking and partying. I started making really foolish decisions and was headed down a pretty bleak road.*

*Then I met a pretty incredible woman and we were married a year later. At the time I had some really dumb ideas concerning spirituality. It wasn’t until hearing the testimony of two pretty unique men of God that I had to stop and really take inventory of my life. I finally gave my whole life to God, submitting to Him as Lord. I could really see that He had always been right there; however, I didn’t see him because I didn’t want to, I was so caught up in myself. Since that day I don’t listen to the same music or watch the same movies and hardly ever drink. I read the Bible daily and pray a lot.*

*I know God is working in my life and I’m really excited to see where He leads me.*

Bruce’s testimony has generated in my life new praise to God for the mercy and grace He has shown each of us. What a wonderful witness of God’s faithfulness and power to save! May each of us boldly share our personal testimony of God’s saving grace with those He brings into our life.

*Pastor Howard*

---

## Thoughts from a Student Pastor

By: Zach Marino

---

Life isn't life without hard times, right? I mean come on, last month I wrote about hard times and struggles and this month it's gonna be a little of the same but with a little different twist on it. Last month I dealt with the stresses of life. When we walk in God's plan for us we can feel huge stresses and battles each day! That's where I referred to needing "God-sized" power! If we are to walk in God's plan we are going to need God-sized power!

I want to look at another side of the "stress ball." This side deals with evil people. People who just are out to get you and see you fail. We all have to admit that there are those people who are the negative flies that bite us every now and then, sometimes more than others. Scripture speaks specifically to this issue and the role of the righteous in it. Let's take a look!

Open up your Bible to Proverbs 24 and check out verses 15-16. What you find is a picture being painted of the wicked person trying to totally "raid" his life, or destroy it. The first thing we have to note about this passage is the fact that the righteous person getting "raided" falls. They not only fall one, two or three times, they fall seven times. We have to realize that scripture actually says that we are not always going to be perfect in what we do, we are going to fall. How do you feel about that? Isn't that kinda depressing? I mean I thought scripture was all about "Jesus rescuing me from struggles so I never have to have pain again!" Sorry friend, scripture affirms that we will face people who will bring pain into our lives. HOLD ON THOUGH! DON'T STOP READING!

*Continued on page 7*

## *Student Ministries Special Events Calendar!*

<u><i>Junior High Bible Study</i></u>	<u><i>Senior High Girls Bible Study</i></u>	<u><i>P.O.P. Senior High Guys Bible Study</i></u>
3-4:00pm	1-3:00 pm	6-8:00pm
Tuesdays	Wednesdays at CCC	Wednesdays Pastor Zach's house

***Rock the River Tour - August 16th - \$10 - Grades 7-12***

## Love Lavished by Adoption

By Jeff Stebbins  
CCC Missionary

Resource Exchange International-Vietnam

On May 21, 1997, in Vietnam, two years of frustrating paperwork and waiting finally ended: our family of three became four when Eva was placed into Beth's arms. Suddenly, too, I began paying more attention to what the Bible says about God adopting us. Theologians write whole books about this—allow me a few paragraphs.

In Greek, adoption is *huio-thesia* (child + make), to make someone your child. The word appears just three times in the New Testament, but this crucial concept underlies most mentions of God as our Father and us as His children. God could easily have just rescued us from sin and death, but He went much further when He adopted us. Salvation keeps us from Hell; adoption makes Heaven our home, and Heaven's King our *Daddy*!

Beth endured eight hours of labor for our first daughter, Anke, and I endured two years of labor (legal red tape) for Eva. Children enter families by birth or by adoption, but Jesus experienced both: Mary bore Him and Joseph adopted Him. In Luke 3:22-23, the Son of God is also called 'the son of Joseph.' And Christians, too, are spiritually born and adopted, for when we believe in Jesus, we are born again of the Spirit (John 3:3-8) and adopted into God's family (John 1:12-13).

Parents often initiate adoptions partly out of *need*—a deep longing for a child—but God lacks nothing. Like many couples or families, Beth and I (and Anke) felt incomplete before Eva arrived. God, though, is perfectly complete. Each Person of the Trinity loves the other Persons infinitely, so creating and adopting us addressed no shortcoming in Him. God doesn't need us; if He did, He would not be motivated by grace.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit draw us into the intimate fellowship they enjoy. *Because you are sons* [children], *God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father"* (Gal. 4:6). In that one verse, and in Rom. 8:15-17, all three Persons of the Godhead enable us to call Him "*Abba*" (Aramaic for Daddy or Papa)—exactly what Jesus called His Father in Mark 14:36.

In John 20:17, Jesus calls believers 'brothers' while distinguishing our relationship with the Father from His relationship with the Father. We are not divine, so we expect such differences; still, *how great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God* (I John 3:1)!

In Heaven, we'll find the implications of this literally endless! Here and now, though, as in human adoptions, there are benefits and obligations when becoming someone's child. The Bible says we must know, love, obey, and imitate our Father—and love and serve other people. We may also have to suffer.

Our obligations, though, pale in comparison to our myriad benefits. Morally and legally, Eva can expect her parents to care for her through her childhood, but God promises to care for His children *forever*! Even better is our home. Before Eva arrived, Beth and I prepared a room for her. Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us in Heaven, so that God can make His home with us (John 14:2-3, 23). And there we will enjoy perfect fellowship with countless siblings! Best of all though, is the One adopting us, because ultimately, God is what makes the Good News good. We'll see Him as He is (I John 3:2, Rev. 22:4), we'll know that we are perfectly loved, and all will be well.

Aren't you glad that you're adopted?





2200 4th Street NE - Waseca, MN 56093

PHONE: (507) 835-2235

FAX: (507) 833-8857

E-MAIL: [ccc@ccecfca.com](mailto:ccc@ccecfca.com)

Website: [www.ccecfca.com](http://www.ccecfca.com)

PRAYER REQUESTS: [prayer@ccecfca.com](mailto:prayer@ccecfca.com)

*A heart for God and you*

## Summer Worship Schedule

Sunday, July 5 through  
Sunday, September 6th



*One service from 9:30–10:45 am*  
*No Sunday School classes*

## Summer Staffed Office Hours

	<u>Volunteer</u>	<u>Secretary</u>
Monday:	9:30 am - Noon	Noon – 5:00 pm
Tuesday:	=====	8:30 am - 5:00 pm
Wednesday:	9:30 am - Noon	Noon - 5:00 pm
Thursday:	=====	8:30 am - 5:00 pm
Friday:	=====	10:00 am - 3:00 pm

### **Christ Community Church Mission Statement**

**As a local body of believers, we will seek to glorify God in worship, in evangelizing the unsaved and in teaching Christians to obey everything Christ commanded. To that end, prayer will be our foremost task, Scripture will be our authority, God's Holy Spirit will be our source of power and love will be our motivation.**



Continued from page 1

## *I've Been Thinking about . . . the Exclusivity of Christ*

### **The work of Christ is the only ground of salvation**

Christ's righteous life, atoning death, victorious resurrection, and heavenly intercession provide the only ground for salvation.

Jesus is the only perfectly righteous person who ever lived. Therefore, God declares sinners to be righteous only by the perfect righteousness of the one man, Jesus, imputed to believers (Rom 5:18-19; 2 Cor 5:21).

Jesus' atoning death on the cross makes him the only person to die as the substitutionary sacrifice for our sins (Is 52:13-53:12; Mk 10:45; Heb 10:11-14; 1 Pt 1:18-19; 2:24; 3:18; 1 Jn 2:2).

Jesus is the only person ever to have been resurrected. (Other people raised from the dead were raised in their mortal bodies, and they died again. Jesus was raised in his transformed, immortal, resurrection body.) Jesus' resurrection from the dead makes him the firstfruits of the resurrection, guaranteeing the future resurrection of believers to glory (1 Cor 15:1-58).

Jesus has ascended to heaven, where he is the only person interceding for believing sinners by virtue of his atoning sacrifice and victorious resurrection (Rom 8:34; Heb 6:19-20; 7:23-8:2; 1 Jn 2:1).

Hence, Jesus is the only perfectly righteous person by whom we can be made righteous, the only person to die as our substitute bearing our sins, the only person whose resurrection can guarantee our resurrection, and the only person to appear before God's heavenly throne in intercession for believing sinners. Did Mohammad die for our sins? Was Buddha raised to life for our justification?

The work of Christ is the only ground of salvation.

### **Christ is the necessary and sole object of faith for salvation**

Salvation is obtained only through faith alone in Christ alone. Those who believe in Christ have eternal life, but those who do not believe in Christ do not have eternal life (Jn 3:16-18, 36). God, by his grace, declares us to be righteous in his sight only through faith in his Son, Jesus Christ (Rom 3:21-28; 4:18-5:2; Gal 2:16; Phil 3:9). The resurrected Lord Jesus is *the* object of faith for life and salvation (Rom 10:9-10; Eph 2:1-10). We are justified (declared righteous) and saved only through faith alone in Christ alone.

### **Conclusion**

The Bible gives consistent and clear witness to the exclusivity of Christ for salvation. Jesus is the only person who can give salvation, the work of Christ is the only ground of salvation, and we can be saved only through faith alone in Christ alone.

Therefore, to say that "Jesus is not the only way, but he is the best way" is to oppose the message of the apostles, to contradict the witness of Jesus to himself, to deny the teaching of God's inspired word (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pt 1:20-21), and thereby to dispute Jesus' testimony regarding the authoritative truth of Scripture (Mt 5:18; Jn 17:17).

Hence, if we confess, "Jesus is Lord," we must also affirm, "Jesus is the only way." To affirm the exclusivity of Christ for salvation is not an arrogant insistence upon our own way, but a humble submission to God's way (Mt 7:13-14).

Continued from page 6

## *I've Been Thinking about . . . the Exclusivity of Christ*

One might object, "What about people who have never heard the gospel of Christ?" In creation, God has revealed his attributes, eternal power, and divine nature to everyone (Rom 1:20). In human conscience, God has revealed his moral law to everyone (Rom 2:14-15). To those who respond positively to God's revelation of himself in creation and conscience, God can send the gospel of Christ, that they may have opportunity to put their faith in Christ and thereby be saved (Acts 10:1-48; 17:22-34).

Jesus is the only way of salvation, the only path to God. Our first response is to put our faith in Christ, turning to him in repentance and receiving him in our hearts (Mk 1:15; Jn 1:12; 6:28-29; Acts 16:29-31; Rom 3:22). Our second response is to tell the good news of Jesus to others, so that they might put their faith alone in Christ alone, for "faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom 10:17 NASB).

Exalted, praised, honored, adored, and glorified be the name of Jesus, for "there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12 NIV).

---

Continued from page 3

## Thoughts from a Student Pastor

This passage goes on. It says that even though the righteous fall seven times, **he rises again**. Did you get that? **We rise again!!** You see, that comment about "Jesus rescuing me" comes into play. For Jesus to rescue us we need to be in need of rescuing. When that friend continually talks behind your back and betrays trust, you are hurt, broken down. You don't have to stay there though, you can rise again! You remember how last month was about Christ's power? Well, this month that power is what we need to rise again!

Proverbs lays it out very clear the hope we have in this life when it comes to brokenness caused by other people. When you continually get cut down at work because of your faith, rise again. When your best-friend betrays your trust and shares your deepest secret, rise again! It's not going to be easy, scripture affirms that. It's possible though!

For this truth to really hit home we have to allow it to hit home. So many times we walk away thinking "oh man, I really like what he/she said, that hit home for me!" How many times do we allow that truth to penetrate our lives and bring change?

I will leave you with those thoughts. I hope that God continues to work in your life through the community of CCC, scripture, and in your personal conversations with Him. You and I both know God is at work, do we believe it though?

Daily making a choice to believe,

Pastor Zach Marino

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
						<b>1</b> <u>8:00am</u> Joint Comm. Meeting
<b>2</b> <u>9:30-10:45am</u> Worship Service  <u>5:00pm</u> Prayer  <u>6:30pm</u> College Ministry	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> <u>3:00pm</u> Jr. High Bible Study <u>7:00-9:00pm</u> Congregational Care Commission <u>7:00-9:00pm</u> Property Com- mission Meeting	<b>5</b> <u>1:00pm</u> Sr. High Girls Study  <u>6:00pm</u> Sr. High Guys Study  <u>6:30pm</u> Worship Team	<b>6</b> <u>12:00-1:15pm</u> Men's Bible Study	<b>7</b> <u>6:00-7:30am</u> Men's Group	<b>8</b> <u>6:00am</u> Journeymen Leader Team Meeting
<b>9</b> <u>9:30-10:45am</u> Worship Service  <u>5:00pm</u> Prayer  <u>6:30pm</u> College Ministry	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> <u>3:00pm</u> Jr. High Bible Study	<b>12</b> <u>1:00pm</u> Sr. High Girls Study <u>6:00pm</u> Sr. High Guys Study <u>Time TBA</u> Worship Team Practice	<b>13</b> <u>12:00-1:15pm</u> Men's Bible Study	<b>14</b> <u>6:00-7:30am</u> Men's Group	<b>15</b> <u>7:30am</u> Journeymen Breakfast
<b>Camp E.D.G.E. - Vacation Bible School 6:30-8:30pm</b>						
<b>16</b> <u>9:30-10:45am</u> Worship Service <u>5:00pm</u> Prayer <u>6:30pm</u> College Ministry  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;">Rock the River Youth Event</div>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> <u>3:00pm</u> Jr. High Bible Study  <u>6:30pm</u> <b>Elder Meeting</b>	<b>19</b> <u>1:00pm</u> Sr. High Girls Study  <u>6:00pm</u> Sr. High Guys Study  <u>6:30pm</u> Worship Team	<b>20</b> <u>12:00-1:15pm</u> Men's Bible Study	<b>21</b> <u>6:00-7:30am</u> Men's Group	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b> <u>9:30-10:45am</u> Worship Service  <u>5:00pm</u> Prayer  <u>6:30pm</u> College Ministry	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> <u>3:00pm</u> Jr. High Bible Study	<b>26</b> <u>1:00pm</u> Sr. High Girls Study  <u>6:00pm</u> Sr. High Guys Study  <u>6:30pm</u> Worship Team Practice	<b>27</b> <u>12:00-1:15pm</u> Men's Bible Study	<b>28</b> <u>6:00-7:30am</u> Men's Group	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> <u>9:30-10:45am</u> Worship Service  <u>5:00pm</u> Prayer  <u>6:30pm</u> College Ministry	<b>31</b>					