

## *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 affirmation of all people’s right to truth claims to the pernicious affirmation of all people’s truth claims as right. 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.

### **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 2:24; 3:18). The Apostle Peter affirms, “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Pt 1:18-19 NIV). The Apostle John avers, “He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 Jn 2:2 ESV).

**“Are we Blessed? Absolutely!”**

*Associate Pastor of Ministry Advancement & Adult Ministries*

**Howard Lundeen**

*“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the Heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.” Eph. 1:3*

Ephesians 1:3-10 describes how God in His grace has lavished upon us many spiritual blessings in Christ. In this article I would like to think of some ways we are blessed by one another. In particular, have you thought about how blessed we are to be part of a community like our church family?

Yesterday during our first service I was refreshed because the daughters of Tim & Becky Dennis decided they wanted to bless their mother on her birthday by singing a song for her. They chose to sing the song during our first service and it proved to be a blessing not only to Becky, but to everyone present. I know God used the music to speak to my heart! Later, as I was thinking about it, I thought about all that was necessary for this event to happen - there were equipment and skills needed. I had to thank God for: the wonderful piano that provided the music; the musical ability of Kjerstin to play the piano; the vocal talent of she and her sisters to sing; the sound system that enabled us to hear; and the people who faithfully man the sound booth so we can enjoy the advantages of modern technology. All of these contributed in making this one event so special. (Speaking of our sound booth people, they are a tremendous blessing because they have the skills to make electronic equipment work properly! If you enjoy helping with media equipment, I know we can always use more volunteers.) When we think about our church community, we must acknowledge that we are blessed by everyone who attends our church. Everyone who comes is gifted and talented in some way, and when we are serving, using these gifts and talents, it is a joy to us and a blessing to others. I know my life is enriched by the diversity, skills, and knowledge each person brings into our church family.

Last night we began this fall’s “Sunday Night Life” session. We started a 6-week DVD series entitled, “*not a fan*”. Think how fortunate we are to have excellent Bible teaching proclaiming God’s truth so readily available in different formats. We are blessed! I know the vast majority of those who attended were impacted by the truth and challenges they heard. When we broke down into small groups, we were spiritually and emotionally enriched by hearing the thoughts and insights of others, and by simply enjoying the love and fellowship of one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

As a member of the Adult Discipleship Commission, who is responsible for Sunday Night Life, I know all the members of the commission cannot thank everyone who contributes to the success of a ministry enough. We are especially grateful for all who volunteered to help with childcare during the evening sessions of “*not a fan*”. In a broader sense, all of you - youth and adults - who are helping with childcare during SNL or at other times, are a great blessing. We thank the Lord for you and your faithful service to families with children.

I believe our vision of bringing the good news of Christ to Waseca, the surrounding communities, and the world is a blessing. We speak of it as our “away game” and it is extremely exciting seeing how God is providing and moving us forward. Praise God for His leading and vision!

Even though I have singled out only a few, all of you - youngest to oldest, truly are gifts from God to those of us who call Christ Community Church home. You are special, valued and definitely a wonderful blessing to our church family. If we want to be encouraged, we should take a few minutes (or hours) and start listing on a piece of paper ways God has blessed us and how we have seen His blessing upon our church. We will be blessed even more!!

*Pastor Howard*

*P.S. – If anyone knows the whereabouts of the curriculum series entitled “H2O” or “Defining Moments”, please let me know. Currently we are not able to locate them.*

## Thoughts from a Youth Pastor

By: Zach Marino

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Last month I introduced the topic of my Cornerstone articles for the next few months. They are based on a re-writing of a Psalm that my dad did a long time ago. I found it in his *One Year Bible* that was given to me before I moved down to Waseca. I am taking this creation line by line and last month it was about the Lord never giving up on us. No matter what we were going through He was always going to be there because He has a plan, a good pleasing and perfect plan. This month we'll take the next line and discuss it a little.

“He is patient with me as I make weak efforts at living for Him.” This line is short but packed with so much passion and sacrifice. God is passionate towards us. Just think about what it takes to be patient with somebody? Can you think of that person that really just drives you nuts? That person that just knows how to get underneath your skin in a matter of seconds? That one person who at any moment can push your panic button and freak you right out? That person who, after all the times you tell them, still decides to not take your advice and suffers the consequences? All those examples are human, real-life situations. We all can pick out somebody for one or all of those scenarios. However, the one that relates to God the most is the last one. God's commands aren't just “advice” but rather, commands. If we publicly confess to being a Follower of Jesus, we need to show that through our actions and words. However, having a clear understanding of God's expectations we still manage somehow to mess things up. That's where God's patience comes into play. Since God is all knowing, He knows that we will mess up time and time again because of our sin nature. However in his omniscience, He chooses to be patient with us, day after day. The other way patience could be interpreted is grace, God giving us what we don't deserve. We live in God's grace because we need it!

We need God's grace because we can only “make weak efforts at living for Him.” In our weakness His strength is demonstrated, and thus He is glorified. “But he said to me, ‘My **grace** is sufficient for you, for my power is **made perfect** in weakness’ (2 Cor. 12:9a). God's patience, God's grace is big enough for our weak efforts. That means there isn't a certain point we get to where we have drained God's patience because of our weak efforts and failings. God's patience is a never-ending well that He draws up out of and pours over us ever day, for the rest of our lives.

How should this impact us? Well, first, it's not about you. If you want to grow closer to God and experience his presence in your life, learn to live in God's grace. When you mess up, sincerely repent and trust that God's grace has covered you, giving you the ability to move on in your walk with the Lord. Secondly, daily give thanks to the Lord for his patience with you. Don't take that for granted. Once we do, we turn the focus to ourselves and off God.

You know what the first trademark of Godly love is? “Love is patient...” God is demonstrating His love for us through being patient. Let's take our experience of God's patience and make sure to share that with others. Share the gospel through patience, it's a small way yet speaks volumes!

Pastor Zach

# **MAKS** *(Moms And Kids)*

Fall is in the air and it is time to get back in the routine!

MAKS is a moms & kids group that meets the **1st & 3rd Tuesday** of each month in the Fireside Room from **10am to noon**. There is no cost to attend. Meetings are geared toward mothers with small children at home; but all are welcomed and encouraged to attend. It is a blessed time to relax, unwind and enjoy spending time working and learning together as mothers. Then, we have the benefit of a meal together while our children are well cared for and having fun.

Whether you have come in the past or are new to MAKS, be sure to put us on your calendar and relax with a little "mom time."

## **October 4th - Education on Special Needs Children**

Deb Parkinson will be sharing information that will educate and help inform all families. Please come and enjoy the company of other mothers as Deb shares personal experiences and valuable information.

## **October 18th - Mumpkins!**

Using pumpkins and mums we will make a great centerpiece for your fall decorating or dining table.



**Come prepared to relax, laugh & meet other moms.**

**Our leaders this year will be Stacy Dufault, Deb Parkinson, Nina Williams, Lisa Cage, Stacy Anazagasty, Melissa Sexton & Aimee Miller. Please contact any one of us with any questions.**



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*A heart for God and you*

## Sunday Worship Events

<b><u>First Service:</u> 8:00 - 9:15am</b>
<b><u>Fellowship:</u> 9:15 - 9:30am</b>
<b><u>Sunday School:</u> 9:30 - 10:30am</b>
<b><u>Second Service:</u> 10:45am - 12pm</b>
<b><u>Prayer Meeting:</u> 5:00 - 6:00pm</b>

**Staffed  
office  
hours**

<u>Day</u>	<u>Volunteer</u>	<u>Secretary</u>
Monday	9:30 - Noon	Noon - 5:00
Tuesday	=====	9:00 - 5:00
Wednesday	9:30 - Noon	Noon - 5:00
Thursday	=====	9:00 - 5:00
Friday	=====	9:00 - 4:00

### **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.**





## WOMEN'S MINISTRY

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**FALL RETREAT at CAMP VICTORY!!**

**“Transforming Power of Prayer”**

DVD series by Stormie Omartian

**September 30-October 1**

**\$50.00**

*Come and experience lots of fun, fellowship  
and the transforming power of prayer!!*

Register at the Information Booth!

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**Women of Faith  
October 21-22**



## MISSIONS BUZZ



### Going to Ghana!



*Rhonda Johnson has all the supplies she  
is able to take with her to Ghana.*

**Thank you for your loving generosity!**  
If you were unable to help in this way but  
would like to contribute to the compas-  
sion ministry of ASON in Ghana or to  
help rescue Bibles, financial donations are  
accepted. See Rhonda for further details.

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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, imperishable, 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). The Apostle Paul connects Jesus' death and resurrection in their saving efficacy by stating, "He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification" (Rom 4:25 NIV).

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 declared 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). Through the pen of the Apostle John, the Lord himself makes this clear: "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (Jn 3:36 NKJV). 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 way, but a humble submission to God's way (Mt 7:13-14).

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).

# OCTOBER 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						<b>1</b>
<b>2</b> <u>8:00-9:15am</u> Worship Service <u>9:30-10:30am</u> Sunday School <u>10:45-12:00</u> Worship Service <u>5:00pm</u> Prayer <u>6:30pm</u> "Not a Fan"	<b>3</b> <u>10:00am</u> Women's Bible Study <u>12:30pm</u> Women's Ministries Mtg <u>6:30pm</u> Precepts	<b>4</b> <u>10:00-Noon</u> MAKS <u>7:00pm</u> Congr. Care Commission <u>7:00pm</u> Property Comm.	<b>5</b> <u>6:00-7:30pm</u> AWANA <u>7:30-9pm</u> Youth Group	<b>6</b> <u>6:00-7:30am</u> Men's Group <u>12:00-1:15pm</u> Men's Study <u>6:15-8:30pm</u> Worship Team <u>7:00pm</u> Women's Study	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> <u>6:00-7:30am</u> Journey Men Leaders Mtg.
<b>9</b> <u>8:00-9:15am</u> Worship Service <u>9:30-10:30am</u> Sunday School <u>10:45-12:00</u> Worship Service <u>5:00pm</u> Prayer <u>6:30pm</u> "Not a Fan"	<b>10</b> <u>10:00am</u> Women's Bible Study <u>6:30pm</u> Precepts <u>6:30pm</u> Outreach Com.	<b>11</b> <u>7:00pm</u> Children's Commission	<b>12</b> <u>6:00-7:30pm</u> AWANA <u>7:30-9pm</u> Youth Group	<b>13</b> <u>6:00-7:30am</u> Men's Group <u>12:00-1:15pm</u> Men's Study <u>6:15-8:30pm</u> Worship Team <u>7:00pm</u> Women's Study	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> <u>8:00-9:15am</u> Worship Service <u>9:30-10:30am</u> Sunday School <u>10:45-12:00</u> Worship Service <u>5:00pm</u> Prayer <u>6:30pm</u> "Not a Fan"	<b>17</b> <u>10:00am</u> Women's Bible Study <u>1:00pm</u> Quilt Group <u>6:30pm</u> Precepts	<b>18</b> <u>10:00-Noon</u> MAKS <u>6:30pm</u> Elder Board Meeting	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> <u>6:00-7:30am</u> Men's Group <u>12:00-1:15pm</u> Men's Study <u>6:15-8:30pm</u> Worship Team <u>7:00pm</u> Women's Study	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <i>Youth Fall Fling at Camp Shamineau through Sunday</i> </div>
<b>23</b> <u>8:00-9:15am</u> Worship Service <u>9:30-10:30am</u> Sunday School <u>10:45-12:00</u> Worship Service <u>5:00pm</u> Prayer <u>6:30pm</u> "Not a Fan"	<b>24</b> <u>10:00am</u> Women's Bible Study <u>6:30pm</u> Precepts	<b>25</b> <u>6:30pm</u> Worship Commission <u>7:00pm</u> Adult Discipleship Comm.	<b>26</b> <u>6:00-7:30pm</u> AWANA <u>7:30-9pm</u> Youth Group	<b>27</b> <u>6:00-7:30am</u> Men's Group <u>12:00-1:15pm</u> Men's Study <u>6:15-8:30pm</u> Worship Team <u>7:00pm</u> Women's Study	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> <u>8:00-9:15am</u> Worship Service <u>9:30-10:30am</u> Sunday School <u>10:45-12:00</u> Worship Service <u>5:00pm</u> Prayer <u>6:00pm</u> 21 Laws	<b>31</b> <u>6:30pm</u> Precepts					