

## “There Are Many Ways To God”–MythBusters (2 of 4)

We’re in a series called, “**MythBusters**” where we’re exploding a few of the spiritual myths that people buy into when it comes to God, religion, and Christianity.

As our key verse for this series is found in 2 Timothy 4:3-4 (p. 915) where we read, “*For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. They will reject the truth and chase after myths.*” 2 Timothy 4:3-4 (NLT) The Apostle Paul writes and says that some people “*can’t handle the truth,*” and search after anyone who will pacify their mind and heart with teaching that sounds like the truth, but is really far from it.

Some people want a “spiritual fix” that makes them “feel good” but in the end it doesn’t make the good. Some want to have their selfish desires fed and their behaviors approved, but not have their hearts cleansed and their lives truly changed.

Today I want us to look at a Myth that simply says, “***There Are Many Ways To God.***”

Now, this has to do with the most radical thing that Jesus ever said. And Jesus said a lot of outrageous things. This is the guy who got up and said “*You’ve got to lose your life to save it.*” He said, “*You’ve got to love your enemies... Pray for those who persecute you... it’s better to give than to receive... the meek shall inherit the earth.*” He said all kinds of amazing things.

But by far the most outrageous thing Jesus ever said, and by the way, the most politically incorrect words ever to come from the lips of Jesus are found in John 14:6 where he said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.*” John 14:6 (NLT)

What’s strange to me is that today you can talk about God anywhere. You can talk about God on Oprah. You can talk about spirituality. You can talk about karma.

You can talk about all these different things, but you can’t talk about Jesus. You talk about Jesus and everybody freaks out—even our schools and our courthouses have outlawed Jesus.

Maybe you’re investigating Christianity and checking it out today. Or maybe you’ve been a follower of Jesus for a long time and for you this statement of Jesus is one that you kind of winced at. You know that if somebody who’s not a Christian confronts you with why He makes this outrageous statement, you’re not quite so sure what you would say.

Let me start right off by saying that I believe that Jesus was telling the truth when He said this. And I’ve come to the conclusion that He said this not out of arrogance but out of great compassion. I believe the closer we study this statement that He made, the more sense it makes.

In fact, I believe this single sentence is one of the most important things Jesus ever said!

So why is this statement so controversial? I think it’s controversial because this statement strikes at the heart of three great myths about religion and Christianity. So I thought it would be a good idea to address these myths this weekend. ***The first myth is this...***

### **Myth #1: All Religions Are Basically The Same**

When you get right down to it, when you strip away all the surface level distinctions, when you get them down to their essentials, all religions basically teach the same thing. So it doesn’t matter which one that you believe. All spiritual paths, in other words, lead up the mountain to God in one way or another. *Right?*

Yet with this one outlandish statement, Jesus Christ boldly takes Christianity and He puts it in a separate class by itself. If Jesus was right, then the reality is this:

### **Reality #1: Christianity Cannot Be Reconciled Other Religions**

The uniqueness of Christianity is rooted in the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. He is unlike any other religious leader who ever walked the planet. Listen to the difference between what other religious leaders say and what Jesus says.

Look at Islam, Judaism, and Christianity as an example (Abraham as the core). Polar opposites!

As I’ve studied world religions through the years, what I found is that all religions other than Christianity are basically based on the idea of people doing something through their struggling and through their striving to somehow earn the good favor of God. **(Show Wall Chart)**

You see the difference? There are drastic and irreconcilable differences between Christianity on the one hand and all other belief systems on the other hand.

Jesus Christ is God's method to reach people with His love. Our sinfulness separates us from God and no one can earn their way into heaven. So, out of his love for us, Jesus Christ became our substitute and paid the penalty for the sin so that we wouldn't have to. And when we believe this and receive his forgiveness, then we become reconciled with God forever.

Acts 4:12 says, *"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) That's what Christianity says. To put it simply, you can spell the difference between religion and Christianity this way:

- **All Religions Are Spelled "D O"** Why? Because they all fundamentally teach that people have to *do* something, some sort of religious ritual, some sort of way to make themselves morally O.K. to try to please God. The problem is nobody knows how many good things they have to do in order to please God. It's like you are a sales person and your boss comes to you and says, *"I'm going to fire you unless you meet your quota but I'm not going to tell you what your quota is."* So you go out and sell, sell, sell because you don't know how much you have to do to meet that quota. It's the same thing. Every other world religion says you've got to *do* something to make yourself acceptable to God, but there's no assurance of salvation.

- **Christianity Is Spelled "D O N E"** Christianity says you can never do enough to earn your way into heaven. Jesus Christ has *done* what we could never *do*. He lived the perfect sinless life and He went to the cross to pay for the sins of the world. And remember what He said just before He died on the cross. He said, "It is finished." The sins of the world had been paid for.

The Bible says in Titus 3:5, *"He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit."* Titus 3:5 (NLT) And all that's left is to have that applied to your life—to receive His free gift of forgiveness and grace and mercy.

***So other religions are irreconcilable with Christianity in terms of how you become reconciled with God. The second myth is this...***

### **Myth #2: All Religions Have Equal Claims On The Truth**

So Christianity is different than other religions. So what! It's still one philosophy among many. It's as valid as any other religious systems. Even if there are some differences, they all have equal claims on the truth. You have your truth. I have my truth. They're all true. *Right?*

Now, this has a certain amount of appeal to us because we have the right to believe whatever we want to believe. But some people make the mistaken assumption that just because you believe something to be true, it is true. And that's just not the case.

Do you know that you could go out after today's message and start your own religious group? You and a few friends could get together and decide what you like and what you don't like. You could be approved for non-profit status and even be classified as a church group. You could write your own beliefs down and sing your own songs. You could open your doors and invited others to join you. You could say whatever you wanted to about life, death and the pressing issues of today. You could be put in the newspaper and phone book and on the internet.

But would that make what you say true? Sure you would be protected under our Constitution, but would you be on equal par with other religions? You could even stand up before your people and proclaim that you were *"the way, the truth and the life. That no one could get to Heaven without you."* But would that make it true? Could you back it up?

So here's the question: How do we know that Jesus was telling the truth? The reality is this:

### **Reality #2: Only Jesus Can Back Up His Claims**

Let me quickly mention four of Jesus credentials to back up his claims (**Answering The Tough Ones Book**):

1. **Jesus Fulfilled Prophecies:** Jesus Christ is the only one in the history of the world to fulfill hundreds of ancient prophecies that were written hundreds of years before his birth.

2. **Jesus Had No Sin:** He validated His claim by His character. The more his disciples go to know him, the more they could say, "In Him is no sin."

3. **Jesus Performed Miracles:** He validated His claim by performing miracles. He did them in broad daylight. He did them in front of skeptics and cynics.

4. **Jesus Died And Was Resurrected:** Jesus Christ fulfilled His own prediction and three days after He was put to death

he rose from the dead. And He was seen by more than 500 eyewitnesses. Who else but the Son of God could spend three days in a tomb and then come forward and establish that He had returned to life.

Just a few weeks after Jesus was put to death and resurrected, one of His disciples named Peter told a huge crowd, *“People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus the Nazarene by doing powerful miracles, wonders, and signs through him, as you well know.”* Acts 2:22 (NLT) those people looked at him and said, *“We know you’re telling the truth. We knew Jesus too. We saw it. We know that that’s true. And we have put to death the Messiah.”* And 3,000 of them that day turned away from their sins and put their trust in Jesus Christ and the church was born.

Years later, another of Jesus followers, the Apostle Paul, defended his belief in Jesus and the only way to God. He said, *“And King Agrippa knows about these things. I speak boldly, for I am sure these events are all familiar to him, for they were not done in a corner!”* Acts 26:26 (NLT)

Here’s the point: Everyone knew what Jesus had done. Whether it was during his lifetime or afterward, no one questioned that He had actually lived, ministered, or performed miracles. It was and remains a fact of history that Jesus was who he said he was. ***The third myth is this...***

### **Myth #3: Christians Are Being Arrogant When They Believe In Jesus**

I’d agree that Christians were being arrogant if the truth of the matter were there were many ways to get to heaven and we were just saying, *“Ours is the best.”* But that’s not what we’re saying. We’re saying that we’ve all sinned and somebody has to pay the penalty for our sins. Who’s going to make the payment? You—for all eternity? Or believe that Jesus paid for your sins?

### **Reality #3 It’s Not Arrogant To Act Upon The Evidence**

Christians aren’t being narrow-minded when they say there is only one way to the Father.

The Bible tells us very clearly as Christians we’re not to be arrogant in what we believe. We’re to be humble. 1 Peter 3 says, *“Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.”* 1 Peter 3:15-16 (NLT) What that means is all Christians should be able to tell people about Jesus Christ and why it is that He is their hope for eternal life. And we’re to do it in a *“gentle and respectful way.”*

Ghandi’s famous quote: *“Oh, I don’t reject your Christ. I love your Christ. It’s just that so many of you Christians are so unlike your Christ.”* **ILLUS:** Ghandi’s experience with Christians & Church.

### **ILLUS: Cancer: Deny, Delay, Diet or Doctor?**

Would anyone accuse you of being narrow minded if you trusted the doctor—a doctor with credibility and credentials—when he or she said there’s only one way to cure your life?

The truth of the matter is we all have a terminal illness called sin. The reason why Christians cling to Jesus Christ is because He is the great physician. He’s the only one who has the medicine that can cure. We can try to scrub away our sins by doing good but it’s not going to work. We can ignore it and hope it all goes away. But it won’t disappear. We can sincerely think there is another way of dealing with it. But we will be sincerely wrong. The truth is, only the great physician offers the treatment that will erase the stain of our sin. And when we turn to Jesus Christ, as that one way, it’s not being narrow-minded. We’re acting with the evidence.

That’s why Jesus could say 2,000 years ago, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”* **PRAY**