

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
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Sermon Title: Two Non-Compromising Beliefs about Jesus, John 13-14

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INTRODUCTION: If you don't like a company, or a doctor, or a service provider, or even your car, you can go online and express your irritation. People tend to be bold when communicating through a keyboard and computer screen.

ILLUSTRATION: The other day, I looked up a product I was considering buying, and the forum allowed people to rate the product up to five stars — five being the best. By each star rating, a person can post comments. I noticed the product I wanted had mostly five stars, but there were some one star ratings. So, I clicked on the one star ratings to read the comments. One of them said, "I ordered the wrong thing." That's interesting because it wasn't the company's fault.

I found a couple of ugly comments on the internet about our church. It was in an online ratings forum. I was bothered because the comments weren't true. Someone was upset about something and went online and just blasted us. I flagged the comments for review and a day or so later, I got a reply from the online ratings forum saying one of the comments did not meet their standards and would be removed while the other one did meet their standards and would remain. There was a number to call for further inquiry. That's all I needed.

There's a military term called "strategic patience." I called the number and decided to be patient because I knew this would take a while. A man answered the phone, and I told him who I was. I told him I was calling in reference to the inquiry I'd made, so he looked up the record. He asked how he could help me further. I said our church never signed up for reviews — that we were not a business competing for others' patronage, that we had particular beliefs, and if people are offended by our beliefs, they could easily go online and say disparaging things for all to read. Then, I said I wanted my church to be removed completely from the ratings forum. He hesitated, and I asked whether the law required us to be listed on his website. He said he understood what I was requesting, and he put me on hold. A few minutes

later, he came back on the phone and said if he removed our name from his site; it would also remove our free ad on yp.com. I said, "Please remove us from yp.com. We do not want the free ad. We never asked for it in the first place." Within a few days, we disappeared from the webpage.

This got me thinking about the world we live in — people going online and rating churches. Most people don't even know why the Church exists. I'd say most Christians don't have a Biblical view of why the Church exists, and many have no idea about our particular beliefs. So, think about it. A preacher could be preaching the truth of the Bible, and an atheist could go online and give the Church a poor rating.

Folks, of course I want us to be a welcoming and friendly church. But, much more than that, we've got to be people of the Bible, even if that puts us in an unpopular light.

This got me thinking about our particular beliefs as Christians and as Baptists. I want to spend some time this morning explaining those things.

OVERVIEW: My two points in this message are:

1. We believe Jesus is the only way to God.
2. Jesus is the only way to God, regardless of what anyone else says.

First, WE BELIEVE JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY TO GOD.

SCRIPTURE: John 14:6 ⁶*Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

EXPLANATION: This is a hotly disputed passage of scripture. Some say Jesus meant something else. I really don't buy that because of the simple and plain language with which Jesus spoke and because of the setting where he spoke.

SCRIPTURE: John 13: 31-38 ³¹*When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. ³²If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.*

³³ *“My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.*

³⁴ *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

³⁶ *Simon Peter asked him, “Lord, where are you going?”*

Jesus replied, “Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.”

³⁷ *Peter asked, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”*

³⁸ *Then Jesus answered, “Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!*

EXPLANATION: In this passage, Jesus was having a private time with his disciples.

SCRIPTURE: John 14:1-11 ¹ *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ² My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going.”*

⁵ *Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”*

⁶ *Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”*

⁸ *Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”*

⁹ *Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the*

Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves.

EXPLANATION: Here's a question I have for you. If, at a tender moment, a child asked you a question, would you give the child an answer you did not mean? No, you would not. At such a tender moment with his disciples, Jesus made it clear he was the Way.

Second, JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY TO GOD, REGARDLESS OF WHAT ANYONE ELSE SAYS.

SCRIPTURE: I Timothy 2:5 ⁵*For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

EXPLANATION: We're living in a day when people allow their feelings to dictate truth. Just because I feel something is true, does not mean it is true. It would be difficult to let go if you discovered you'd believed a lie all your life. If your well-meaning parents told you something and believed it to be true because their parents taught them, then it would be really hard to let go if you found out it was all a lie.

ILLUSTRATION: Last July, I told you about a group of Native American Indians called the Havasupai who live in the Grand Canyon. DNA testing proved their ancestors were from Asia and they had only been in the Grand Canyon for 800 years. This conflicted with their legend, so they sued the university who studied their DNA, citing misuse of their DNA.

The spokesperson for the tribe, Rex Tilousi, said, "When people tell us, 'No, this is not where you are from,' and your own blood says so—it is confusing to us. It hurts the elders who have been telling these stories to our grandchildren."

In other words, they'd rather believe the lie of the legend. It's their business if they want to do that. However, I wonder what would have happened if they had said, "Wow, now we know."

ILLUSTRATION: Through the years, I've heard numerous stories about people coming to faith in Jesus Christ and realizing he's the answer they'd been searching for. But, none really sums it up better than the simple story of a woman in India who was told about Jesus, God's Son, who died for her sins. She said, "I always knew he was out there. Now I know his name."

ILLUSTRATION: I read an article this week about two street preachers in England who were convicted of abuse for stating Jesus was the only way to God. The article said, "*The preachers insisted that they were speaking truth from the Bible, but prosecutor Ian Jackson argued that they cannot proclaim that what they believe is true. "To say to someone that Jesus is the only God is not a matter of truth. To the extent that they are saying that the only way to God is through Jesus, that cannot be a truth," Jackson reportedly said in court.*"

APPLICATION: Back to my earlier statement about my request to the man to remove us from the online forum — we DO have particular beliefs that could be offensive to people. It's not my intention to be offensive. I am just sharing the Bible.

What do YOU believe? You're free to believe what you want. My question "What do YOU believe?" is for you to consider. Keep in mind, eternity knocks at the door all the time. We are only one heartbeat away from eternity. A friend of mine was minding her own business in a car when a semi plowed right into her. She entered eternity right then. She was at the height of her writing and public speaking career.

Do you believe a lie? Did you know it is possible to really believe a lie is the truth? Romans Chapter 1 tells us about people who rebelled against the truth.

SCRIPTURE: Romans 1:25 ²⁵ *They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator — who is forever praised.*

If you are listening today and are uncomfortable with today's message, I understand. The good news is — there is hope! Hope in Jesus!

Listen to this — and listen closely. Jesus is the only way to God, and the Bible talks about that way being a narrow way. But, the great thing is this, and I want you to understand it: the way through Jesus is narrow, but Jesus accepts us as we are. That means he has a broad tolerance or I should say, strategic patience with all people.

Jesus is the only road to heaven, and that may sound closed-minded to you. But, really think about it. There are many roads to Jesus. All of us took a different route to Jesus, and he found us along the way. We can come from all walks of life to Jesus, the gatekeeper of the gate. I was saved as a little boy. Some of you were saved as adults. I was saved at church. Some of you were saved at airports, bars, in boot camp, wherever. All of us are going in different directions on life's path, but Jesus meets us and brings us to the gate of the narrow way.

You see, other religions may not take you as you are. You have to conform, you have to do something. You have to walk a certain path before you are accepted. With Jesus, whatever path you are on, he'll find you and bring you to the gate of the narrow way.

You might be listening this moment coming off a hangover. You might be recovering from a fight. You might simply be a good person sitting on your couch at home watching this program and hearing the truth for the first time.

- The person with the hangover does not have to put on his Sunday best to meet Jesus.
- The person recovering from the fight does not have to be fully recovered to meet Jesus.
- The good person sitting on the couch at home doesn't have to be in church to meet Jesus.

Now, do you see what I mean when I say there are many paths to Jesus? His acceptance is broad and quite open to all. The key is faith and repentance. What comes first — faith or repentance? I believe they come at the same time.

SCRIPTURE: I John 1:9 *If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

SCRIPTURE: Romans 10:9⁹ *If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

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I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

Find me at www.thbc.com Click on sermons or YouTube channel: Pastor Paul Gunn
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Sincerely, Paul Gunn
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