

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021**  
**Glynde Lutheran Church**  
**Sermon on John 14:6**  
**Theme: “I am...the truth”**  
**“Don’t be fooled by the lies of this world**

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***Introduction:***

In this series of messages for last month and today, we are looking at some of my favourite passages from John’s Gospel. We’ve looked at the Samaritan woman at the well in John chapter 4, the man born blind in John chapter 9, and the raising of Lazarus from the dead by Jesus in John chapter 11. This morning we are looking at John chapter 14, where Jesus says those well-known words:

**“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except by me” (14:6).**

You know, we live in a secular world where people *by and large* don’t believe in God, *or even if they say they believe in Him, they live their life as if He doesn’t exist: they are “practical atheists”....* And most are certainly not listening to Jesus, God’s Son, and following him in their life....

The figures bear this out! In fact they are quite startling! Some 40% of Australians say *or infer* that that don’t believe in God, and of the remainder only some 10% or so of Australians worship regularly in a Christian church, and are intent of listening to Jesus, God’s Son. As a result, most people in our society are listening not to Jesus, God’s Son, but to the lies that are commonly promoted by the media and the people around us.... *(See Appendix One)*

This morning, we are going to think about some of the lies that people promote and believe to be true, we are going to listen to what Jesus, *who is “the truth”*, would say in answer to these lies, and then we are going to think how God wants us to answer these lies, *as we try to echo Jesus to the people around us.*

What lies am I talking about? Well, there are any number of lies that are believed to be true by many, *if not most*, people in our society. This morning, I just want to focus on four lies that are often believed to be true by people in Australia and in the Western World as a whole.

### ***Lie Number One***

The first lie that I want to focus on is the lie that “God doesn’t exist”. These days many, many people believe that “science has disproved the existence of God”. A champion of this view is Richard Dawkins, who wrote the book *The God Delusion*. When he came to Adelaide a while back *in September 2013* as part of Adelaide Writers Festival, he attracted heaps and heaps of people....

So what would Jesus say in response to the statement that “there is no such thing as a personal God”? I’d be tempted to answer, “You got to be joking!!” But I don’t think Jesus would answer this way. He would answer *the person who believed this lie to be true* with love. But he’d nevertheless refute very strongly this lie.

Maybe Jesus would say something like:

**How can you doubt the existence of a personal God!? Everything around you points to the existence of a Creator! Look at the birds of air and the flowers of the fields. How did they come into being if God didn’t make them!**

**And listen to the witnesses who speak from the past in the pages of the Old Testament about their experiences of God: they speak with one voice about the God who created us all, and who wants each of us to live in a relationship with Him.**

**And I tell you that the God exists and that He loves you. If you don’t believe in a personal God because of all these other things, believe because I tell you that it is so.**

Jesus would confront a person with the reality of the existence of God, and then go on to challenge that person to make up his or her mind as to who he, *Jesus*, is.

And what should we say to someone who doubts the existence of God. We should say something very similar to what I have imagined Jesus would say. We are called to echo Jesus to the world around us....

In this situation, I tend to try and confront people with the reality that there is a personal God, a God who created everything, by pointing to the world around us and asking how it all came into being. I point out to people that there are only two possibilities for everything in the universe, *for the mass-energy that exists*: either it has always existed in one form or another *and I haven't known too many people to argue for this first option*, or it was created, *and that second possibility assumes the existence of a Creator God.*

And furthermore, I point to the order and design in everything. I often point to my arm, for example and talk about the way that the bones and the muscles, and the blood vessels and nerves are carefully arranged. I talk about how the order and design in all this points to the existence of a Creator, *of God...*

And I point out that if you go down to the microscopic level, again the order and design in our cells, *and particularly the way DNA is put together*, point us directly to the existence of God (*cf. Appendices Two and Three re Anthony Flew, "There is a God: how the world's most notorious atheist changed by mind", p. 127, 129, plus diagrams in Google Image*)..

Furthermore, just like Jesus, I would point to the experience of people down through the ages, and talk about my experience of God, and my conclusion with the writer of Psalm 14:

**The fool says in his heart,**  
**"There is no God"** (*Psalm 14:1*).

## *Lie Number Two*

The second lie that I want to focus on this morning is the lie: “It doesn’t matter what you believe, as long as you are sincere”, or to put it another way, “All religions and all beliefs are just different ways of making to the same place, *whether you call that place heaven or nirvana or whatever*”.

I remember a leaflet that I once had with a picture of Mt. Fuji on the front of it. Apparently, there are many ways up to the top of Mt. Fuji, *and this is what most people believe with regard to the way to God: that there are many ways to God, and that all that matters is that you are “sincere” in your belief.*

This lie is believed to be true by huge numbers of people in our society. In our society, and in the Western world as a whole, “tolerance is perhaps the most prized virtue” (*Stott, Contemporary Christian, p. 321*). And it seems to be eminently tolerant to say, “It doesn’t matter what you believe, you’ll make it there in the end!”

What would Jesus have to say to a person who makes this statement or who believes this statement. I think that Jesus would answer something along these lines:

**You know, it does matter what you believe! My Father sent me to suffer and to die for you, in order to make it possible for you to be forgiven by Him and to live in a child-Father relationship with Him.**

**I took on myself the punishment and the judgement that you deserve from God for your sins. And now I offer to you the benefits of all that I did for you. There is only one way to receive God’s forgiveness and to live as God’s child, both now and in eternity: and that’s by trusting in me as your Saviour: “I am the way...!”**

Listen to some of the things that Jesus said when he was here on earth:

**My Father has given me all things. No one knows the Son except**

**the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all of you who are tired of carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest (Matt. 11:27-28)**

**For even the Son of Man did not come to be served; he came to serve and to give his life to redeem many people (Mark 10:45).**

**I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never ever die...**

**I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me (John 11:25f; 14:6).**

So, what should we say when we are confronted by this lie *that it doesn't matter what you believe, and that all religions will lead you to God?* Again, we should echo Jesus in all that we say....

We can also point out to a person who believes this lie to be true that he or she would never believe this to be true in any other area of human endeavour. Who would dare to say, for example, that what you write down on an examination paper doesn't matter, as long you sincerely believe it to be true!

It's ridiculous! What you believe does matter!

And we could also point out that it is equally "not very sensible" to state that all religions are the same and all will get you there in the end.

Because the different religions don't even agree on such basic things as whether there is a God or not, or whether there is a heaven or not....

And Christianity and the other religions are diametrically opposed when it comes to talking about how to get there: other religions say that "you get there" by doing good things, whereas Christianity says that "you get there" as a free gift from God.

We can say to people: “Who are you going to believe: those who maintain this lie that what you believe doesn’t matter, OR Jesus, the Son of God, who says that there is only one way to have relationship with God, *and that’s by receiving the benefits of what he did for us all on the cross, by trusting in him as your Saviour.*

And we can point out that what Jesus says rings true as you read what he says... And not only that, God affirmed Jesus and what he said by empowering him to do miracle after miracle (*“signs” in John’s Gospel*) and supremely by raising Jesus from the dead on that first Easter Sunday!

### ***Lie Number Three***

The third lie that I want to look at this morning is the lie which states that “the purpose of life is to be happy”. This is a lie that is almost universally believed in the Western world, *even among Christians!* I always remember Ronald Conway’s summary of the philosophy of most Australians in his book *The Great Australian Stupor*. There he writes:

**The whole Australian way of life...is rooted in the equation, Material wealth = Pleasure = Happiness = Reason for Living (p. 65).**

We live in a hedonistic, narcissistic culture.

Now that’s a mouthful!? Or to put it simply, we live in a “me centred” society, where the happiness of “me” is what most people aim for, and see as the purpose of life.

What would Jesus say in response to the claim that “the purpose of life is to be happy”. I think that he would say something like:

**How wrong can you get! Sure, I understand your desire to be happy and to know joy, but happiness and joy are by-products of living your life for others. That’s what life is all about: learning to live your life for others, *and not for yourself.***

**The purpose of life is not to be happy, but to learn to love, and to prepare for eternity. As you follow me and learn from me how**

**to love, you will have life “in all its fullness”, and you will have “joy” (John 10:10;15;11).**

Listen to a couple of the things that Jesus had to say when he was here on earth:

- \* **If anyone wants to come with me, he must forget self, carry his cross, *and in this way* follow me. For whoever wants to save his own life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it (Mark 8:34-35).**
  
- \* **I, your Lord and Teacher, have just washed your feet. You, then, should wash one another’s feet. I have set an example for you, so that you will do just what I have done for you.... And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another (John 13:14-15, 34).**
  
- \* **Jesus answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all you soul, and with all your mind’. This is the most greatest and most important commandment. The second most important commandment is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as you love yourself’. The whole Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets depend on these two commandments” (Matt. 21: 27-40).**

They’re just the tip of the iceberg so far as the things that Jesus had to say about the purpose of life. God’s will for the life of each one of us is that we follow Jesus and learn to love like Jesus. That’s the purpose of life: to learn to love in preparation for eternity.

So what does Jesus want us to say to those who believe that the purpose of life is to be “happy”? Jesus wants us to echo what he says, and to point out *as he would* that living life for yourself doesn’t give life in its fullness. It’s only by following Jesus in a life of love for others that you find joy and contentment as a byproduct of living life for others.

### ***Lie Number Four***

The last lie that I want us to look is the lie: “You can do whatever you want to, as long as it makes you happy”. This lie is closely connected with the last lie, that “the purpose of life is to be happy”. Both lies stem from the “me” centred focus of people in our society.

The lie that “you can do whatever you want to, as long as it makes you happy” can be seen in a whole lot of statements that people generally regard to be true, statements like:

- \* **“You can sleep around with whoever you want to, *male or female*, as long as it makes you happy”**
- \* **“You can divorce your partner if you need to get out of your marriage in order to be fulfilled in yourself”**
- \* **“If your unborn child will diminish your happiness, abort it”**
- \* **“If an elderly, demented parent is a nuisance to your happiness, encourage her to end her life through euthanasia.**

What would Jesus say to this way of thinking: that “you can do whatever you want to, as long as it makes you happy”. I think that he would reply something like this:

**You’ve got it wrong again! Didn’t you hear what I said! The purpose of life is to learn to love, to prepare for eternity.**

**God wants you to be His child, and to live as His child, now and in eternity. Cling to me as your Saviour, follow me, and learn from me how to love. Don’t do anything that will hurt those whom God has placed around you. And if you hurt them, ask for their forgiveness, and then go on striving to love them, *empowered by God’s Spirit who fills you as you follow me.***

**You can’t do just what you want to! To do that is to turn your back on God, and what He wants for your life.**

Listen to some of the things that Jesus had to say about this while he was here on earth:

**“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth’. But now I tell you: do not take revenge on someone who wrongs you. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, let him slap you on the left cheek” (Matt. 5:38-39).**

**“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your friends, hate your enemies’. But now I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be the sons of your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:43-45).**

**“This, then, is how you should pray:**

**Our Father in heaven:**

**May your holy name be honoured;**

**may your Kingdom come;**

**may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us today the food we need.**

**Forgive us the wrongs we have done,**

**as we forgive the wrongs that others have done to us....**

**If you forgive others the wrongs they have done to you, your Father in heaven will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive the wrongs you have done (Matt. 6:14-15)**

**Be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and with what God requires of you (Matt. 6:33).**

Jesus, then, would *if he were physically here with us* courageously refute the lie that we can do whatever we want to, as long as it makes us happy.

And when we are confronted with this lie, we should likewise echo Jesus, and make people realise how shallow and how dangerous it is to live your life making decisions according to what makes you happy.

### *Conclusion:*

So don't be fooled by the lies of this world!

Whenever you wonder about the truth of something that you are told, or that you have thought to be true, go to Jesus and listen to him who is "the truth".

And, like Jesus, don't be afraid to courageously speak "the truth" to those around you. God wants to use *you* to lead your family and your friends to know "the truth". May God bless you as you speak "the truth" to those around you!

### *Appendix (1)*

#### **Irreligion in Australia (Wiki)**

Atheism, agnosticism, scepticism...or general irreligion are increasing in Australia.<sup>[4]</sup> **Post-war Australia has become highly secularised country.<sup>[5]</sup> Religion does not play a major role in the lives of much of the population.<sup>[6]</sup>**

**When asked of their religious affiliation in the 2016 census, 29.6% of Australians (or 6,933,708 people) selected "no religion."** This is more than seven percent higher (and 2,240,546 more people), than in the 2011 census. Additionally in 2016, another 0.5% instead opted to specify their form of irreligion, writing it in under "other," hence resulting in 30.1% of Australians (or just over 7,040,700 people) selecting "no religion."<sup>[1]</sup> **A further 9.6% either did not state a religion, or gave a response that was unclear, meaning that 39.7% of Australians did not expressly state a religious affiliation in the 2016 census.**

### *Appendix (2)*

**Deoxyribonucleic, DNA)** is a molecule composed of two polynucleotide chains that coil around each other to form a double helix carrying genetic instructions for the development, functioning, growth and reproduction of all known organisms and many viruses. DNA and ribonucleic acid (RNA) are nucleic acids. Alongside proteins, lipids and complex carbohydrates

(polysaccharides), nucleic acids are one of the four major types of macromolecules that are essential for all known forms of life.

The two DNA strands are known as polynucleotides as they are composed of simpler monomeric units called nucleotides. Each nucleotide is composed of one of four nitrogen-containing nucleobases (cytosine [C], guanine [G], adenine [A] or thymine [T]), a sugar called deoxyribose, and a phosphate group.... The nitrogenous bases of the two separate polynucleotide strands are bound together, according to base pairing rules (A with T and C with G), with hydrogen bonds to make double-stranded DNA. It is the sequence of these four nucleobases along the backbone that encodes genetic information (*Wiki*)

### ***Appendix (3)***

This in turn leads to the big question: “Can the origins of a system of coded chemistry be explained in a way that makes no appeal whatsoever to the kinds of facts that we otherwise invoke to explain codes and languages” (*p. 127, Antony Flew, There is a God*).

The origin question rises to the top at this point. “The problem of how meaningful or semantic information can emerge spontaneously from the collection of mindless molecules subject to blind and purposeless forces presents a deep conceptual challenge” (*p. 129*)