

**TITLE:** I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE

**TEXT:** JOHN 14:1-7

**SCRIPTURE:** HEBREWS 10:19-22

## **I – WIZARD OF OZ:**

The book by L. Frank Baum came out in September 1900, and it was made into a movie in 1939. Since that time it has been converted into a full color movie and is a staple of American television, being shown at least once every year and usually more. It's so widely known and watched that some of the images and characters have become buzzwords in our culture, such as when I call the "munchkins" down for children's moment. I'm talking of course about "The Wizard of Oz." I know I preached a series on characters a year ago but I think it takes us where we need to go today, so let's follow the road again.

In the movie we have a young Kansas girl named Dorothy, and her little dog Toto, who are sucked up in her house by a tornado. When the wind quits blowing she finds herself in the Land of Oz with the desire to find a way back home to Kansas. She's put on the path to finding her answers when the munchkins tell her to follow the yellow brick road to the Emerald City where the Wizard of Oz can get her back home. She's also given a pair of ruby slippers by the good witch of the north. Along the way she meets companions such as the scarecrow who needs a brain, the tin man who needs a heart and the lion who needs some courage. As they follow the road to find their answers to life they are continually interrupted and interfered with by the evil wicked witch of the west. They finally get to the wizard just to find out he's some old guy hiding behind a curtain with a smoke and light machine.

It turns out all right though when Dorothy discovers the fact she had the power to get home herself the whole time.

## **II – LOOKING FOR OZ:**

It is said that The Wizard of Oz is the greatest and best loved homegrown fairy tale this country has. I think it's continued popularity proves this out. But I don't think it's because it's the best movie or the best story we've been exposed to. Instead I think it's continued popularity has to do with the fact that it reflects our lives.

We are all looking for the answers to life. We all want to know how to get home. We all have problems and we're looking for the one who has the answers. How many of you feel like you've been sucked up by the tornado called life and it's spinning you

around and around and it doesn't look like you'll ever get a break or stop spinning? Even if the storm puts you down you're still left with questions and a journey. As you walk along the path various people cross your path, some without brains, some without courage, and some without hearts and they all affect your life. You continue on your path and find that it isn't an easy road to follow. There are haunted forests along the way where the trees are covered in mortgages, hospital bills, car payments, groceries, and other expenses. If this weren't enough there's the force of evil who sends the flying monkeys of ill health, temptation, addiction, and bad relationships just to name a few to deter you from your journey. Then, if you've followed the wrong path, you get to the end and find some fraud behind the curtain who can't do anything for you anyhow. That to me is the worst thought of all. That I would get to the end of the journey and find out I had followed the wrong road.

I want to know that all my earthly storms didn't matter because the one at the end of the road was able to get me home for all of eternity. That the one at the end of the road didn't hide behind a curtain, but stood there waiting for my arrival and said "welcome home." I want to follow the right road!

### **III – TEXT:**

Not only don't I want to take the wrong road, I don't want you to either. Luckily none of us have to. As we continue to look at the "I AM" sayings of Jesus, we find that he himself tells us which road to take.

#### **John 14:1 - 7 (NLT)**

<sup>1</sup>"Don't be troubled. You trust God, now trust in me. <sup>2</sup>There are many rooms in my Father's home, and I am going to prepare a place for you. If this were not so, I would tell you plainly. <sup>3</sup>When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. <sup>4</sup>And you know where I am going and how to get there."

<sup>5</sup>"No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "We haven't any idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

<sup>6</sup>Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup>If you had known who I am, then you would have known who my Father is. From now on you know him and have seen him!"

This is the last talk Jesus will have with his disciples. He's told them he's going to die, he's washed their feet, he's told them that one of them will betray him, he's eaten supper with them for the last time, and he's even told Peter, the rock, that he won't make it through the night without betraying him. Judas leaves to go and get ready for his part in the Passion, and Jesus gives this last talk to those who remain.

He knows they're troubled, knows they're upset and tells them it will all be okay. They trusted God, so now trust God's Son. He talks calmly and reassuringly as he

tells them his leaving has a purpose. They've been with him for the last three years, but he is going to prepare a place so that they can be with him for all of eternity when they reach the end of the road he's set them on. He knows what he's talking about because the place he's preparing for them is in his hometown, heaven. Then he makes it personal. He tells them when they reach the end of the road, when their journey is over, he will personally come back for them and take them to their new home.

Then our friend doubting Thomas says, no Jesus, we don't know where you're going, we don't know which road you're talking about, we don't know the way to get to the final destination you're talking about.

Jesus tells them, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. The only way to get to God is through me. Pretty much tells us what road we have to be on doesn't it.

Jesus is "THE WAY" to God because only he has intimate knowledge of God, his Father who he lived with in heaven before coming here to save us. He is "THE TRUTH" because he has the perfect power of making life a coherent experience, even in the face of ups and downs. He is "THE LIFE" because death did not defeat him, he defeated death.

You need no other map or directions but this one. Follow the right road...follow Jesus.

#### **IV – WE WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED:**

Jesus is the one and only road that leads to God. If we follow Jesus we will not be disappointed at the end of our journey. We will not find a short old man with smoke and lights trying to impress us. We will find Jesus who is waiting to show us to our new room, and he's not hiding behind a curtain!

In the Temple was a place called the Holy of Holies where the sacred scrolls were kept and where the Ark of the Covenant was kept in the original worship tent built by Moses. Behind this curtain is where the chosen high priest would go to consult with God after going through a ritual of purification so he could appear in front of God without offending him. No one but this high priest could enter. That is until Jesus made the way for us. In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke we read that as Jesus breathed his last, as he gave up his Spirit and commended it into the hands of his heavenly Father, at the moment he died, that curtain which separated mankind from God was ripped in two, from top to bottom. The death of the Son of God opened the curtain for everyone who follows the road of Jesus.

In the passage you heard read from the book of Hebrews this morning you heard that we can boldly enter into the Holy of Holies, into the presence of God because his

blood opened the curtain. And behind this curtain, this sacred curtain, is God himself and we don't have to be afraid of him, we don't have to cower in fear like the lion, or shake until we rattle like the tin man, or run away screaming like the cowardly lion. It says we can enter right into the presence of God with our hearts fully trusting him because Jesus opened the curtain. Jesus is the road to God and if we follow him we will find the truth that only he made the sacrifice we need to allow us to have life everlasting with God.

### **V – GOING HOME:**

The question today is simply this, “ARE YOU ON THE RIGHT ROAD?” Have you found the way? Do you know the truth, that only Jesus can lead you to eternal life with God?

We all came from God and we all want to return to God. That's where our homes truly are. Just like Dorothy, you have always had the ability to get home someday. You don't have to click your heels together, spin around three times, and chant, “There's no place like home, there's no place like home.” All you have to do is say “I believe.”

I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I believe that he is the road I should follow. I believe that he is the way, which will take me into the presence of God. I believe that it isn't a pair of ruby slippers that will get me home, but the red blood of my Savior who died for me. I believe that the yellow brick road I'll walk on is the street of gold in heaven where I'll find the room Jesus has gone to prepare for me, and I believe he'll be there at the end of the road to show me to my room. How about you...do you believe?

AMEN