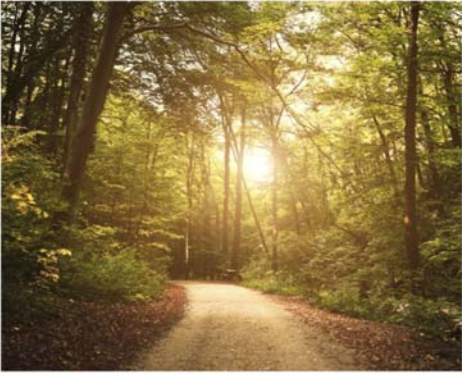


John 14:6: How Is Jesus ‘the Way’?

John 14:6: *Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me.*



On the night before his crucifixion—and just hours before he would begin a night of unjust treatment that would lead to humiliation, beatings and an eventual crucifixion—Jesus invested unhurried and precious hours with his disciples. His aim was to comfort them, as what they were about to witness would shake them all to their very core. Jesus was assuring them of his care for them and his profound loyalty to his Father, as this loyalty would ultimately bring redemption to them and to the whole world. Jesus’ simple statement of his being *the way, the truth, and the life* would be a key to open up their understanding of what their lives would need to look like.

We are going to explore these descriptions in three separate episodes so we can really dig into what Jesus meant.

Grasping how Jesus is *the way* in **John 13** will help us to understand and apply Jesus as *the truth* in **John 14** and then teach us how to appreciate him as *the life* in **John 15**. Not suprisingly, it’s all laid out for us.



Judas has just left the Upper Room, having been revealed as the betrayer.

Jesus will now begin to describe himself as *the way* even before he labels it as such:
John 13:31–32: *31 Therefore when he (Judas) had gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him (Jesus); 32 if God is glorified in him (Jesus), God will also glorify him (Jesus) in Himself (God), and will glorify him immediately.*

Judas leaves to sell the location of Jesus to the enemy, which will, in turn, get Jesus killed. And yet, here Jesus is talking about his own glory and the glory of God! What is glorious about this? It seems exactly the opposite.

The glory and honor spoken of here begins to show us Jesus’ ultimate mission. Judas’ betrayal set in motion Jesus’ persecution and death. His sacrificial death would bring God’s glory.

We might look at this and think, *Wait a minute—Judas is going off to betray Jesus. There is tragedy lurking!* But Jesus sees this as, *Judas is going off to betray me. It is heartbreaking, but this is an opportunity for God’s glory.*

There is always opportunity in the present tragedy if we see things through the eyes of Jesus.



Jesus was going to travel a road of humiliation and crucifixion. He framed the pain and suffering before him as an opportunity for God to be honored in him through his sacrifice. Jesus was going to honor God!

This is a path with a glorious destination, even though the path itself sounds pretty dismal. There is a lot to learn here in terms of Jesus being *the way* when we look at bringing glory to God as an initial step.

Jesus next expressed one of the challenges his followers would face:

John 13:33–35: *33 Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, Where I am going, you cannot come.*

This seems like an odd statement. He is saying, “I am the way, yet where I am going you cannot come...but follow me anyway.” This was a big proclamation! They are going to be separated—*Where I am going, you cannot come.* Jesus was going to honor God, and yet they could not go with him.

Now came their instructions—their learning tools:

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

Even though they couldn’t go where he was going, here is what they would need to do. They needed to learn the basics before going through the more difficult experiences.

- The command for his disciples: *love one another.*
- The command for Jesus: Glorify God even through persecution.

These were different paths for the moment but all part of following Jesus as *the way*.



Even though they’d be separated from him, they were given a new commandment to follow. Jesus’ disciples needed to learn to be like him.

Jesus would next explain the harsh truth of their present experiences.

John 13:36–38: *36 Simon Peter said to him, Lord, where are you going? Jesus answered, Where I go, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow later. 37 Peter said to him, Lord, why can I not follow you right now? I will lay down my life for you. 38 Jesus answered, Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny me three times.*

Jesus had just told them, *Where I am going, you cannot come*, but here are your instructions. Peter asks, *Lord, where are you going?* This is Peter being Peter. There is goodness in the real, strong connection and love Peter felt for his Master.

Jesus explains, *You cannot follow me now; but you will follow later*. Peter wanted to follow him right at that moment.

Peter, along with the rest, needed to learn to love one another. This is why he wasn’t in a position to follow Jesus at that time. He needed to follow the instructions so that he could follow later. We see his anxiousness, like sometimes we get anxious. We want to run ahead to the third or fourth quarter of the race when we’re still at the beginning of the first.

Jesus is teaching Peter to go slowly. He would soon enough have tough experiences, but those experiences would teach him exactly what he needed to know and learn. *Love one another, even as I have loved you* is where they would begin.



And how is Jesus *the way* for us to follow? He was walking the road of voluntary self-sacrifice, and he was teaching his disciples, and us now, to follow him on that road.



How do I personally follow Jesus as “the way”?



The answer is right there in **John 13**—love others as he’s loved you. This is the path he has paved, and in doing so, is the proof that we’re walking on the right path.

This is just the beginning. We will see Jesus add more directions. It’s not just saying, “I love others; I’m good. I’m following Jesus.” This is a wonderful place to start on the path and is where Jesus initially places them.

Jesus continued to show them the way in the very next sequential verses:

John 14:1-2: *1 Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.*

Now he is getting specific—there are places Jesus is preparing, a destination he is going to. Up to this point, he has been a little mysterious because he is putting together all the pieces so the apostles will understand.



Jesus’ faithfulness enabled him to prepare their new heavenly home. This is beyond their expectation, beyond their understanding.

Jesus continues:

John 14:3–6: 3 *If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also.* 4 *And you know the way where I am going.* 5 *Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you are going, how do we know the way?* 6 *Jesus said to him, I am the way <3598>, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me.*

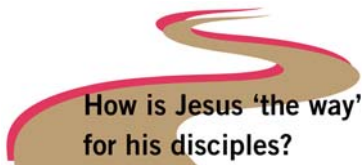
Way: Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance #3598 *hodos*; a road; by implication, a progress (the route, act or distance); figuratively, a mode or means:—journey, (high-)way

The Greek word for *way* here is *hodos*, meaning:

- A road or path—a physical route one travels.
- A journey or progress—the act of moving toward a destination.
- A manner of life—a metaphor for one’s conduct, decisions and direction.

So, when Jesus says, *I am the way*, he’s not just saying he knows the route—he is the road, the journey and the destination. It’s comprehensive.

He continues to teach them that same evening how he is also *the truth* and *the life*, as we next discuss in Episodes 1393 and 1394.



His disciples had already been shown the way, but they didn’t know it yet. The path to follow is one of attentiveness, discipline and follow-through regarding Jesus’ teachings.



It sounds so simple! What does following Jesus as *the way* look like in practical terms? What does it mean for us?

First, Jesus himself told us that the Father only draws us to Himself through Jesus:

John 6:43–45: 43 *Jesus answered and said to them...* 44 *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.* 45 *It is written in the prophets, (he next quotes from Isaiah 54:13:) AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD. Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to me.*

These are important texts:

1. He quotes from **Isaiah 54:13**—*and they shall all be taught of God*—to show that divine teaching is at the heart of Israel’s hope. Whoever hears God’s instructions will be drawn to Jesus as their source of life. God’s drawing process includes recognizing Jesus as the Messiah.

2. Jesus provides exclusive access. Jesus doesn’t say he is “a” way; he says he is “THE” way (*hē hodos*). In Greek, the definite article (*hē*) emphasizes exclusivity. Jesus is the only path to the Father, not just one among many.

Q. What about those who don’t follow on this path either by choice or circumstance? Are they doomed?



No, absolutely not. For them, Jesus will still be *the way*, but they are not called to this sacrificial path offered in this lifetime. Jesus died for all: *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:22)*. The bigger picture takes care of the “everyone else,” and we will discuss this shortly.

The drawing of those comparatively few who would follow Jesus now are compelled to follow through on the very difficult task of walking in his footsteps. While the world will have to follow the same precepts in the future, their walk will be different.

First, we must be drawn to walk in *the way*, to follow Jesus. Once drawn to God, Jesus illustrates that his followers are protected through him:

John 10:7–9: 7 *So Jesus said to them again, Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door; if anyone enters through me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.*

Jesus is *the door* for the sheep as well as the shepherd. He is the way to get in and out AND the one who guides and protects. How is Jesus *the way* for his disciples? The entrance into God’s protected flock is **ONLY** through Jesus.

Jesus is *the door*. He is *the shepherd*. Later on, he’s *the vine*. He’s *the way, the truth and the life*, and many other descriptions. There is a long list of metaphors used to describe him. Each image reveals a different angle of his character and mission, helping us bridge the gap between the unknowable to the familiar. Metaphors make it personal.

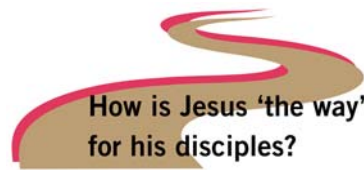
Q. How can Jesus be both a door and a shepherd?



An ancient sheepfold would have been a pen of protection for the sheep, typically made from stone. Sheep could rest safely inside. In the picture to the right, a shepherd sits calmly in the doorway. He prevents the sheep from going in and out when they are not supposed to. And he prevents enemies from going in.



Jesus provides the metaphor of a shepherd protecting sheep as a picture of him protecting the lives of all his followers.



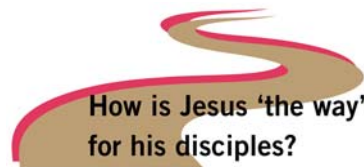
Entrance into God’s protected flock is only through Jesus.

How did Jesus further describe “the way” we are to follow?

Matthew 7:13–14: *13 Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 For the gate is small and the way <hē hodos> is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.*

Because the way is so narrow, it demands intentional, wholehearted focus and commitment. To use a sports analogy, we can’t “take our eye off the ball.”

The way is not easy. It isn’t, “I believe in Jesus, so I’m saved and automatically going to heaven!” Believing in Jesus means now we must go through a small gate down a narrow way.



Jesus walked a difficult road, as ALL he did was to glorify his Father. Through his sacrifice, giving and submission, God’s plan would unfold. He is our pattern for what a Christian life should look like.

We were drawn, we were protected. Now on this narrow, difficult way, we have to be sure-footed in following in his footsteps.

Jesus as “the way” showed us how to stand against the tide of sin and darkness. He is preparing his disciples to be misjudged and rejected:

Matthew 10:24–25,28: *24 A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. 25 ...If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his household!*

Beelzebul (sometimes spelled Beelzebub) was originally a Philistine deity, but by Jesus’ time it became a nickname for Satan, used by Jesus’ opponents to accuse him of casting out demons by demonic power (see **Matthew 12:24**). Jesus is saying, if the Master is being slandered as being demonic (called...Beelzebul), then his followers should expect the same or worse.

28 Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Gehenna—destruction).

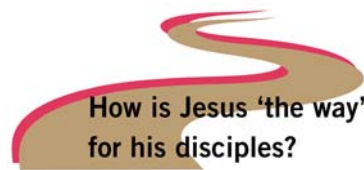
This tells us the only one we need to have reverent fear of is God Almighty because no human can take away our current God-honoring life or our eternal life.

Jesus is saying, “They may persecute us, they may call us demonic, they may even take our physical life. Don’t worry about that. Follow me. Follow who I am. Follow what I do. Follow what I say. We are now in God’s hands.”

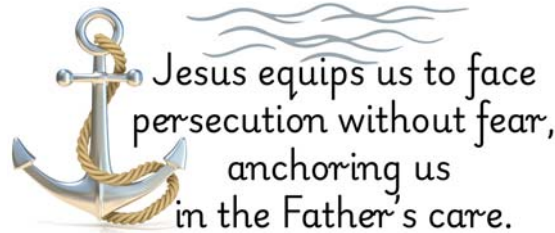
Jesus moves on to describe the care God gives to those who follow Jesus:

Matthew 10:29-30: *29 Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.*

In these verses, we go from being called demonic, to possibly losing our lives, to Jesus assuring us that we are more valuable to God than two little birds. In fact, *the very hairs of your head are all numbered*. This is amazing! By following Jesus as *the way*, God knows YOU. He knows everything about you and will care for you in the best way possible.



Jesus taught us in word and deed to stand for that which is godly and not fear the persecution that comes. Following his example brings God's clear protection. Jesus protects us by being the shepherd, but this elevates it to even higher with God's protection as well.



What does following Jesus as *the way* look like in practical terms?

Review

- We are drawn to God through Jesus.
- We are protected.
- We need to be sure-footed on this difficult path.
- We will be tested along the way, but with God's protection overruling.

We have been looking at describing *the way* only through the words of Jesus, through what he taught. Now let's look at what some of the other apostles taught us about *the way*.

Because Jesus has been glorified, he has proven the value of living a sacrificing, God-honoring life at this time:

Romans 8:18–21: *18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.*

This clearly shows two groups:

1. the sons of God who are the faithful followers of Christ, the true church, and
2. the creation—mankind in general—the “everybody else.”

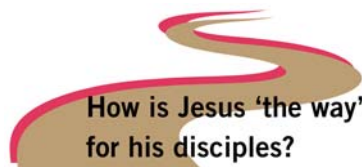
The creation is waiting for the sons of God.

Those *sons of God* need to go through the sufferings of this present time. They need to be tested like a soldier going to boot camp.

Rick

My son is in the Coast Guard. Before he got in, he went to boot camp. I remember him calling me from boot camp the few times they would allow him to make a phone call. He shared how the experience was grueling. It was overwhelming. But the point was to harden them as soldiers who would be given the responsibility of protecting others.

This is what Jesus is guiding us through. We are asked to follow him as he honored God through all of his experiences, even though we respect his trials and sufferings were more difficult than our own.



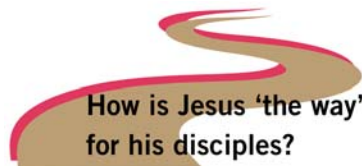
Jesus freed us from the grip of Adam’s sin. We, in turn, are called upon to play a role in the future freeing of the rest of the world from the same sorrowful existence. Faithful Christians go through it first so that he can use them to build the kingdom later.

Our trials don’t go away by us being a Christian; they are part of *the way*.

Remember we asked about those who aren’t following *the way* now, either by choice or circumstance. Is everyone else doomed? No, they are waiting for those currently in God’s “boot camp” to qualify to be with Jesus in heaven. Then they will be reconciled back to God in the kingdom on earth.

Every aspect of Jesus’ life is worthy of our focused attention. His life IS the way!

Hebrews 12:1–3: *1 ...let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him who has endured such hostility by sinners against himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*



Jesus wrote the book of our daily walk in faith. Every aspect of our lives could have clear focus and direction if we would just meditate on his example.

Consider him...so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

We draw strength from him as we walk in his footsteps on this narrow way.

In his “prison letter” to the Philippians, the Apostle Paul sums up our privilege to follow Jesus as the way:

Philippians 1:19–21: *19 for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the spirit of Jesus Christ, 20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will*

even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

It is Paul's expectation and hope that he will continue with boldness (*whether by life or by death*), even if he cannot be out there in front of everybody. His boldness to follow in Jesus' footsteps was the most important thing. *To live is Christ and to die is gain—this is the way.*

This goes back to the same glory we discussed at the beginning of this episode. It is the same hope Jesus had to glorify the Father, even if it meant his death.

It's a simple concept, but profound in application. In short, Jesus is *the way* because he not only shows us the destination, but he is the road, the gate, the guide, and the vehicle by which we are drawn into eternal life and empowered to live it here.

It begins with love. Our commitment to this walk needs to be renewed again and again, as does every other aspect of our Christian lives.

The simplicity of this message from Jesus is that when he says, *I am the way*, he is saying, "Don't look in all kinds of places; just look to me. Follow my example, follow my teachings, follow my words, follow my motivation and what I came to do. You then, can be part of what we know scripturally as the body of Christ."

This is the beauty and privilege of being a disciple of Christ.

So, how is Jesus 'the way'?
For Rick, Jonathan, Julie and Christian Questions...
...Think about it!

All scriptures cited are from the NASB1995 translation unless otherwise noted.



Next episode

Episode 1393:
John 14:6—How is Jesus 'the Truth'?



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Text CQREWIND to 22828
to receive our Weekly Newsletter, Show Notes and Study Questions

Bonus Material and Study Questions

A preview of the next two episodes:

While still in the Upper Room the night before his crucifixion, Jesus continued teaching his disciples the reality of his being *the way, the truth, and the life*. We have so far seen his being *the way*.

John 14 shows us the basis for his being *the truth*:

John 14:5–29: 5 Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you are going, how do we know the way? 6 Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me. 7 If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him. 8 Philip said to him, Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us. 9 Jesus said to him, Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, Show us the Father? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own initiative, but the Father abiding in me does His works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves. 12 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. 13 Whatever you ask in my name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the son. 14 If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. 15 If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 I will ask the Father, and He will give you another helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 that is the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 After a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you will live also. 20 In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21 He who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will disclose myself to him. 22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, Lord, what then has happened that you are going to disclose yourself to us and not to the world? 23 Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him. 24 He who does not love me does not keep my words; and the word which you hear is not mine, but the Father’s who sent me. 25 These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. 26 But the helper, the holy spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. 28 You heard that I said to you, I go away, and I will come to you. If you loved me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. 29 Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe.

After they left the Upper Room, John 15 shows us the basis for Jesus being *the life*:

John 15:1–27: *1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples. 9 Just as the Father has loved me, I have also loved you; abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love; just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love. 11 These things I have spoken to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full. 12 This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in my name He may give to you. 17 This I command you, that you love one another. 18 If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you, A slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. 21 But all these things they will do to you for my name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent me. 22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 He who hates me hates my Father also. 24 If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated me and my Father as well. 25 But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE. 26 When the helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will testify about me, 27 and you will testify also, because you have been with me from the beginning.*

Study QUESTIONS

Ep.1392: How Is Jesus 'the Way'?

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1392-the-way/>

See:  CQ.Rewind
SHOW NOTES

1. In John 13:31-32, how can these verses speak of Judas' betrayal and Jesus' sacrifice and then go on to talk about bringing glory to God? Discuss thoroughly.
2. How did Jesus lay out the challenges a) he was about to face, b) one of the challenges the disciples would face almost immediately, and c) the first of their learning tools in John 13:31-35?
 - a. How is Jesus 'the way' for us to follow?
 - b. What can you do personally to follow Jesus? Have you done this?
3. What are the multiple meanings of the Greek word *hodos*, translated "way" in English? How does Jesus fulfill all these terms? (John 14:1-6) Have you recognized Jesus in each of these roles in your life?
4. What does following Jesus as 'the way' look like in practical terms for us?
 - a. John 6:43-45 (quoting from Isaiah 54:13) What is the necessary first step?
 - b. John 10:7-9 How is Jesus both 'the door' and 'the shepherd' for his sheep?
 - c. Matthew 7:13-14 What does 'the way' look like? What does it demand of us as a result?
 - d. Matthew 10:24-30 There will be difficulties, but what is promised to see us through these?
 - a. How are we anchored to help face persecution?
 - b. Have you ever felt that your experiences are tailored specifically for you by a loving Father who knows you better than you know yourself? Explain.
5. How does Romans 8:18-21 show there are two groups saved? Who are these groups?
 - a. What is the purpose of the first group of faithful followers of Christ, his true church?
 - b. When will this purpose be fulfilled?
 - c. What skills will the first group have at that time to help with this project? How will they gain these?
6. Consider the words of Hebrews 12:1-3. Do they inspire you?
 - a. How can meditating on Jesus' walk help us?
 - b. How does it give you strength knowing Jesus overcame his trials and he is there for you in your trials?
 - c. Consider memorizing verse 3, holding it close to pull into your mind when under stress.
7. The simplicity of needing only to look to Jesus to find our way to God and a full, rich existence with purpose brings peace. In what ways do you feel it? Give examples.