



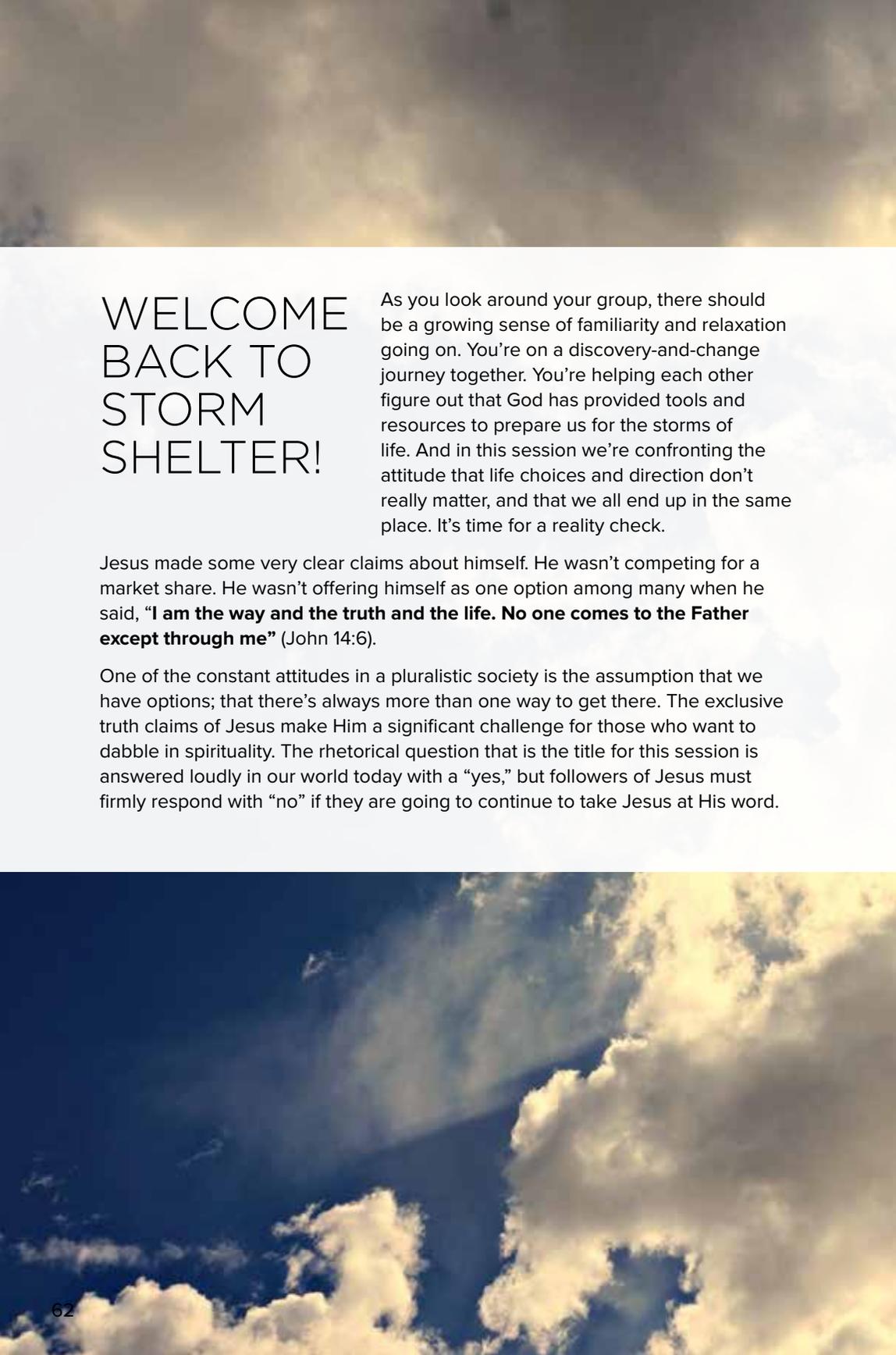
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SESSION 4



DON'T ALL
ROADS LEAD TO
HEAVEN?



WELCOME BACK TO STORM SHELTER!

As you look around your group, there should be a growing sense of familiarity and relaxation going on. You're on a discovery-and-change journey together. You're helping each other figure out that God has provided tools and resources to prepare us for the storms of life. And in this session we're confronting the attitude that life choices and direction don't really matter, and that we all end up in the same place. It's time for a reality check.

Jesus made some very clear claims about himself. He wasn't competing for a market share. He wasn't offering himself as one option among many when he said, **"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"** (John 14:6).

One of the constant attitudes in a pluralistic society is the assumption that we have options; that there's always more than one way to get there. The exclusive truth claims of Jesus make Him a significant challenge for those who want to dabble in spirituality. The rhetorical question that is the title for this session is answered loudly in our world today with a "yes," but followers of Jesus must firmly respond with "no" if they are going to continue to take Jesus at His word.





OPEN UP WITH PRAYER

Thank you God for bringing us together again. We are trusting in your Son as the only way, and seeking to clarify this truth that will withstand the storms of life. Help us live and speak faithfully for the One who gave His life to rescue us and give us eternal life. Help us to discover more about your plan each and every time we gather. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

- 1 When have you found that despite a map and even with a GPS unit you still managed to get lost?
- 2 This past week we have been reflecting on the reality of God's Word in our lives. Who has a discovery to share that you made while reflecting and applying God's Word? (It's OK if you're struggling to keep up with the material.)
- 3 Take a moment to alert the group that next week it will be important to make some decisions about the future of the group. You may decide to add a week to the six for a celebration gathering. In any case, if there's another study planned, this would be the time to briefly promote it.
- 4 Sit for a few minutes with your spiritual partner. If your partner is absent or if you are new to the group, join with another pair or someone who doesn't yet have a partner. If you haven't established your spiritual partnership yet, do it now. Share with your partner how your time with God went this week. What is one thing you discovered? How did you follow through with your "Work It Out" commitments from last week? What obstacles hindered you from following through this week? Make a note about your partner's progress and how you can pray for him or her.

TAKE IT IN

APPROXIMATELY 15 MINUTES

WATCH DVD SESSION 4

Watch the DVD teaching for this session now. We have provided a *Notes* space below. There you can record any key thoughts, questions, and things you want to remember or follow up on. After watching the video, have someone read the discussion questions in the *Talk It Over* section and direct the discussion among the group. As you go through each of the subsequent sections, ask someone else to read the questions and direct the discussion.

NOTES:



We are definitely talking about a position that is widely held in society today. Some of us may have family members or close friends who firmly believe all roads lead to heaven. Pastor Cal has certainly given us a way to think and talk about these matters. That's what we want to do now. It isn't easy for most of us to disagree with people, and we don't think we can force others to believe the way we do. We need to find ways to gently challenge others to think about the various roads, because most of them are dead ends. In the storm shelter questions, the point isn't to win an argument; the point is to lead someone to real safety.

5 Pastor Cal used the story of the lighthouse and the battleship to start his teaching. What point was he making with the story?

6 How does Jesus stand out above other religious leaders? *(See Study Notes below if needed)*

7 Pastor Cal pointed out that a number of religions share similar ethical teachings. What sets Christianity apart when it comes to the question of how a person becomes right with God?

8 Pastor Cal quoted the following five passages as examples of Jesus' unique truth claims. As you read each passage, answer the following two questions: What was Jesus claiming about himself? If He was telling the truth, how do His words impact everyone?

John 5:24, “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my words and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned.”

John 6:40, “For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

John 6:51, “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If a man eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I give for the life of the world.”

John 11:25, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.”

John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

9 Beyond His claims, how did Jesus substantiate/back-up who He said He was and what He said He could do?

10 How was Jesus’ resurrection the “end of discussion” event that confirmed what Jesus said about Himself?



Being confident in our relationship with Christ is one thing; speaking up for Him in a world that wants to avoid making a decision about Him is another. The “all roads lead to heaven” approach is often a way to cover a deeper belief that a) there is no heaven to get to, so why worry; or b) my way is just as good as your way. We don’t have Jesus’ permission to avoid telling others about Him; we are under orders to do so.

11 If you had one minute to tell someone why you trust Christ as your hope for heaven, what would you say? *(Have several people try this—it’s good to practice with friends before you try it in the fire).*

12 Pair up with another person in your group. Take turns role-playing the following scenario:

Person #1: I believe that all roads basically lead to heaven.

Person #2: Would you mind telling which road *you* are on?

Person #1: I’m not really on a road right now.

Person #2: I would like to share with you why I’m on the road I’m on. Is that okay?

(Don’t be surprised when you try this if they won’t tell you—because they don’t have one; their position is specifically about not choosing a road. Which leaves them in a position the Bible would call “lost.”)



13 Pastor Cal also pointed out that we aren't being truthful if we let people get away with being "nice" toward Jesus and calling Him a great teacher or wise man. Briefly explain the lunatic, liar, or Lord argument that Pastor Cal used in pressing the point that Jesus didn't allow room for us to treat Him casually.

14 One of the key issues to be worked out in our relationship with others is to love those who choose to reject Jesus as the way to heaven. Hearing someone say they think all roads lead to heaven ought to provoke some response of compassion in us. Pray now with your partner. Ask God to give you a compassionate heart toward the lost and for a divine appointment to share your faith in Jesus.

COME BEFORE GOD:

God already knows everything about every person you will meet. Your encounter is part of His plan in that person's life and in yours. Simply ask God what your next step is. Get quiet for just one minute, close your eyes, and clear your mind. In your mind ask God, "How should I respond when someone who is lost insists on staying lost?" Write down any thoughts, impressions, pictures or feelings you might have. If you want to share what you received with the group, feel free but there's no obligation.

PRAY TOGETHER:

God, thank you that you found a way past my defenses and my resistance to plant the gospel in my heart and mind. Help me pass it on to others, even those who are on a different path. Thank you for providing compelling reasons to believe in Christ and also for moving by your Spirit to ignite faith. Help me to turn to you each day for guidance, knowing that on my own I can't convince anyone you're the only way; you have to open their eyes. Help me love them as you would want me to. In Jesus' name, Amen.



NOTE: Some of the group members may have personal prayer requests they want to share. Allow everyone to answer this question: "How can we pray for you this week?" Ask someone in the group to pass their study guide around to write prayer requests on their *Prayer and Praise Report* on page 124. Ask that person to make copies, type it up and email it or take a picture and text it to the group.

STUDY NOTES

While it is true that many of the world's religions have similar moral teachings, there are vast differences in what you have to do to be right with God; there are vast differences in how you can be assured of forgiveness from God, and there are vast differences in how it is that one gets to heaven and can be assured of heaven.

When you look at the corroborative evidence of Jesus' sinless life, his supernatural power and his resurrection, there is no other self-proclaimed prophet or Messiah or religious figure in history who can hold a match to Jesus.



MOVE IT FORWARD

This week, take what you learned and spend some time again putting it into practice. Choose one or more of the following activities to further your spiritual growth and even connect to others in your group. Don't feel you have to complete all of these. Decide what you can commit to and go for it. Share with your prayer partner what you are committing to.

- ... **Pray for each other this week and for anyone you know who is outside the faith.** You can use the *Prayer and Praise Report* gathered earlier in this meeting to support your group in prayer.
- ... **Reflect On It.** Commit to daily connection with God. See suggestions on how to do that each day in the "Reflect On It" section.
- ... **Change your mind.** Memorizing Scripture helps to redirect our mind to God's plan. Take time to give this important practice a try:

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"

(John 14:6 NIV).

- ... **Take personal notes at the weekend service.**
Be ready to share your thoughts the next time you gather with your group.

REFLECT ON IT

Day 1

Scripture:

Acts 4:12

¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.

Observation: The context (Acts 4:1-22) was an argument over healing in Jesus' name and the attempt to silence the apostles. In what ways is the "all roads lead to heaven" argument intended to keep Christians quiet?

Application: Write out a prayer of thanksgiving for your salvation. Use it!

Prayer:

Day 2

Scripture:

1 Peter 3:15

¹⁵ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

Observation: What does it mean to "revere Christ as Lord"?

Application: What kind of hopeful living do you think others can see in you? What are you prepared to say if someone asks why you're so hopeful? (You might ask a friend to let you practice and you can return the favor.)

Prayer:

Day 3

Scripture:

Colossians 1:13-14

¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Observation: Describe the different ways that God in Christ did great things for us that we could never do for ourselves.

Application: What do those gifts make you want to say to God?

Prayer:

Each day this week, read the selected verses and give prayerful consideration to what you learn about God, His Spirit, and His place in your life. Use SOAP as you read and think about the Scripture passages. Listen to God and record your applications, thoughts, insights, or prayer in the section below the verses you read. Continue to experiment using ACTS in your personal prayer times. On the sixth day record a summary of what you have learned over the entire week through this study.

Day 4

Scripture:

1 John 5:11-12

¹¹And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹²Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Observation: Consider the word given in the verse: Who or what is given?

Application: When was the last time you shared this testimony with someone—that you have been given eternal life? In your prayer today, ask God for an opportunity to share your experience with someone.

Prayer:

Day 5

Scripture:

John 11:25-26

²⁵Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

Observation: What did Jesus mean when He told Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life”? How does Jesus use the word die in two different ways in this verse?

Application: Do you believe this? How can this truth bring you comfort and peace in the midst of a storm?

Prayer:

Day 6.

Summary:

Use the following space to summarize any thoughts God has put in your heart and mind about the things we have looked at during your Reflect On It time this week.