

## STOP LOOKING FOR LOOPHOLES

### I. [Acts 4:12](#) & [John 14:1-6](#)

A. W.C. Fields was an actor and comedian who lived between 1880 and 1946. He was known for his wit and sardonic humor. Despite a career laced with drinking and womanizing, one of his friends found him with a Bible shortly before his death. Fields quipped to his surprised pal, "*I'm looking for loopholes.*"

B. When it comes to God, His Word, His will, and His ways, His plan of salvation for mankind, there are no loopholes. Mercy, love, and compassion beyond comprehension--absolutely. But no loopholes. No alternative routes. No Plan B.

C. Today's message is for you, your children, your grandchildren, your friends and neighbors. They may not hear it from me but they can hear it from you. Sin is the possession of every soul born who has walked on the earth, save One. Death is the destiny of all and second death the destiny for all who reject Christ--the One who was without sin but who died for you and me. Peter declared before the Jewish leaders in [Acts 4:12](#) (NIV): "*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.*"

D. There are many gospel messages floating around out there. Some will tell you everyone goes to heaven when they die. Or they'll say everyone makes it to heaven eventually, after a pit stop in celestial rehab. Some say if your good outweighs your bad, you'll go to heaven. Others say there are many pathways to the top of the mountain and you should pick the one that best suits you. There are also a lot of theological *quilters* who knit together a little bit of every religion to form their own security blanket. Still others say, this life is all there is so eat, drink, and be merry because tomorrow we die. But none of that is what Jesus said!

E. On the night of His arrest on the evening before His crucifixion, Jesus gathered with His disciples to celebrate Passover, institute the Last Supper, wash their feet, share His heart, and prepare them for what was to come. He had to let them know it wasn't going to be the way they thought it would be but ultimately it would turn out far better than they ever imagined. Here's what He told them in [John 14:1-6](#) (ESV): *1 "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also. 4 And you know the way to where I am going." 5 Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going. How can 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 except through Me.*

F. So did Jesus say He was a way or *THE Way*? Did He say, "*No one comes to the Father except through Me*" or "*Through any way that seems good to you?*" If the people you love want to know *THE Way*, we can help them. You can help them! We have Good News for them. We have the GPS coordinates. But if they're wanting someone to join their "quilting bee" they should know we aren't tailors!

G. The Pharisee Saul, before he was the Apostle Paul, used to wrap himself in a garment of self-righteousness based on his striving to keep the Law of Moses. He hated believers in Christ who were first known as *The Way*. He sought to destroy those who championed Jesus as the way, the truth and the life. But Jesus apprehended Saul with blinding light that led to him seeing. [Philippians 3:7-11](#) (NLT) we see what Saul discovered after the scales fell from his eyes: *7 I once thought these things were valuable (His errant religious pedigree), but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. 8 Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ 9 and become one with Him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with Himself depends on faith. 10 I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised Him from the dead. I want to suffer with Him, sharing in His death, 11 so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!*

H. So today's message is for anyone who would hear it. Tell your loved ones this: Stop looking for loopholes! Look to Jesus Christ! Place your faith in Him! Throw away your ugly quilted garment for a robe of righteousness--His righteousness! Don't wait for your deathbed--you were born on that bed and will continue sleeping on it every night until the day you die or the day Christ becomes your Rest and Peace! Stop going the wrong way and start going His way! Dead end streets do not lead to eternal life! The highways to hell are highly congested, jammed with wayward travelers! But Jesus is *The Way* mapped out for everlasting life!

\* Close with Prayer...

## Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

### Acts 4:12 (NIV)

**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.

### John 14:1-6 (ESV)

**1** "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. **2** In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? **3** And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also. **4** And you know the way to where I am going." **5** Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going. How can 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 except through Me.

### Philippians 3:7-11 (NLT)

**7** I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. **8** Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ **9** and become one with Him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with Himself depends on faith. **10** I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised Him from the dead. I want to suffer with Him, sharing in His death, **11** so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!

### Looking for Loopholes - W.C. Fields (1880 - 1946)

Just before the death of actor W. C. Fields, a friend visited Fields' hospital room and was surprised to find him thumbing through a Bible. Asked what he was doing with a Bible, Fields replied, "I'm looking for loopholes."

- [Bible.org: https://bible.org/illustration/looking-loopholes](https://bible.org/illustration/looking-loopholes)

## Film Clips & Other Links

### **James MacDonald on Four False Gospels**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opeGjWXi35Q&feature=related>

### **How I Distinguish Between the Gospel and False Gospels - John Piper (Audio & Script)**

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/how-i-distinguish-between-the-gospel-and-false-gospels>

### **A Call To Young People--Kempton Turner**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2YKrtCdwSk&feature=related>

### **Idiots Catching Flies by Charles H. Spurgeon**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLEhxX0e-j8>

### **Millersport Covenant Church Sermon Podcasts (MP3s on iTunes)**

<http://millersportcc.com/feed/podcast>

## Bonus Stuff

### John 3:35-36 (NET)

**35** The Father loves the Son and has placed all things under His authority. **36** The one who believes in the Son has eternal life. The one who rejects the Son will not see life, but God's wrath remains on him.

### 1 John 5:11-12 (ESV)

**11** And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. **12** Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

### 1 Timothy 2:5-6 (AMP)

**5** For there is [only] one God, and [only] one Mediator between God and mankind, the Man Christ Jesus, **6** who gave Himself as a ransom [a substitutionary sacrifice to atone] for all, the testimony given at the right and proper time.

## **Is Jesus the Only Way to Heaven?**

By The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association [BGEA](#)

<https://billygraham.org/story/is-jesus-the-only-way-to-heaven/>

How is Christianity different from every other religion in the world? The answer focuses on Jesus Christ, “the Son of the living God” ([Matthew 16:16](#)).

Christ means “anointed one.” It is the term for the ancient Hebrew word Messiah—the anointed one whom God would send to save His people. The first believers of the early Christian church recognized Jesus as the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. Their period of world history was full of discouragement and despair. The promised Messiah shone as a beacon in the darkness, and His light has never dimmed: “In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ... The true Light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world” ([John 1:4, 9](#)).

Today, as world leaders struggle with seemingly insurmountable problems, this darkening and menacing situation accentuates the brightness of the One who proclaimed, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but have the light of life” ([John 8:12](#)).

Jesus alone can offer eternal life because He is the only one who lived a sinless life and provided the perfect sacrifice for our sins by His death on the cross. He lived on earth as man, but was also divine. Because He was divine, He rose again three days after His death—the only one ever to die and come back to life on His own—then ascended into heaven. While the founders of various non-Christian religions of the world have died and been buried, [Christ is very much alive!](#)

Jesus was [the only one to claim to be God and the only one to prove it](#). In His words, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” ([John 14:6](#)).

Because the Bible is God’s inspired Word and God cannot lie, it does not contradict itself or teach falsehoods. It is in this very Scripture that Jesus is revealed.

## **Jesus: The Only Way to Heaven**

By John MacArthur

<https://www.oneplace.com/ministries/grace-to-you/read/articles/jesus-the-only-way-to-heaven-9299.html>

In the Jesus Movement of the 1960s and '70s, the "One Way" sign — the index finger held high — became a popular icon. "One Way" bumper stickers and lapel pins were everywhere, and the "One Way" slogan for a time became the identifying catchphrase of all evangelicalism.

Evangelicalism in those days was an extremely diverse movement. (In some ways it was even more eclectic than it is today.) It encompassed everything from Jesus People, who were an integral part of that era's youth culture, to straight-line fundamentalists, who scorned everything contemporary. But all of them had at least one important thing in common: They knew that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven. "One Way" seemed an unshakable belief that all evangelicals held in common.

That is no longer the case. The evangelical movement of today is no longer unified on this issue. Some who call themselves evangelicals are openly insisting that faith alone in Jesus is not the only way to heaven. They are now convinced that people of all faiths will be in heaven. Others are simply cowardly, embarrassed, or hesitant to affirm the exclusivity of the gospel in an era when inclusivity, pluralism, and tolerance are deemed supreme virtues by the secular world. They imagine it would be a tremendous cultural *faux pas* to declare that Christianity is *the* truth and all other faiths are wrong. Apparently, the evangelical movement's biggest fear today is that Christians will be seen as out of harmony with the world.

## **Postmodernism**

Why has this dramatic shift taken place? Why has evangelicalism abandoned what believers once all agreed is absolutely true? I believe it is because church leaders, in their desperate quest to be relevant and fashionable, have actually failed to see where the contemporary world is going and why.

The dominant worldview in secular and academic circles today is called *postmodernism*. To the postmodernist, reality is whatever the individual imagines it to be. That means what is "true" is determined subjectively by each person, and there is no such thing as objective, authoritative truth that governs or applies to humanity universally. The postmodernist

naturally believes it is pointless to argue whether opinion A is superior to opinion B. After all, if reality is merely a construct of the human mind, one person's perspective of truth is ultimately just as good as another's. "Truth" becomes nothing more than a personal opinion, usually best kept to oneself.

That is the one essential, non-negotiable demand postmodernism makes of everyone: We are not supposed to think we know any objective truth. Postmodernists often suggest that every opinion should be shown equal respect. And therefore, on the surface, postmodernism seems driven by a broad-minded concern for harmony and tolerance. It all sounds very charitable and altruistic. But what really underlies the postmodernist belief system is an utter *intolerance* for every worldview that makes any universal truth-claims—particularly biblical Christianity.

### **Postmodernism and the Church**

The church today is filled with people who are advocating postmodern ideas. Some of them do it self-consciously and deliberately, but most do it unwittingly. (Having imbibed too much of the spirit of the age, they are simply regurgitating worldly opinion.) The evangelical movement as a whole, still recovering from its long battle with modernism, is not prepared for a new and different adversary. Many Christians have therefore not yet recognized the extreme danger posed by postmodernist thought.

Postmodernism's influence has clearly infected the church already. Evangelicals are toning down their message so that the gospel's stark truth-claims don't sound so jarring to the postmodern ear. Many shy away from stating unequivocally that the Bible is truth and all other religious systems and worldviews are false. Some who call themselves Christians have gone even further, purposefully denying the exclusivity of Christ and openly questioning His claim that He is the only way to God.

The biblical message is clear. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" ([John 14:6](#)). The apostle Peter proclaimed to a hostile audience, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" ([Acts 4:12](#)). The apostle John wrote, "He who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" ([John 3:36](#)).

Again and again, Scripture stresses that Jesus Christ is the only hope of salvation for the world. "For there is on God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" ([1 Timothy 2:5](#)). Only Christ can atone for sin, and therefore only Christ can provide salvation. "And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life" ([1 John 5:11-12](#)).

Those truths are antithetical to the central tenet of postmodernism. They make exclusive, universal truth claims, declaring Christ the only true way to heaven and all other belief-systems erroneous. That is what Scripture teaches. It is what the true church has proclaimed throughout her history. It is the message of Christianity. And it simply cannot be adjusted to accommodate postmodern sensitivities.

Instead, many Christians just pass over the exclusive claims of Christ in embarrassed silence. Even worse, some in the church, including a few of evangelicalism's best-known leaders, have begun to suggest that perhaps people *can* be saved apart from knowing Christ.

Christians cannot capitulate to postmodernism without sacrificing the very essence of our faith. The Bible's claim that Christ is the only way of salvation is certainly out of harmony with the postmodern notion of "tolerance." But it is, after all, just what the Bible plainly teaches. And the Bible, not postmodern opinion, is the supreme authority for the Christian. The Bible alone should determine what we believe and proclaim to the world. We cannot waver on this, no matter how much this postmodern world complains that our beliefs make us "intolerant."

### **Tolerant Intolerance**

Postmodernism's veneration of tolerance is its most obvious feature. But the version of "tolerance" peddled by postmodernists is actually a twisted and dangerous corruption of true virtue.

Incidentally, tolerance is never mentioned in the Bible as a virtue, except in the sense of patience, forbearance, and longsuffering (cf. [Ephesians 4:2](#)). In fact, the contemporary notion of tolerance is a pathetically feeble concept compared to the love Scripture commands Christians to show even to their enemies. Jesus said, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you" ([Luke 6:27-28](#); cf. [vv. 29-36](#)).

When our grandparents spoke of tolerance as a virtue, they had something like that in mind. The word once meant respecting people and treating them kindly even when we believe they are wrong. But the postmodern notion of

tolerance means we must never regard anyone else's opinions as wrong. Biblical tolerance is for people; postmodern tolerance is for ideas.

Accepting every belief as equally valid is hardly a real virtue, but it is practically the only kind of virtue postmodernism knows anything about. Traditional virtues (including humility, self-control, and chastity) are openly scorned, and even regarded as transgressions in the world of postmodernism.

Predictably, the beatification of postmodern tolerance has had a disastrous effect on real virtue in our society. In this age of tolerance, what was once forbidden is now encouraged. What was once universally deemed immoral is now celebrated. Marital infidelity and divorce have been normalized. Profanity is commonplace. Abortion, homosexuality, and moral perversions of all kinds are championed by large advocacy groups and enthusiastically promoted by the popular media. The postmodern notion of tolerance is systematically turning genuine virtue on its head.

Just about the only remaining taboo is the naïve and politically incorrect notion that another person's alternative lifestyle, religion, or different perspective is wrong. One major exception to that rule stands out starkly: It is OK for postmodernists to be intolerant of those who claim they know the truth, particularly biblical Christians. In fact, those who fancy themselves the leading advocates of tolerance today are often the most outspoken opponents of evangelical Christianity.

Why is that? Why does authentic biblical Christianity find such ferocious opposition from people who think they are paragons of tolerance? It is because the truth — claims of Scripture — and particularly Jesus' claim to be the *only* way to God — are diametrically opposed to the fundamental presuppositions of the postmodern mind. The Christian message represents a death blow to the postmodernist worldview.

But as long as Christians are being duped or intimidated into softening the bold claims of Christ and widening the narrow road, the church will make no headway against postmodernism. We need to recover the distinctiveness of the gospel. We need to regain our confidence in the power of God's truth. And we need to proclaim boldly that Christ is the *only* true hope for the people of this world.

That may not be what people want to hear in this pseudo-tolerant age of postmodernism. But it is true nonetheless. And precisely *because* it is true and the gospel of Christ is the only hope for a lost world, it is all the more urgent that we rise above all the voices of confusion in the world and say so.

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