

28. Jesus the Way to the Father

John 14:1-14

Warm-Up Question: When you are low and depressed, where do you go for encouragement and comfort? Do you prefer to be alone or with others? What do you do to cheer yourself up?

¹“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ²My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴You know the way to the place where I am going.” ⁵Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” ⁶Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” ⁸Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” ⁹Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. ¹²Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it (John 14:1-14).

A Place for Each of God’s People

It was Stephen Langton, in the twelfth century that added chapter divisions to the Latin Vulgate translation of the scriptures. Unfortunately, the 14th chapter division cuts the reader off from the explanation as to why the disciples were troubled in heart, so let’s back up and look at that. Jesus had just told them that He only had a little more time with them (John 13:33). He had also told Peter that he would deny three times that he even knew Him before the night had passed. As they reclined around the table on this solemn occasion, we can only imagine how shocked and saddened they must have been. Each of the disciples thought Peter to be a very full-hearted and bold believer. When they heard Jesus say that even Peter would deny him, this would have greatly unnerved them. We have the benefit of hindsight to read about all that went on that night, but it is highly likely that each of them was wondering what kind of pressure they would soon be under. What dangers might they soon be facing? They must have been wondering if they would be able to stand up to what was ahead? On top of it all they had just been told that they could not come with Him, but they would follow later (John 13:36). There was only One

who could pay the price for the sin of the world to bring men to God, and that was Christ, God in flesh. He would go before them and make a way for them to follow.

⁷No one can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for them—⁸the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough—⁹so that they should live on forever and not see decay (Psalm 49:7-9).

No man could pay the debt of sin that was owed by each of us. There had to be a Redeemer, a sacrificial payment by God Himself that would make the way for men to follow Christ to the Father's house. Jesus was trying to tell them that they already knew the way, since He has been with them, and that He was the way to the Father. The disciples seem unable to grasp this, and respond by telling him that they did not know the way, since they did not know where He was going. They refused to believe what He is trying to convey to them. It was at this point that they seem to finally grasp the fact that He would be leaving them shortly for good. This is why their hearts were troubled. They could also see that Jesus Himself was troubled. They did not want to accept or believe that this could happen. They were approaching a very dark time, and it was becoming apparent to them. Here we see the gentleness of Jesus. For when He knew that He would be undergoing immense suffering soon, and death was inevitable, He was thinking of how He could break this news to them and prepare them for what was to come. He wanted to ease their sorrow by giving them hope.

As Christ looked around the table at His disciples, His heart went out to them. He could see that they were troubled by His words. Imagine how Peter felt after being told that he would deny Christ. The Lord sought to fortify their hearts now in the remaining time before they were to go to the Garden of Gethsemane. When our hearts are troubled, stressed, fearful and uncertain, when it seems as if our world is caving in—we are to remember what Jesus said here in this passage: “my Father's house has many rooms” (John 14:2). No matter what is going on in your mind and heart, Peter, no matter how broken you are, no matter what you are going through, there is a place in my Father's house for you. He's saying it to Peter and the disciples, but He is also saying it to us. Deep down within the very soul of each person born into this world is a yearning for a better place:

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

Can you remember a point in your life, which brought about thoughts concerning what lies beyond death? Was there a situation that brought about these thoughts? Explain.

The enemy of our souls, Satan, the father of lies, seeks to fix our minds only on this world in the hope that we will not live our lives for eternal things, but for the things of this world and for the present moment only. He has used people as his 'agents' down through the ages to construct all kinds of philosophies and ideologies that aim to blot out any thought of eternity in the minds of mankind. The enemy wants us to stay focused

only on this earth below, and not those things that lie beyond. In contrast, the apostle John reminds us that:

“Everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever. (1 John 2:16-17.)

It is said that Professor T. H. Huxley, the famous agnostic (who, by the way, invented the term “agnostic” and applied it to himself), reversed his views prior to his death and came to believe in God and a future life. As he lay dying (so his nurse reported), he raised himself on his elbows and gazed into the distance as if surveying some invisible scene, then dropped back on his pillow and murmured: “So it was true! So it was true!”¹

Yes, it is true. In the Father’s house there are many rooms. Perhaps you have read the King James Version, which translates the Greek word *monai* as mansions, but the term really means dwelling places or rooms. The picture is that we will live with God in His house—that His house has many rooms for us to abide with Him. For those of you that have lived with the insecurity of moving from place to place, and in dismal circumstances, take hope! We are talking about having an eternal house in the heavens where we will be at home with God forever! When Jesus said; “I am going to prepare a place for you, we should not think in terms of Jesus the carpenter building each of us a physical home. The Greek word that is translated ‘prepare’ is *hetoimazō*, the word that is used of an oriental custom of sending a person before kings on their journeys to level the roads and make them passable. The word was also used to describe the disciples going to prepare the Upper Room for the Passover feast (Luke 22:9, 12). The sad departure of Christ was for the way to be prepared for the disciples and us to follow Him to the Father’s house. He went ahead of us to make the way to God “passable” for us.

So that we get a picture of what heaven will be like, the scriptures tell us of a time when a heavenly city will come down from heaven to earth—a city that is prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. Notice who we will be living with:

¹Then I saw a **new heaven and a new earth**, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was **no longer any sea.** ²I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, **prepared as a bride** beautifully dressed for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now **the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them.** They will be his people, and **God himself will be with them** and be their God. ⁴He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (Revelation 21:1-4).

How wonderful it will be to live with God—the pain of this world will be dried from our eyes by the gentle touch of the Lord Himself. I think He has purposely not told us

much about heaven, because many of us would want out of this world before our time. In another place Paul the apostle tells us:

No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him (1 Corinthians 2:9).

In our wildest dreams and imaginations of heaven we cannot imagine how good it will be for those of us who walk with Christ on this earth. If your heart is troubled by the way this world is, and what you are going through, let your mind and heart be fortified with the fact that you will one day be with God Himself in His holy house. How that must have encouraged Peter, especially after he had denied Christ, that there was room for even him after he had denied his Lord.

Notice the dimensions of the New Jerusalem, and with it, the many rooms that are in the Father's house:

"Come, **I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.**" ¹⁰And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹²It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. ¹³There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. ¹⁴The wall of the city had **twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.** ¹⁵The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. ¹⁶The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be **12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long.** ¹⁷He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man's measurement, which the angel was using. ¹⁸The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. ¹⁹The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, ²⁰the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. ²¹The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass. ²²I did not see a temple in the city, because **the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb** are its temple. ²³The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. ²⁴The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. ²⁵On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but **only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life** (Revelation 21:9-27. Emphasis mine).

What things stand out to you in this description of this home that God is building for you?

The wall around this city is 144 cubits thick. That is equivalent to 216 feet. We are also told that the size of the New Jerusalem is 12,000 stadia and as wide as it is long which today measures 1400 miles wide and 1400 miles long. That is an area in North America extending from California to the Appalachian Mountains and from Canada to Mexico. The ground level alone is nearly two million square miles. Don't forget though, the height of the city is the same measure as it is wide and long (Revelation 21:16). If each story is a generous 12 feet, that would make 600,000 stories. Billions of people will be able to live there with many square miles per person. We tend to think that a city that size on the earth would affect the earth's axis, but remember that the New Jerusalem is part of a New Earth and a new heaven (Revelation 21:1), this new Earth will be completely different.

The dimension of the city is a perfect cube. In Solomon's Temple was a room that only the High Priest, once a year, with the sacrificial blood of a slain animal, entered beyond the heavy curtain that kept man separated from the very presence of God. This curtain was the one that was torn at the very time of Christ's sacrificial death on the cross (Matthew 27:51). The room of the Most Holy Place, where God alone dwelt, was a cube of twenty cubits (1 Kings 6:20).

The New Jerusalem's dimensions being that of a cube reflect the fact that God has provided for Man to live with Him forever, as the dimensions are the same as the dimensions for Solomon's Temple. It is a picture of man being invited into the very presence of God to enjoy fellowship with Him and His people forever in the Holy of Holies.

To know where we are going when we die is the perfect antidote to fear, worry and a troubled heart. The Lord promised that He would come back and take us to be with Him (John 14:3). He wouldn't have told us so if there were any doubt about it. We can trust His Word on this. He said, "**trust in God, trust also in me**" (John 14:1).

Jesus the Way to the Father

When He said to them. "You know the way to the place where I am going" (John 14:4), the disciple Thomas said to him, '**Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?**' I love people like Thomas, my namesake. He was one that truly wanted to understand everything. I think I am like him in that respect. Thomas wanted clarification as to what Christ was saying—where is this place you are going? His devoted heart would not allow the thought of his master going on without him. He had to know how he could follow to be with Him.

⁶Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him" (John 14:6-7).

I don't think Thomas got the answer he was looking for. Instead of a series of directions or things to do, the answer given was a person, Christ Himself, "I am the way." This is the sixth of the seven "I Am" statements of Christ in the Book of John (6:35; 6:48; 6:51; 8:12; 10:7; 10:9; 10:11; 10:14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1; 15:5). Here again Jesus is claiming to be the great *I Am* that Moses was told was the name of the creator of all things (Exodus 3:14). The words that He is the Truth and the Life are supporting statements to His saying that He is the Way. If we are looking for direction as to how to be right with God, we are to look at the person of Christ. We are to come to Him and let Him fill your life, for embodied in Him is all Truth and the Life of God that we need. If there was any other way to get to the Father, don't you think that He would have told us? There is no other way to be right with God. He said, "**No one comes to the Father except through Me.**" (John 14:6). As human beings, we tend to prefer a set of rules, laws, rituals we can perform—something we can do to earn a reward. It gives us a sense of self-accomplishment and a sense that we are in control. But Jesus gives us no other way but Himself. He is the Way, the Truth, the Life.

Albert Einstein, the great theoretical physicist, was once traveling from Princeton on a train when the conductor came down the aisle, punching the tickets of every passenger. When he came to Einstein, Einstein reached in his vest pocket. He couldn't find his ticket, so he reached in his trouser pockets. It wasn't there either. He looked in his briefcase but couldn't find it. Then he looked in the seat beside him. He still couldn't find it. "The conductor said, 'Dr. Einstein, I know who you are. We all know who you are. I'm sure you bought a ticket. Don't worry about it.'" Einstein nodded appreciatively. The conductor continued down the aisle punching tickets. As he was ready to move to the next car, he turned around and saw the great physicist down on his hands and knees looking under his seat for his ticket. "The conductor rushed back and said, 'Dr. Einstein, Dr. Einstein, don't worry, I know who you are; no problem. You don't need a ticket. I'm sure you bought one.' Einstein looked at him and said, "Young man, I too, know who I am. What I don't know is where I'm going."

You may be clever like Einstein but if you do not know Jesus, you do not know where you are going—you do not know your ultimate destination. Yet Jesus tells us that we can know the way, and He Himself provides the Way for us.

[Do you think that the idea of absolute truth is being attacked in our day? How do you see this affecting people's search for meaning and truth?](#)

He is the way to God because only He is the truth. When a man comes to Christ he comes to the embodiment of the truth of the Father. When one comes to Christ, He comes to the source of Life. To get to this heavenly place, the Father's house, we need to receive the life of God. What we received from Adam is not enough:

²¹For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²²For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:21-22).

So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. ⁴⁷The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. ⁴⁸As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man (1 Corinthians 15:45-49).

We need an impartation of the life of God that only comes through a covenant in blood brought about by the shed blood of Christ at Calvary. You may be a good person, but there is no other way to the Father other than receiving new life from Christ. This is what Jesus said to Nicodemus in the third chapter of John’s gospel, verse 3, “**I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again** (John 3:3). The phrase in the Greek is, *gennaō anōthen*, it literally means to be born from above. The life given by God only comes to a person upon their true and sincere repentance (turning from their sin to God) and coming to the person of Christ and entering into the New Covenant with God through His blood sacrifice for your sin. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. In another place Jesus said:

³²Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you **the true bread** from heaven. ³³For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and **gives life to the world.**” ³⁴“Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.” ³⁵Then Jesus declared, “**I am the bread of life**” (John 6:32-35).

We are spiritually dead and incapable of living in this heavenly kingdom without a transfusion of the life of God given only by Jesus the Messiah. Jesus tells us two things quite clearly here:

1.) The true bread that the Father gives is Jesus. 2.) We need this bread of Life.

There is no room for ambiguity here. If anyone is in any doubt about who Jesus says He is, this statement should put those doubts to rest.

To See Jesus is to See the Father

Jesus then again claims equality to the Father. He says, “**If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him**” (John 14:7). The disciples, after the cross and resurrection, will come to know God in a new and intimate way. Jesus will show each and everyone just what God is like. To see Christ crucified is to look at the heart of God toward us all. He really does love us that much, that He would die a terrible death in our place as us and for us.

At that point Phillip also has his say, “**Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us** (John 14:8). Jesus seems disappointed at this saying of Phillip:

“Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work (Verses 9-10).

The disciples were slow to grasp exactly who Christ was. Yes, they had come to a belief that He was the Messiah, but they were slow to believe that He was God manifest in the flesh. God is One. To look at Jesus is to see the Father. The words and the works that Jesus did was the Father living in Him and doing His work through Him. May the Spirit of God give us all enlightenment on this wonderful truth.

The Father was working through Jesus in every word and every work of compassion. Jesus himself says that it is so (John 14:10).

Does this change your image of God the Father? How?

Finally, Jesus leaves his small band of disciples with a fantastic statement. He tells them that whoever believes in Him will do the same works He did, and even greater works! This must have blown their minds. He says that this will happen because He is going to the Father. Then He emphasizes this by challenging them to ask anything in His name and He will do it.

What do you think Jesus meant by the term “even greater things than these?” (John 14:12).

Some would say that this refers to the fact that since Jesus was leaving his earthly ministry in the hands of the disciples the work would be multiplied, as his followers would multiply and so the works of the Father on earth would increase. Others have pointed to the fact that in the book of Acts, for instance, people were healed merely by Paul’s handkerchief (Acts 19:11-12) and Peter’s shadow (Acts 5:15-16). Either way you look at it, the Word has spread and His works increased. The Father has been glorified and continues to be glorified in the Son.

Prayer: Thank you, Father that you have provided a Way for us to be with you in your house forever. Whatever we go through in this life, we are encouraged that beyond death there is a place in your house with you. We long to be with you and see your glory. Amen!

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