

28. Jesus the Way to the Father

John 14:1-14

The Gospel According to John

We are studying the words of Jesus to His disciples on the night of the Last Supper as they were all reclining around a low table. The Lord was teaching them important things to prepare them for the hours of darkness at His crucifixion. Soon, they would be going to the Garden of Gethsemane where Christ knew He would be arrested. In our last study, we looked at the departure of Judas with the Lord's telling the disciples that they would all fall away and that Peter would deny Him three times. Jesus had also said, "My children, I will be with you only a little longer" (John 13:33). Sadness and concern filled the room as they listened to His words. He spoke again:

¹Do 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" (John 14:1-6).

A Place for Each of God's People

In the twelfth century, Stephen Langton added chapter divisions to the Latin Vulgate translation of the Scriptures. Unfortunately, the fourteenth chapter division does not allow the reader to understand the whole meaning of the passage. A closer look without the chapter division helps explain why the disciples were troubled in heart. The thought that they only had a little more time with Him upset them all (13:33). As they reclined around the table on this solemn occasion, we can 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 three times deny him, this must have significantly unnerved and upset them.

We have the benefit of hindsight to read about all that occurred that night, but it is highly likely that each of them was wondering what kind of pressure they would soon be facing. They must have been concerned that they would be able to stand up to what was ahead. What worried them most was His words that they could not come with Him, but they would follow later (John 13:36). Only One could pay the price for the sin of the world to bring men to God, and that was Christ, God in the 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 ordinary man could pay the debt of sin owed by each of us. There had to be a Redeemer, i.e., a sacrificial payment by God Himself to make the way for men to follow Christ to the Father's house. The Old Testament sacrifices of various animals were just a picture that looked ahead to

what was taking place the next day, the once-and-for-all-time sacrifice of the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29). The Lord comforted His disciples by reminding them that they already knew the way to the Father's house. The disciple Thomas spoke for them when he said they did not know where He was going, so how could they know the way (v. 5).

Even though the Lord had told them, again and again, that He would be put to death, they refused to believe it. However, at this point, the truth began to sink in: He had to go alone to pay the price for them to follow. This fear of the future and His departure was why their hearts were troubled. Here we see the gentleness of Jesus, for even when He knew He would soon be going through immense suffering and the inevitability of death, He was thinking of how to prepare His disciples 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 they were troubled by His words. Imagine how Peter felt after being told that he would deny Christ. When our hearts are troubled, stressed, fearful and uncertain or when it seems as if our world is caving in, we are to remember what Jesus said 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 experiencing, there is a place for you in the Father's house. He's saying it to Peter and the disciples, but He's also saying it to us. Deep down within the soul of each of us, planted within our inner being, 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 time in your life when thoughts of eternity began to come to you? Was there a situation, a near death, or the passing away of a relative, that made you wonder about what would happen to you after death?

The enemy of our souls, Satan, the father of lies, seeks to focus our minds only on the things of this world in the hope that we will live just for the present moment and this current world in which we live. He has used people down through the ages to construct all kinds of false religions, philosophies, and ideologies that aim to blot out any thought of eternity in the minds of humankind. The Apostle John reminds us that God hates the things of this world:

¹⁵Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. (1 John 2:15-16.)

There is a story about Professor T. H. Huxley, the famous agnostic (who, by the way, invented the term "agnostic" and applied it to himself). Huxley reversed his views before his death and came to believe in God and an afterlife. 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

¹ Selwyn Hughes. *Every Day with Jesus*. May-June 1996 edition, Crusade for World Revival.

Yes, it is true. In the Father's house are many rooms. Perhaps, you have read the King James Version, which translates the Greek word *monai* as mansions, but the term means dwelling places or rooms. We will live with God in His house, and His home has many rooms for us to abide with Him. For those of you who have lived with the insecurity of moving from place to place, and in unfortunate circumstances, take hope! We are talking about having an eternal house in the heavens where we will be at home with God forever! (2 Corinthians 5:1). When Jesus said; "I am going to prepare a place for you" (14:2), we should not think in terms of Jesus the carpenter building each of us a natural home. The Greek word translated as "prepare" is *hetoimazō*, the word used of an Eastern 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 necessary for the way to be prepared for all God's people to follow Him to the Father's house. He went ahead of us to make the way to God "passable."

The Scriptures tell us of a time when a heavenly city will come down from heaven to earth—a city prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. Notice with whom we will be living:

Then 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 (v. 4). He has purposely not told us much about heaven because many of us would want to leave this world before our time. In another place, Paul the Apostle, tells us the following:

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 what you are experiencing, let your mind be fortified with the fact that you will one day be with God Himself in His holy house. Imagine how that must have encouraged Peter, especially after he denied Christ, that there was room for even him after his three-time denial of his Lord.

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). If there were any doubt about it, He wouldn't have told us. We can trust His Word on this. He said to them, "**Trust in God, trust also in me**" (John 14:1). If Jesus were not God, this statement of His

would be highly blasphemous. He was saying that, just as you trust God, you can also trust Him as to the future home for believers in Christ. □

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?” (John 14:5). I love people like Thomas, a man never afraid to be real. He was one who genuinely wanted to understand everything. I can identify with him in that respect. Thomas wanted clarification as to what Christ was saying, so he asked, “Where is this place you are going?” His loving heart would not allow the thought of his Master going on without him. If he could not follow now, he had to know how he could follow later to be with Him.

¶Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ¶If 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 for which he was looking. 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 great *I Am* statements (10:11; 10:14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1; 15:5). Here again, Jesus was claiming to be the great *I Am* that Moses was told was the name of the God of Israel and the Creator of all things (Exodus 3:14). The words that Jesus 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 our lives.

Embodied in Jesus are all Truth and the Life of God that we need. If there was any other way to get to the Father’s house, don’t you think 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, directions, laws, or rituals that we can perform, i.e., something we can do to earn a reward. It gives us a sense of self-accomplishment and the thought that we are in control. We want to do something to gain eternal life, but Jesus gave us no other way than Himself. He is the Way, the Truth, and 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 the famous physicist, 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 see it in there. Then he looked in the seat beside him. He still couldn't locate 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, i.e., you do not know your ultimate destination. Jesus tells us that we can know the way and that He Himself provides the Way for us.

Do you think the idea of absolute truth is attacked in our day? How do you see this exclusivity of only one way to God affecting people's search for meaning and truth?

Jesus is the way to God because only He is the truth. When a man comes to Christ, he comes to the living truth of the Father. When a person comes to Christ, He comes to the source of Life (John 1:3).

We Need a Life Transfusion

To get to this heavenly place, i.e., the Father's house, we need to receive the life of God. The physical life we received from Adam is not enough; we need an impartation, i.e., an infusion of new life to our spirit from God:

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).

⁴⁵So 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).

The life of God comes to us only through the shed blood covenant of Christ at Calvary, i.e., the place where Jesus atoned (compensated) for our guilt and shame. You may be a morally good person, but there is no other way to the Father other than receiving new life from Christ. This truth is what Jesus explained to Nicodemus, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again" (John 3:3). The Greek phrase translated as *born-again* is *gennaō anōthen*, and means to be born-again or from above. This new life given by God comes to people when they repent (turn from their sin) and turn the direction of their lives toward the Lord. 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 (Ephesians 2:1, 5) and incapable of living in the heavenly kingdom without a transfusion of the life of God given only by Jesus the Messiah. We need more than a better life in this world; we need an exchange of life. Jesus tells us two things in the passage above:

- 1.) The true bread that the Father gives is Jesus.
- 2.) We need this bread of Life. Without it, we don't have the true life that God intends for us to have.

To See Jesus is to See the Father

Jesus then again claimed equality to the Father:

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 (John 14:7-11).

After the cross and resurrection, the disciples will come to know God in a new and intimate way. Christ said, “**From now on, you do know him and have seen him.**” (v. 7). In different parts of the world, there are many so-called gods, but there is none like the Lord. At the cross, Jesus showed each of us what the true God is like. To see Christ crucified is to look at the heart of God toward us all. God loves us so much, that He would die a terrible death in our place as us and for us.

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. Phillip spoke up, “**Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us**” (John 14:8). The Lord seemed disappointed at the saying of Phillip.

The disciples were slow to grasp Who Christ was and is. Yes, they had come to a belief that He was the Messiah, but the very thought that God would walk the earth and tabernacle among them staggered their minds. To look at Jesus is to see the Father. The words and works that Jesus did were because the Father was living in Him and doing His work through Him. May the Spirit of God give us all enlightenment on this beautiful truth!

The Father was working through Jesus in every word He spoke and every work of compassion He did. Jesus Himself said that it was so (John 14:10).

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

What do you think the Lord meant by the words in verses 12-14?

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 14:12-14).

Jesus spoke a statement that must have amazed them. He told them that whoever believes in Him would do the same works He had been doing, and even greater works. The Lord said this would happen because He was going to the Father, and from the Father's side, He would continue to build the church through the Body of Christ, His people. The thought is that His ministry would continue through them from His position in heaven from the Father's side. He said, **"I will build my church"** (Matthew 16:18). Yes, the Lord uses people such as pastors, evangelists, etc., but without Him, we can do nothing. It is the Lord who does the work. We are just vessels through whom He chooses to work. To have Him work through us, He then challenges us to ask anything in His name, and He will do it.

Some say the words in the passage above, i.e., the reference to the greater works (v. 12), refer to the fact that, since Jesus was leaving his earthly ministry in the hands of His disciples, the work would multiply as more people all over the world were reached. As His followers would multiply, 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 falling on them (Acts 5:15-16). Were these the greater miracles?

The Lord didn't say that only the Apostles would glorify Christ but that all those who believe would do the works He had been doing. Let's not limit God by juggling with words and sentences. The healings and signs that were done by Peter and Paul and the other Apostles were supernatural signs and power that Jesus performed through them as they were led and empowered by the Spirit. God's disciples are the glove, but it is the unseen hand of the Lord inside the glove that performs the work. Without Him, we can do nothing. Believers are but the Body of Christ, the extension of the life and works of Jesus. He continues His ministry through each of us who believe. The Word of God and the works of God have spread and increased. The Father is being 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 home with You. We long to be with You and see Your glory. Amen!

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NOTES.

On p.4, you will need a footnote reference to the Einstein story.