

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

JOHN 14.1-14



T. M. Moore

A Scriptorium Study

And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets,

He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Luke 24.27

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Gospel of John: John 14.1-14
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Introduction to *John 14.1-14*

In the light of what is about to transpire, Jesus points His disciples beyond the fear, confusion, and disappointment of the next hours and days to the hope of glorious future. He is going away, but they cannot follow. He is going to prepare a place for them, and will return to take them to Himself. And He promises to be with them, granting their prayers and doing great works through them until then.

The Christian faith is a forward-looking faith. We rest on the finished work of Jesus, but we look forward to greater works and blessings in the days ahead. These promises sustain us during the trials and challenges of our present.

So at all times it is important that we keep focused on Jesus, trusting in His Word, and resting in His power and promises. He is the way, the truth, and the life.

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1 A Place for You

Read and meditate on John 14.1-3.

Jesus pointed His disciples away from the present moment, to another time, another place, and another gathering together with Him. He wants us to focus there as well.

¹“Therefore I say, be not troubled in your heart. As you believe in God, believe in Me, and do not be afraid. ²For where my Father dwells are many mansions – I would surely tell you if it were not so. I go before you to prepare a special dwelling for you. ³If I go, and there prepare a place for you, then I will come again, embrace you and receive you to Myself, that where I am, you shall be with Me always there.”

- John 14.1-3

Reflect

1. How can you see in verse 1 that Jesus plainly made Himself equal to God? Why is it necessary for us to believe both in God the Father and in Jesus Christ the Son? Complete this prayer: *Father, I know that I must believe in You, that I might come before You (Heb. 11.6), and that I must believe in Jesus, that...*
2. Jesus began to focus the disciples beyond this world and this life to the place where His Father dwells. How did Jesus teach them to think about that place? How does this affect your vision of where we are ultimately bound? How should we think about that dwelling place? *Help me, Lord, to have a large and growing vision in mind of where You are and where we will one day be, because...*
3. Jesus has told us where He has gone and what He’s doing there. But that’s not much detail. He is preparing a place for us, and He will come again to receive us to Himself. Could He have told us more detail than this? Why do you suppose He didn’t? Are we wise to speculate about such matters, beyond what Jesus has clearly revealed in His Word? Explain. *Thank You, Lord, for the promise that You are coming again to receive us to Yourself, and to...*
4. Where is Jesus now? Meditate on Psalms 47, 110, 2, and 93. How do these help you in thinking about where Jesus is now, and what it’s like there? Paul says we should set our minds on such scenes (Col. 3.1-3). Why is that a good idea? *Lord, I want to see You more clearly, exalted in glory, advancing Your Kingdom, and working in my life to...*
5. Jesus indicated that the best thing about where His disciples would ultimately end up would be He Himself. They would be with Him. Meditate on Psalm 16 and 1 John 3.1-3. Why is being with Jesus such a great blessing? Bring together into one the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

Summary

“Our Lord consoles his disciples who, as men, would be naturally alarmed and troubled at the idea of his death, by assuring them of his divinity, ... ‘Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in

me,' as if they must believe in him if they believed in God. This would not follow unless Christ were God... You are in fear for this form of a servant. Let not your heart be troubled. The form of God shall raise it up.”
Augustine (354-430 AD)

Our comfort and hope in this life, and for the life to come, is that Jesus Christ is God. How does knowing this bring peace to your heart when it might otherwise be troubled?

Closing Prayer

I waited patiently for the LORD;
And He inclined to me,
And heard my cry.
He also brought me up out of a horrible pit,
Out of the miry clay,
And set my feet upon a rock,
And established my steps.
He has put a new song in my mouth—
Praise to our God;
Many will see it and fear,
And will trust in the Lord.
Blessed *is* that man who makes the LORD his trust,
And does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.
Many, O LORD my God, *are* Your wonderful works
Which You have done;
And Your thoughts toward us
Cannot be recounted to You in order;
If I would declare and speak *of them*,
They are more than can be numbered.
Sacrifice and offering You did not desire;
My ears You have opened.
Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.
Then I said, “Behold, I come;
In the scroll of the book *it is* written of me.
I delight to do Your will, O my God,
And Your law is within my heart.”

Psalm 40.1-8

Psalm 40.1-8 (*Dix: For the Beauty of the Earth*)

I waited patiently for God; He inclined and heard my cry,
Lifted me up above the sod, set me on a Rock on high!
New songs in my mouth He gave; may He through me many save.

Blessed are all who trust in You, turning both from lies and pride.
Countless wonders, Lord, You do, and Your thoughts with us abide.
Lord, Your worth who can declare? None with You can e'er compare.

Off'rings You do not require – open now my ears, O Lord –
What from me do You desire? Firm delight to do Your Word.
Take my life in ev'ry part; write Your Law upon my heart.

2 Right This Way

Read and meditate on John 14.4-6.

It's not that Jesus wasn't answering His disciples' questions about where He's going (Jn. 13.36; 14.5). He was. But He was stretching their thinking in some very new ways.

⁴"And you know where I'm going, and the way."
⁵But Thomas, one of them, began to say,
"Lord, we do not know where You go; how can we know the way?"
⁶Then Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, the life. No one can to the Father come except by Me."

- John 14.4-6

Reflect

1. Clearly the disciples were puzzling about where Jesus was going. His comments in verses 1-3 probably muddled as much as they clarified things, since the disciples could conceive what He was talking about, but could only vaguely imagine what He meant. He confounded them even more by saying that they knew the way to where He was going. Why was Jesus doing this? Was He simply trying to get them to think? To stretch their minds beyond familiar patterns of thought, to embrace new possibilities? Explain. Complete this prayer: *It's very easy, Lord, for me to settle into routine thoughts, plans, and ways, rather than to seek the exceedingly, abundantly more of what You have promised (Eph. 3.20). Teach me to...*
2. In a powerfully mystical way, Jesus answered the disciples' queries in verse 6. This beloved text is so familiar to us, that unless we slowly unpack it, we will miss the enormous significance of what Jesus says here. First, Jesus explained that He is the way. In the Greek, the word is *hodos*, from which we get the word, *odometer*. A way is the course one must travel to arrive at a destination, or the method one employs to solve a problem or create something new. A way is more than a door, and although Jesus has said He is the *door of the sheep* (Jn. 10.9), by describing Himself as *the way*, He is saying much more. Explain. What does Jesus mean by describing Himself as *the way*? The first Christians described themselves as followers of "the Way" (Acts 9.1, 2). What were they saying about themselves? *Lord, You are my way, so as I journey through this day, You...*
3. But to *what* is Jesus the way? Where is He taking us? Where are we traveling in or along with or by means of Him? First, to *truth*. Jesus *is* the Truth. What are the implications of this for the plans, choices, decisions, and actions we make each day? What does Jesus mean by saying He is *the truth*? If we travel any way other than Jesus, are we traveling truly? Explain. *You are truth, Lord; Your Word is truth. Each day lead me to You, into You, and from You to...*
4. Jesus is the way to truth because He is the truth. As we travel in Him, we travel in truth, and are shielded from the lies and deceptions of a fallen world (cf. Ps. 12). But Jesus is also *the life*. What does Jesus mean by this? What kind of *life* is Jesus? How much of *life* does He define, represent, embrace, and affect? *Thank You, Lord, for the gift of life, the gift of Yourself! Let Your life be in me today...*
5. Jesus was answering the disciples' questions about where He was going and how to get there, by pointing to Himself as the way, the truth, and the life. Where are you going, Jesus? "To truth and life, to Me." How can we get there? "I am the way." What are we saying about discipleship when we confess Jesus to be the way, the truth, and the life? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote from questions 1-4.

Summary

We understand the ‘way’ to be the road to perfection, advancing in order step by step through the words of righteousness and the illumination of knowledge, always yearning for that which lies ahead and straining toward the last mile, until we reach that blessed end, the knowledge of God, with which the Lord blesses those who believe in him. For truly our Lord is a good way, a straight road with no confusing forks or turns, leading us directly to the Father. For ‘no one comes to the Father,’ he says, ‘except through me.’ Such is our way up to God through his Son.” *Basil the Great (330-379 AD)*

Jesus is where we’re going, and Jesus is how we will get there. Whatever in your life is not *in* Jesus, *unto* Jesus, *for* Jesus, and *by* Jesus should be surrendered *to* Jesus for His glory. How would you explain this to someone who asked you what it means to be a Christian?

Closing Prayer

Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases!
For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.
They speak idly everyone with his neighbor;
With flattering lips *and* a double heart they speak.
May the LORD cut off all flattering lips,
And the tongue that speaks proud things,
Who have said,
“With our tongue we will prevail;
Our lips *are* our own;
Who is lord over us?”
“For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy,
Now I will arise,” says the LORD;
“I will set *him* in the safety for which he yearns.”
The words of the LORD *are* pure words,
Like silver tried in a furnace of earth,
Purified seven times.
You shall keep them, O LORD,
You shall preserve them from this generation forever.
The wicked prowl on every side,
When vileness is exalted among the sons of men.

Psalm 12

Psalm 12 (*Hamburg: When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*)

Help, Lord! The godly cease to be; they who believe in Christ are few.
Falsely the wicked confidently flatter, deceive, and mock Your truth.

Stop, Lord, the lips that utter lies, all those who speak with boasting tongue!
See how Your holy Word they despise, while their own praises they have sung.

Rise up, O Lord, and rescue all Your precious children sore distressed.
Save those who faithfully on You call; grant them deliv’rance, peace, and rest.

Your words are pure and proven true, like silver seven times refined;
You will preserve Your Word ever new, and keep the heart to You inclined.

Proudly the wicked strut and stand; Your indignation builds on high;
Men may exalt their wicked plans, but You will judge them by and by.

3 See Jesus, See the Father

Read and meditate on John 14.7-9.

Jesus is as much of the Father as we can bear to see.

7 "If you had known Me, you would know the Father, too. And from now on you know the Father; you have seen Him, too." 8 Then Philip said, "Lord, show the Father to us; grant that we might know Him. That will be sufficient." 9 Jesus said, "Have I been so long with you, Philip, yet you have not known Me? He who has seen Me has seen the Father. Do you say to Me, 'Show us the Father'?"

- John 14.7-9

Reflect

1. Meditate on John 1.18 and Hebrews 1.3. Our purpose in life is to know God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – and to glorify and enjoy Him forever. Why is Jesus so absolutely critical to our realizing this purpose? Complete this prayer: *Lord, there is no way to know God except through You. And today, I want to know You better, so that...*
2. In what sense did Jesus use the word *know* in verse 7? What does it mean to *know* Jesus? How does knowing Jesus enable us to *know* the Father? In what sense should we expect to *see* the Father in Jesus? *Lord, this is more than just head knowledge, more than mere information. To know You means...*
3. Philip's comment in verse 8 reminds me of Moses, asking to see the glory of God full-on (Ex. 33.18-23). He does not seem to understand what he's asking. The verb, "it is sufficient," means "to be sufficient or adequate for a particular purpose, with the implication of leading to satisfaction – to be sufficient, to be adequate, to be enough" (Louw & Nida). In what sense was Philip right, and in what sense was he wrong in his thinking? *Lord, You are never merely "sufficient" for us; You are always...*
4. There's a sense in which Jesus' entire mission to earth is summarized in what He says in the second part of verse 9: "He who has seen Me has seen the Father..." Why is this so? Why did Jesus come to earth? What are the effects of His "declaring" the Father to the world? *Jesus, show me the Father by showing Yourself to me, so that I...*
5. Suppose you shared verse 9 with an unbelieving friend, and your friend responded by saying, "What do you mean, 'see' Jesus?" How would you answer that? What are we to see of Jesus, so that we might see the Father? How can we see this? What are the results of seeing God in this way? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you wrote for questions 1-4.

Summary

"It was not the carnal body that he had received by birth from the Virgin that could manifest to them the image and likeness of God. The human aspect that he wore could be no aid toward the mental vision of the

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incorporeal God. But God was recognized in Christ by those who recognized Christ as the Son on the evidence of the powers of his divine nature. And a recognition of God the Son produces a recognition of God the Father. For the Son is in such a sense the image as to be one in kind with the Father and yet in a way that indicates that the Father is his origin.” *Hilary of Poitiers (315-367 AD)*

“Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him.” What is involved in this being true of every *now* of your life?

Closing Prayer

“I will declare the decree:
The LORD has said to Me,
‘You *are* My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
Ask of Me, and I will give *You*
The nations *for* Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession.
You shall break them with a rod of iron;
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.”
Now therefore, be wise, O kings;
Be instructed, you judges of the earth.
Serve the LORD with fear,
And rejoice with trembling.
Kiss the Son, lest He be angry,
And you perish *in* the way,
When His wrath is kindled but a little.
Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in Him.

Psalm 2.7-12

Psalm 2.7-12 (*Agincourt: O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High!*)

Proclaim the message far and wide, that God has exalted the Crucified!
From heav’n He sent us His only Son, Who has for us salvation won!

To Christ the Lord be given all who humbly embrace Him and on Him call.
Be wise, be warned: His judgment comes to break the prideful, sinful ones.

Rejoice with fear in Jesus’ grace, and worship before His exalted face!
Beware His anger and judgment grim: How blessed are all who rest in Him!

4 Of Words and Works

Read and meditate on John 14.10, 11.

Jesus asserts His inseparable unity with the Father, and what this means for His words and works.

¹⁰“Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and that He is in Me also? For the words I speak I do not on My own authority proclaim; the Father Who dwells in Me, He it is Who does the works. ¹¹Believe in Me that I am in the Father, and that He is in Me also, or believe in Me because you see the works.”

- John 14.10, 11

Reflect

1. These claims of Jesus are so remarkable that we need to ponder them carefully. Let's begin by looking at one of the smallest words in verse 10. How was Jesus using the word *in* here? What are the implications of each of these usages? Complete the following prayer: *Lord, when I reflect on the promise that You are in me, I...*
2. In Jesus, the disciples were seeing the Father. If they could have seen the Father, they would see Jesus. Meditate on Colossians 1.27. What is your “hope of glory”? What are the implications of this for the people in your Personal Mission Field? *Lord, help me, I pray. Today You are sending me out into my Personal Mission Field, as You were sent to the world, and You intend...*
3. Again, Jesus insisted that the words He spoke were not on His own authority, but that of the Father. This makes Jesus not only the Son of the Father, but His Agent and Witness as well. Meditate on John 1.12. What does it mean for you to be a child of the Father? *Thank You, Father, for adopting me as Your own child. Help me also to...*
4. The *words* Jesus spoke were the result of the *work* of God in Him. Because God *worked* in Him, Jesus spoke certain *words*. Meditate on Philippians 2.13. How can you know when God is at work *in* you? *Be at work in me today, O Lord, exceedingly abundantly beyond all I've ever dared to ask or think, and I...*
5. The works and words of Jesus enable people to *believe* in Him more fully (v. 11). What are the implications of this for your witness for Christ? For your own walk with Him? For your work of encouraging other disciples as His followers? Bring together your prayers from questions 1-4 into one prayer.

Summary

“If, he would say, my Father had spoken anything to you, he would not have used any other words than these that I am now speaking. For so great is the equality in essence between myself and him that my words are his words, and whatever I do may be believed to be his actions. For, because he ‘abides in me,’ by reason of the exact equivalence in essence, he himself does the works. For since the Godhead is one in the Father, in the Son and in the Spirit, every word that comes from the Father comes always through the Son by the Spirit. Every work or miracle is through the Son by the Spirit, and yet it is considered as coming from the Father. For the Son is not apart from the essence of the Father, nor indeed is the Holy Spirit. But the Son, being in the Father and having the Father again in himself, claims that the Father is the doer of the works. For the nature of the Father is mighty in operation and shines out clearly in the Son.” *Cyril of Alexandria (375-444 AD)*

The greatest mystery in the world is that Jesus Christ, the very imprint and expression of the Father, dwells by His Spirit in those who believe in Him. Not only is this the greatest mystery, but it is the most liberating idea anyone can entertain. Why?

Closing Prayer

The LORD *is* my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
The LORD *is* the strength of my life;
Of whom shall I be afraid?
When the wicked came against me
To eat up my flesh,
My enemies and foes,
They stumbled and fell.
Though an army may encamp against me,
My heart shall not fear;
Though war may rise against me,
In this I *will be* confident. LORD
One *thing* I have desired of the LORD,
That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD
All the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the LORD,
And to inquire in His temple.

Psalm 27.1-4

Psalm 27.1-6 (*Joanna: Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise*)

Lord, You are our Light and our Savior most dear!
You guard us with might; therefore, whom shall we fear?
Though evil surround us, our enemies fall;
No harm shall confound us when on You we call.

One thing we request, but to dwell with You, Lord.
Your beauty to test and to think on Your Word.
In trouble You hide us secure in Your grace;
No foe may o'erride us: We sing of Your praise!

5 Greater Works?

Read and meditate on John 14.12.

This incredible promise remains for all the followers of Christ today. We need to make sure we understand just how important this is.

¹²“Assuredly,
I say to you, he who believes in Me,
that works that I do he will also do,
and greater works than these works will he do,
for I am going to My Father.”

- John 14.12

Reflect

1. Our first response to this promise is surely something like, “How can this be?” We want to answer this question fully, so that we can lay hold on this promise in the way Jesus intends. First, let’s catalog the good works Jesus did during His earthly ministry. How many different good works can you identify? And did you include in your list the good work of calling and making disciples? What did that involve? Complete this prayer: *Lord, keep before me each day Your example of good works, and let me take up as many good works as...*

2. When Peter bore witness to Jesus with Cornelius, he started by mentioning Jesus had done many good works (Acts 10.34-38). It seems almost everyone in that neck of the woods had heard about Jesus’ good works. How did Jesus explain the relationship between the *works* He did and the *words* He taught (cf. vv. 10, 11; Jn. 5.36)? What does this suggest about the place good works should have in our witness for the Lord? *You have appointed me as Your witness, Lord, and I want to be effective both in words and works. Today, help me to...*

3. Jesus said the works He did, those who believe in Him would do also. Does this mean that we should expect to do miracles? Explain. Why was Jesus able to do these miracles? To what did Jesus’ miracles attest? *Lord, there’s something miraculous in every good work we do, since our bent is normally to pay attention only to ourselves and our own interests and need, and since we can only do such works as You work in and through us. Let Your Spirit work in me today, Lord, so that...*

4. We recall, from verse 10, that Jesus intentionally conflated the *words* He spoke with the *works* the Father did through Him. Do you think that, in Jesus’ mind, works and words were necessarily separate? Were the words Jesus spoke part of the works He did? What are the implications for us in the Personal Mission Field to where Jesus has sent us? *Give me words today, Lord, that I may work Your work by...*

5. It’s the “greater works than these” that gives us pause, and especially because Jesus addressed this to an individual believer (“he”). But how many individual believers have there been since Jesus ascended to the Father? Does this help us in understanding what He might have meant by “greater”? And note the basis for this promise: “because I go to My Father.” Meditate on Psalms 2.6-9, 45.3-5 (cf. Rev. 6.1, 2), and 110.1-3. What is Jesus doing at the right hand of God? How is He doing these things? Are these works “greater” than what He did during those three years in Judea and Galilee? Explain. Bring together into one your prayers from questions 1-4.

Summary

“‘He who believes in me, the works that I do shall he do also. And greater works than these shall he do.’ If, then, he who believes shall do such works, he who shall not do them is certainly no believer, just as ‘He who loves me, keeps my commandments’ implies, of course, that whoever does not keep them does not love....”

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In a similar way, also, it is said here, 'He who believes in me shall do such works.' The one who does not do good works, therefore, is no believer. What have we here, then, brothers? Is it that one is not to be counted among believers in Christ who will not do greater works than Christ? It would be hard, unreasonable, intolerable to suppose so, that is, unless it is rightly understood. Let us listen, then, to the apostle when he says, "To him who believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." This is the work in which we may be doing the works of Christ, for even our very believing in Christ is the work of Christ." *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

Discipleship involves us in good works and good words – works and words like Jesus did. But this can only be the case as God is at work within us, willing and doing of His good pleasure (Phil. 2.12, 13). How can we know which good works Jesus might have in store for us on any day?

Closing Prayer

The LORD said to my Lord,
"Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."
The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion.
Rule in the midst of Your enemies!
Your people *shall be* volunteers
In the day of Your power;
In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning,
You have the dew of Your youth.

Psalm 110.1-3

Psalm 110.1-3 (*Aurelia: The Church's One Foundation*)

"Sit by Me at My right hand," the Lord says to my Lord,
"Until I make Your foot stand on all who hate Your Word."
From in His Church the Savior rules all His enemies;
While those who know His favor go forth the Lord to please.

6 Ask in His Name

Read and meditate on John 14.13, 14.

As if the promise of “greater works than these” weren’t enough, Jesus offers one more astonishing promise, waiting to be claimed.

¹³“And
*what you request in My Name, understand
that I will do it, that the Father may
be glorified in me. ¹⁴Again I say,
if you ask anything in My Name, I
will do it.”*

- John 14.13, 14

Reflect

1. Surveys have shown that most Christians do not pray very much. One sample of several thousand believers found that they pray, on average, three minutes per day, including prayers before meals. Why do you suppose we don’t pray any more than we do? Complete this prayer: *Lord, I want to be a person of prayer, but I struggle with...*

2. Jesus had previously taught His disciples that we should always pray, and not lose heart or grow weary of it (Lk 18.1). Paul exhorted us to pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5.17). Is this possible? What might it look like if you were praying this way? What would be the content of your prayers? In our verses for today, Jesus provides two incentives for praying. Can you identify them? *Lord, if I understood prayer better, and believed in it more than I do, I would...*

3. The first incentive is the privilege of praying in Jesus’ Name. Here’s what this is like: A father gives his son his credit card to buy himself a birthday present. He calls the merchant where the son will be using the card, and clears the purchase, within certain parameters – type of gift, amount, and so forth – acceptable to the father. Then he says to his son, “Get whatever you want, in my name.” It’s not *carte blanche*, but it’s a very significant gesture. What does it mean to pray in Jesus’ Name? Is this just a glib formula tacked on at the end of our prayers? Do we need to have certain information in mind when we pray in Jesus’ Name? Meditate on Matthew 6.33. Should this guide us in praying in Jesus’ Name? *Lord, when I pray in Your Name, I...*

4. Whatever we ask in Jesus’ Name, *He* will do. Is He likely to do anything *not* consistent with the works and words we see Him doing in the gospels? Or with the sketches we saw of Him exalted in the psalms? Or what will conduce to God’s glory? So if we want Jesus to *do* something for, in, or through us, what do we need to do? *Lord, like those Greeks of old, I would see You more clearly, so that when I pray...*

5. What if Jesus had written scripts for us to use in prayer – for the content of our prayers, to guide us in praying in His Name, or for the things He regards as important? Would that help you pray better? Pray more? Do you think the book of Psalms might be such a prayer book? Explain. Bring together into one your prayers from questions 1-4.

Summary

“Wake up then, believer, and note what is stated here: ‘In my name.’ That [name] is Christ Jesus. Christ signifies King, Jesus signifies Savior.... Therefore whatever we ask for that would hinder our salvation, we do not ask in our Savior’s name, and yet he is our Savior not only when he does what we ask but also when he does not. When he sees us ask anything to the disadvantage of our salvation, he shows himself our Savior by

not doing it. The physician knows whether what the sick person asks for is to the advantage or disadvantage of his health. And [the physician] does not allow what would be harmful to him, though the sick person himself desires it. But the physician looks to his final cure... And some things we may even ask in his name, and he will not grant them to us at the time, though he will some time. What we ask for is deferred, not denied... He adds, 'that the Father may be glorified in the Son.' The Son does not do anything without the Father, inasmuch as he does it in order that the Father may be glorified in the Son, ... for the Father and Son are one." *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

Prayer is the greatest privilege, and the most characteristic activity, of a believer. How would you describe the condition of your prayer life at this time? Does Jesus' promise concerning prayer excite you to want to pray more?

Closing Prayer

O God, do not be far from me;
O my God, make haste to help me!
Let them be confounded *and* consumed
Who are adversaries of my life;
Let them be covered *with* reproach and dishonor
Who seek my hurt.
But I will hope continually,
And will praise You yet more and more.
My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness
And Your salvation all the day,
For I do not know *their* limits.
I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD;
I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only.
O God, You have taught me from my youth;
And to this *day* I declare Your wondrous works.

Psalm 71.12-17

Psalm 71.12-18, 3 (*Solid Rock: My Hope is Built on Nothing Less*)

O God be not too far from me; my ever-present Helper be!
Consume and shame my enemies; let them reproached and humbled be.
A Rock of habitation be; command Your Word to rescue me;
My Rock and Fortress ever be!

But as for me my voice I raise to sing in hope and constant praise!
With saving grace my voice will swell Your never-ending grace to tell.
A Rock of habitation be; command Your Word to rescue me;
My Rock and Fortress ever be!

O Lord, I praise Your righteousness, Who me from youth have taught and blessed.
Forsake me not when I am old, 'til I Your mercies all have told!
A Rock of habitation be; command Your Word to rescue me;
My Rock and Fortress ever be!

7 Looking Ahead

Read and meditate on John 14.1-14.

Jesus' work on earth was all but finished. So He began pointing His disciples to the future, teaching them to look to Him and His Word for all their hope and help.

¹“Therefore I say, be not troubled in your heart. As you believe in God, believe in Me, and do not be afraid. ²For where my Father dwells are many mansions – I would surely tell you if it were not so. I go before you to prepare a special dwelling for you. ³If I go, and there prepare a place for you, then I will come again, embrace you and receive you to Myself, that where I am, you shall be with Me always there. And you know where I'm going, and the way.” ⁵But Thomas, one of them, began to say, “Lord, we do not know where You go; how can we know the way?” ⁶Then Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, the life. No one can to the Father come except by Me. ⁷If you had known Me, you would know the Father, too. And from now on you know the Father; you have seen Him, too.” ⁸Then Philip said, “Lord, show the Father to us; grant that we might know Him. That will be sufficient.” ⁹Jesus said, “Have I been so long with you, Philip, yet you have not known Me? He who has seen Me has seen the Father. Do you say to Me, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and that He is in Me also? For the words I speak I do not on My own authority proclaim; the Father Who dwells in Me, He it is Who does the works. ¹¹Believe in Me that I am in the Father, and that He is in Me also, or believe in Me because you see the works. ¹²Assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will also do, and greater works than these works will he do, for I am going to My Father. ¹³And what you request in My Name, understand that I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in me. ¹⁴Again I say, if you ask anything in My Name, I will do it.”

- John 14.1-14

Reflect

1. Jesus explained to His disciples that He is the *way* we must travel, the *truth* to keep us from lies and error, and the *life* we most earnestly desire. Jesus made Himself central to everything we should hope for, trust in, desire, or seek. How should this focus on Jesus shape and inform our daily lives? How can maintaining this focus strengthen us in times of temptation or trial? Complete this prayer: *Lord, I long for You to be more constantly present and central in my life, so that...*

2. Jesus came to reveal the Father to us (Jn. 1.18), because living with the Father, in His dwelling place and presence, is our ultimate destination. Jesus is as much of the Father as we can receive at this time (Heb. 1.3). By focusing on Jesus, we focus on the Father Who created us, keeps us, redeemed and saved us, and will one day receive us eternally into His presence as His children. Recall John 12.20, 21 and meditate on Psalm 16.8, 9 and Colossians 3.1-3. What are some practical ways to fulfill what these passages teach? *Lord Jesus, help me to see You with the eye of my heart, and to keep You always before me, lest...*

3. Jesus had already told His disciples that they must love one another as He had loved them. This is the mark of discipleship (Jn. 13.35). In John 14.1-14, Jesus gave His disciples a *focus* to help them rise above mere self-interest, so that they could encourage and support one another in love – His return, their eternal dwelling with the Father, Himself as the temporal revelation of the Father. He also urged them to “think big” when it came to the works they would do as they awaited His return (v. 12). How would the kind of focus Jesus was building here have encouraged them in doing such works? Do the Christians you know, or the churches with which you are familiar, tend to think in terms of “greater works than these”? Explain. *Give me a heart for those “greater works,” Lord. Today, show me...*

4. Along the way on our journey to the Father, as we take up good works of love, we will need to be sustained. We have now power for such endeavors in and of ourselves. True believers understand the importance of prayer, and they know to make their requests in line with what the Lord has commanded and promised (vv. 13, 14). Can we keep a proper focus for the life of discipleship, or do consistently the works Jesus commends, apart from prayer? Explain. What should a disciple’s prayer life look like? *Call me to prayer throughout the day, Lord, by...*

5. The most encouraging promise Jesus made in this passage was that He will be with us to do in, for, and through us whatever He has commanded or promised (v. 14). In the next section of this upper room discourse, He’ll explain how He will do that. How does knowing Jesus is with us encourage us to love like Jesus, do good works like Jesus, and resort often to prayer in Jesus’ Name? How can we cultivate and sustain the sense of Jesus being with us always (Matt. 28.20)? Bring together into one prayer the prayers you composed for questions 1-4.

Summary

“And as the disciples were afraid for themselves when Peter, the boldest and most zealous of them, had been told, ‘The rooster will not crow until you have denied me thrice, ...’ Jesus adds, ‘In my Father’s house are many mansions,’ ... by way of an assurance to them in their trouble that they might with confidence and certainty look forward, after all their trials, to dwelling together with Christ in the presence of God.” *Augustine (354-430 AD)*

The life of following Jesus is an *eschatological* life: It these *last days (eschaton)*, it looks forward to the *end of days* and the *new heavens and new earth*, and endeavors to *express* that destination in lives of love and good works. What are the primary hindrances we as Christians must overcome to maintain this forward-looking aspect on our lives?

Closing Prayer

I have set the LORD always before me;
Because *He is* at my right hand I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices;
My flesh also will rest in hope.
For You will not leave my soul in Sheol,
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.
You will show me the path of life;
In Your presence *is* fullness of joy;
At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.

Psalm 16.8-11

Psalm 16.8-11 (*All to Christ: Jesus Paid It All*)

You are ever with me, Lord; in You I shall not fall.
But rejoicing in Your Word, I abide within Your call.
 Make me know life's way! Pleasures fill Your hand;
 Fill my life with joy each day! Before Your face I stand.

Soon Your glory I shall see, for as Jesus rose again,
You will come to gather me to my home with You in heav'n.
 Make me know life's way! Pleasures fill Your hand;
 Fill my life with joy each day! Before Your face I stand.

The Gospel of John: John 14.1-14

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. Would you describe your Christian life as “forward-looking”? Explain.
2. How do focusing on Jesus, doing good works, loving like Jesus loved, and prayer work together in a believer’s life? Construct a single sentence containing all these ideas that you could use to explain the life of discipleship to a new believer.
3. John 14.6 aptly summarizes the Good News about Jesus. Construct a presentation of the Gospel using only this verse.
4. Self-centeredness, small-mindedness, prayerlessness, and doubt. These great enemies of the life of discipleship are never very far from any of us. How can nurturing a forward-looking faith help us to overcome these obstacles?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from John 14.1-14? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

Items for prayer:

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Thank you.