



**Sunday School Lesson for February 18, 2007
Released on February 14, 2007**

"Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life"

Lesson Text: John 14:1-14

Background Scripture: John 14:1-14

Devotional Reading: Ephesians 4:17-24

John 14:1-14

- 1** Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.
- 2** In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.
- 3** And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.
- 4** And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.
- 5** Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?
- 6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.
- 7** If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.
- 8** Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.
- 9** Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Shew us the Father?
- 10** Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.
- 11** Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do *it*.

INTRODUCTION

It was time for Jesus to be glorified; so He would be going where the disciples would not be able to accompany Him (John 13:33). They were to focus instead on loving each other in the same way that He had loved them. In spite of this command, the disciples were still thinking about His comment that they could not go with Him, and it puzzled them.

Jesus knowing full well that the faith of the disciples will soon be tested by the shocking events of His arrest and crucifixion. The disciples should not lose faith even though most others do not believe. The disciples should maintain belief even when it looks like the forces of evil have won the day.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lessons in this series so far have focused on passages from the first 12 chapters of the Gospel of John. As we noted last week, this section is often called the Book of Signs because it highlights Jesus' public ministry of miracles and teachings; it portrays Jesus' actions as signs of His divine nature.

Yet despite all these great works, most people either did not believe Jesus or refused to confess their faith for fear of persecution (see John 7:13; 9:22). Following this rejection, Jesus met privately with His disciples on the last night of His life in an upper room. There they celebrated the Passover (John 13:1-3).

It is interesting to compare the Gospel accounts here. Matthew, Mark, and Luke focus mainly on the events surrounding the institution of the Lord's Supper (see Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-38). John, however, includes lengthy excerpts from Jesus' "farewell address"- His last words for the disciples before His arrest.

The farewell address occupies all of John 13—17. It focuses on the need for unity after Jesus' departure. This includes not only the disciples' unity with Christ but also unity with one another. In today's passage Jesus reminds the disciples that they can come to God only by believing in Him and following His example.

LESSON AIMS

1. Describe Jesus' relationship to the Father.
2. Define what Jesus meant by the way, the truth, and the life.
3. Develop a plan for meditating on one of Jesus' miracles each day to increase belief.

1. Why did Jesus feel it was important to reassure His disciples that they not be troubled? (vs. 1)

Jesus knew the perplexity of His disciples' hearts and told his disciples to not let their hearts be troubled however, Jesus was not really concerned with their physical hearts but their emotional and spiritual state. If they became so stricken with grief, it would not take much for their faith to be shaken. Jesus wanted them to not only believe on the Father but Him as well. It was their faith that Jesus wanted them to guard regardless of the unexpected turmoil that comes with the life of this world.

2. What was Jesus' plan for all His disciples? (vs. 2)

This is the good news: Jesus will not abandon His people. The word "go" *in verse 2* clearly refers to His upcoming death, resurrection, and ascension. Jesus' death pays sin's penalty while His resurrection shows His mastery over death (Revelation 1:18). That is how Jesus is able to "prepare a place for" those who love Him.

Jesus explained to His disciples that His plan for them included His preparing a place for them in His Father's house in heaven.

3. How can we know that heaven is a real place?

The word "place" refers to a specific location. We know heaven is a real place, and we (believers) are all going to have a residence in which we will dwell forever; and because Jesus said He will go and prepare a place...we know it to be true. Jesus validates this truth by saying, "If it were not so, I would have told you." He was about to assure His disciples that since He Himself is the truth, anything He says will be true. We can be assured that heaven is there for every believer.

4. What did Jesus say He would be doing after He left them, and what would happen after that? (vs. 3)

Jesus knew that His disciples' world was about to be shattered, leaving them confused and filled with doubt. He sought to help them understand that His departure was ultimately going to be beneficial to them. He told them He was going to prepare a place for them, and He will come again, and receive them unto himself; that where He goes, they shall also be with Him. Jesus was going to prepare a heavenly home for His disciples and this home is also available to us who believe on Him. Simply put, Jesus will be coming back to gather up those that are His (whether they be dead in the grave or alive) and take them to Heaven.

5. How does a Jewish wedding help explain Jesus' absence and eventual return? (vs. 3)

In reference to Jesus' absence and eventual return, the comparison of a Jewish wedding is given. A Jewish betrothal meant that the man and woman were bound to each other, but the actual marriage ceremony did not take place immediately. The first thing the bridegroom had to do was prepare a home for his wife-to-be. The betrothal lasted up to a year, and he occupied himself during that time with this preparation. When everything was ready, he returned for his bride and took her to the home he had prepared for her. If you look at the comparison study of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 – Jesus was referring not to the time when He would come and set up His earthly kingdom, but to the time when He would take believers out of this world to be with Himself. Just as the bridegroom was away for a period of time, so it is with Jesus. We are currently in that time, waiting for His return. Just as the bridegroom came for his bride and took her home, so it will be for believers when Jesus comes again.

6. What was Thomas's objection to Jesus' statement, and how did He respond to him? (vs. 4-6)

In verse 4, Jesus said his disciples will know where he is going and how to get there. Jesus assumed the disciples understood where He was going and the way that He was providing for them to go to heaven. He had been instructing them throughout His ministry, but much like us, the disciples were slow to learn.

Thomas responded and said, "Lord, we don't know where you are going so how can we know how to get there? No doubt Thomas was speaking on behalf of the other disciples as well. Their natural tendency was to think only in terms of time and space here on earth. Thomas' mind was thinking of a physical movement from one place to the next since they had been following him around thus far throughout His ministry. Was that changing now? (Thomas may have thought)

Jesus did not rebuke Thomas for his lack of understanding but instead made a straightforward statement about how to get to heaven. Jesus told Thomas, He is the Way, the Truth and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Him. This statement revealed that Jesus was not talking about going to another place on earth but going to His heavenly Father and the place where He dwelt.

7. What was a time in your life that you showed a lack of spiritual discernment? How did you grow from this experience?

The greatest challenge for most of us probably is realizing, on a continuous basis, that there is a spiritual reality that is more enduring than our current physical reality. If Satan can't get us to forget about the spiritual reality entirely, his other tactic is to get us to "compartmentalize" areas of our lives: spiritual stuff is for Sunday morning and grace before meals, while regular life is for all the other times.

When we slip into this kind of compartmentalizing, we do not allow Jesus to lead us in all areas. Which movies we watch, where we surf on the Internet, what kind of cars we buy—Jesus is interested in all of these areas. Our choices indicate spiritual discernment. Wouldn't it be great if we always knew for sure that we were making the choices that Christ wants us to make? Lack of understanding in these areas may be reduced by greater attention to Bible study and prayer.

8. What do the third and sixth "I am" statement in John teaches about getting to heaven? (vs. 6)

This "I am" statement teaches us that Jesus is the way to God, Jesus is the Truth of God and Jesus is the life of God. Jesus is the only way to God. This statement also reminds us of the third "I am" statement: "I am the door" (10:7, 9). Since He is the truth, we need to realize that what He says cannot be refuted. There is but one way to heaven, and it is through Jesus Christ. There is no other means by which to dwell with the Father.

9. Suppose that you share John 14:6 with a skeptic. In response he or she says, "You're just being narrow-minded. Surely a loving God would make a way for those who have never heard of Jesus!" How do you prepare yourself in advance for this kind of reaction?

You may or may not be able to persuade the skeptic. Remember that even Jesus himself did not persuade everyone.

What is most important is that your own faith remain unwavering when you hear such arguments. Was Jesus himself narrow-minded? See Matthew 7:14: "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Does God have any plan other than Jesus? See Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

God sent His Son to die for the sins of the world (John 3:16). You can't get more loving than that!

10. How is Jesus a manifestation of His Father, and why did He rebuke the disciples? (vs. 7-10)

A manifestation is an indication of the existence or presence of something. Jesus is no doubt the existence of His Father. According to the Apostle Paul, Jesus is "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15). This means that Jesus is the perfect image of God. If He is the perfect image of God, in every way He is God. In Hebrews 1:3, the author referred to Jesus as being "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person", with the word "his" referring to God.

It is not clear whether Jesus meant to rebuke the disciples or give them a promise when He said, "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him" (John 14:7). The context seems to indicate a rebuke, telling the disciples that by now they should know Him well enough to know the Father also. In verses 9-10, Jesus says to Philip that He has been with him this long and he (Philip) still doesn't know Him – recognize who He really is? And, that the Father and He are one. Jesus went on to ask Philip if he believed in the relationship He and the Father had? Both the words Jesus spoke and the works He did reflected the presence of the Father in Him. In fact, the words He spoke and the works He did were not really His alone at all; they were the words and works of the Father Himself.

11. How are Jesus and God one? (vs. 11-12)

Jesus and God are one because they exist in one another. We have all heard of the trinity or the tri-unity of God. We know that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are separate Persons but they all identify God. Each Member of the Godhead possesses full and equal deity. They are a unity having diversity within that unity. Each Person is fully God while being a separate Person and having certain responsibilities in the Godhead.

Sometimes, it is difficult trying to explain the concept of the tri-unity of God. I recall being in a Bible study where the concept was explained pretty thoroughly but there still were some who did not fully understand so the following earthly example was given – a pastor can have 3 personalities (i.e., Pastor, husband and father). This does not cause him to cease being a pastor in order to perform or maintain his duties as a father or husband; he is still a pastor and is able to fully represent being a husband and father.

12. What did Jesus promise the disciples about their prayers? (vs. 13-14)

Looking at verse 13, Jesus promised the disciples that whatsoever is asked in His name, it will be done, so that the Father is glorified in the Son. In verse 14, Jesus goes on to say any thing that is asked in His name, He will do it. In these verses, when Jesus says, "in His name", he is not talking about ending a prayer with the so commonly used phrased – "in Jesus name". Jesus wanted his disciples to pray with the understanding that what ever they ask will be granted according to Jesus' will.

We today must also believe this as well. In doing so, we show forth our confidence in Jesus that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him (1 John 5:15-15). We as believers must pray according to God's purposes and not for selfish reasons. When our prayers are not based on our own merit (of which we have none) and the answers will bring glory to God, He is glad to respond to us. However, there may be times when His answers differ from what we had hoped, but we can be certain that He has heard the petition and knows what is best for us.

CONCLUSION

Jesus had spoken troubling words to His disciples. In this week's lesson we have considered the next words of comfort that He gave them. He assured them that He was going to prepare a place for them in His Father's house and that He would come again for them.

Jesus also emphasized that the only way to God is through Him. He declared, in no uncertain terms, that those who had seen Him had seen the Father God as well. Those who come to the Father through the Son will accomplish great things for Him and will be granted requests made in Jesus' name.

It is a privilege and a responsibility to represent Jesus.

PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, we know that storms and other unforeseen circumstances will come our way – help us to maintain a faith that is unshakeable so that we may stay focused on you as we ride out the storms that rage in our lives knowing that a better plan lies ahead. Thank you for your darling son Jesus who died for the remission of our sins. Amen.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER: **1.** Believe in Jesus and find God. **2.** When we ask in Jesus' name, the glory of God is our motive. (See Matthew 7:7-8.)

ANTICIPATING NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Next week we examine Jesus as the True Vine. Read John 15:1-17.

LESSON SUMMARIZED BY:

Veronica Jasper veronica@jesusisall.com