

GOSPEL OF JOHN

Encounter Jesus – The Son of the Living God

The Way Home

I'm just a poor wayfaring stranger – Traveling through this world below
There is no sickness, no toil, nor danger – In that bright land to which I go

I'm going there to see my Father – And all my loved ones who've gone on
I'm just going over Jordan – I'm just going over home

Hebrews 13:14 (ESV) ¹⁴ *For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.* You may have lost your way OR you may have never received the directions. I want to make sure that YOU know the Way Home!

Last week's lesson concluded as Jesus gave the disciples then and now a new commandment: **John 13:34 (ESV)** ³⁴ *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.* Just before Jesus gave this new commandment He mentioned that He was going away. At the time, Peter's mind zeroed in on the Lord's leaving rather than the new commandment. Let's listen in on Peter's conversation with Jesus.

Read John 13:36-38 (ESV) ³⁶ *Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward."* ³⁷ *Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."* ³⁸ *Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.*

Some believe that Peter thought that Jesus was planning a voyage to other places since His message had been rejected by the Jews and Peter wanted to go. Since Peter said that he would lay down his life for Jesus, it seems he sensed something ominous was about to happen. But, Peter really did not understand – Jesus was going on the road to His death but the road would ultimately lead Him to heaven and for Peter and for us as well. Jesus who knew all things (**John 18:4**), knew that Peter was not going to follow him that night but instead would deny Him. Notice Jesus' use of *truly, truly* again emphasizing the truth of His words.

It doesn't change the story either way but the signal the Roman divisions used to change the guard for each shift was a trumpet call. The Latin word for trumpet call (the language spoken by the soldiers) is gullcinium meaning, cockcrow. At the end of the 3 a.m. and 6 a.m. shifts, the guard change was announced by a Roman "cock-crowing" or blowing of a trumpet. I really prefer the idea of the actual rooster or cock crowing as Peter denied Christ but it may have been a trumpet call. Whatever created the sound, bird or trumpet, it was a call to repentance that would break the heart of Peter.

Though deeply troubled by His own betrayal and crucifixion, Jesus concerned himself with His disciples' distress. That's Our Jesus!

Read John 14:1-4 (ESV) ¹ *“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.”* ² *In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?* ³ *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.* ⁴ *And you know the way to where I am going.”*

Almost every commentator I read mentions the unfortunate chapter break of this passage because it most certainly is a continuation of Jesus’ words in the previous chapter. It causes a break in the continuity of thought; however, there is no need for us to concern ourselves with that.

In Old Testament times, the people of Israel had faith in the one true and living God. They trusted in a God they had never seen. Now they have never seen Him, and Jesus is saying to His disciples: *Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.* He wanted them to remember that when they looked at Jesus they were looking into the face of God! Our Jesus is with us in the bad times, the good times, and yes, even just the plain frustrating times. He cares. **1 Peter 5:7 (ESV)** ⁷ *casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*

Jesus calls heaven *my Father’s house*. Welcome home – welcome to my Father’s house. It has many rooms. The Greek word is **monē** meaning ‘abiding places.’ McGee explains that Jesus is saying that this vast universe is filled with abiding places or places to live. When we accept Christ as Savior we have a place to abide forever.

When we read Jesus’ words: *I go to prepare a place for you* – I suppose our first human thought could be construction – homes like we might build on earth – even a mansion like the word is translated in the KJV. However, it is more probable that Jesus was referencing the preparation He must do in the coming days – hours really. The sin problem had to be settled before we could enter heaven. The Door must be opened into the Presence of God. Jesus had just initiated the Lord’s Supper and spoke about His body being broken – His blood being spilled – this was how Jesus was preparing for our abiding place in heaven. Jesus must travel the Via Delarosa – The Way of Suffering.

Some suggest heaven is a condition and not a place when, in fact, heaven is both a place and a condition. To be clear, the condition for acceptance into the Father’s house is having accepted the redemption provided by the Son of God. **Ephesians 1:7 (ESV)** ⁷ *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.*

Others would like to suggest that heaven is not a real place and I just want to say that is a real lie. John R. Rice, says “Pray God will make heaven real to you. It is not far away. Angels come and go continually from heaven to earth and back... Let no unbelief steal away the blessed promises about heaven.”

Read John 14:5-7 (ESV) ⁵ *Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”* ⁶ *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”* ⁷ *If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”*

From the beginning of Jesus' ministry, the disciples had envisioned an earthly kingdom. They still did not understand that Jesus was going to His Father's house in heaven by the way of suffering. Thomas wanted Jesus to know they didn't get it. How would they know the way to the place with many rooms? Jesus' answer to Thomas brings us to another of Jesus' seven I AM statements. *I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.* In the Greek language, I AM is a very intense way of referring to oneself. The God of Heaven had identified Himself to Moses as I AM.

Our Great I AM, Jesus, is The Way – The Way Home – The Way to the Father! How could Jesus be the Way? The writer of Hebrews explains in **Hebrews 9:12 (ESV)** ¹² *he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.* For this reason The Way became one of the early names for the Christian faith.

Jesus, our Great I AM, brought the Truth of God into the world. How could He be the Truth of God? By the Father sending Him to us! *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)*

Jesus, the Great I AM, is The Life. Eternal Life comes through faith in Jesus! John began his gospel by saying in **John 1:4 (ESV)** ⁴ *In him was life, and the life was the light of men.* Jesus in another I AM statement had said to Martha in **John 11:25 (ESV)** ²⁵ ... *"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.*

Jesus not only said that He was *the way the truth and the life*; He also added, *No one comes to the Father except through me.* No one else can bring people to God. Why? Jesus had already explained in **John 6:44 (ESV)** ⁴⁴ *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.*

By the way, no one can claim to know God while rejecting Jesus His Son. Some say it is too narrow-minded to believe Jesus is the only way to heaven. Is believing that $2 + 2 = 4$ too narrow-minded? No, you say, that is a fact. Well, it is the same with Jesus – He is the only way to the Father.

When Jesus said, *If you had known me*, Jesus was not saying that they did not know Him but they still did not know that His destiny on earth the first time was to die as a sacrifice for our sins. They were clinging to the Jewish idea of an earthly Messiah. *From now on you do know him and have seen him* meaning that when they saw His death and resurrection, they would know The Way Home.

Read John 14:8-11 (ESV) ⁸ *Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."* ⁹ *Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"* ¹⁰ *Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.* ¹¹ *Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.*

But, they still didn't get it. *Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.* It is not clear exactly what Philip was thinking. Maybe he pictured some type of glory revelation similar to what Moses had

experienced or the view into heaven that Isaiah saw. Jesus had previously told them in **John 10:30 (ESV)** ³⁰ *I and the Father are one.*” Wiersbe comments, “I appreciate Philip's desire to know the Father. He had come a long way since that day Jesus found him and called him. The burning desire of every believer ought to be to know God better.”

Philip had seen Jesus perform many miracles. He had seen the dead being brought back to life, Jesus calming the storm, walking on water –the list goes on. Everything that Philip was asking to see, he had already seen in Jesus. Jesus is a much greater revelation of God than anything in the Old Testament. His greatest work of all was to reveal the Father. Philip had experienced God in the flesh.

Read John 14:12-14 (ESV) ¹² *“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.*”

Jesus begins with another *truly, truly* statement. The truth of these verses contain two promises from Jesus.

(1) *Whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do.* Jesus is not saying that the Eleven were going to do more amazing miracles that He performed. Through the Power of the Holy Spirit, the disciples would be instruments of God who would carry the good news of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. Fifty days after Christ’s resurrection and 10 days after Christ’s ascension, the Holy Spirit fell on the day of the Feast of Pentecost. Peter who from fear had denied Christ on the night before the crucifixion addressed the crowd through the Power of the Holy Spirit and 3,000 people found their Way Home to the Father! Today, we still have the power through the Holy Spirit to bring folks to the Father.

(2) *Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do.* Was Jesus talking specifically to the disciples then or is the promise also for us today? This is not a blank check from Jesus to fulfill our physical and earthly desires. If we pray to win the lottery and promise to give a tithe and then tack on ‘in Jesus’ name I pray’ and conclude that we should win the lottery because we are praying in Jesus’ name, we have missed the point. What Jesus was talking about – goes to our spiritual depth. Ask Him to send you someone to witness to – and He will do it. Ask Him to show you a place of service in His name and He will do it.

My interpretation of this particular promise in no way limits the answering of our prayers. Jesus has promised to answer us when we ask according to His will. John said in **1 John 5:14-15 (ESV)** ¹⁴ *And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.*

There have been times in my prayer life when I have experienced what John was talking about – I knew God heard me. Therefore, I claimed this promise and looked forward to receiving the answer to my prayer and I did get the answer. I am not unique. This is something that has happened to believers throughout the ages. How does a person know when God hears? It is not something that I can really explain to you. You must learn how to hear God for yourself. But, when it happens, you will know and you will experience the feeling of being at home with the Father.