

The Gospel of John

Lesson 19: The Way, the Truth, and the Life -- John 14:1-31

The room is heavy with dread. Jesus has just told His disciples that He is leaving, that one of them will betray Him, and that Peter, brave, blustering Peter, will deny Him three times before morning. Everything they have built their lives on for three years is about to be torn away. You can feel the panic rising. And into that frightened silence Jesus speaks words that have steadied trembling hearts ever since: "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me." He does not minimize what is coming. He simply gives them, and us, a place to put our fear, which is trust in Him.

Then He makes a promise about the future that has been read at more funerals than any other passage in Scripture: "In my Father's house are many rooms... I go to prepare a place for you. And... I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also." Heaven is not a vague hope or an impersonal destination; it is the Father's house, and Jesus Himself is preparing a place there for His own. Thomas, ever the honest doubter, blurts out, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" And Jesus answers with one of the most exclusive and most comforting claims He ever made.

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Not a way among many ways. Not one truth among many truths. The way, the truth, the life. There is one road to the Father, and it is a Person. In a world that insists all paths lead to God, Jesus says there is one, and He is it. And Philip, still not understanding, says, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus answers with gentle astonishment: "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." To look at Jesus is to look at God.

And before the chapter ends, Jesus makes a promise that will carry His disciples through everything that is coming. He will not leave them as orphans. He will send "another Helper," the Spirit of truth, who will dwell with them and teach them all things and bring to their remembrance everything He has said. He leaves them His peace, "not as the world gives," a peace that can survive even the cross. This chapter is Jesus comforting frightened followers on the worst night of their lives, and the comfort He gives is not that the trouble will pass quickly, but that He is the way to the Father, that He is preparing a place, and that they will never be left alone. Read it slowly and let it quiet your own troubled heart.

Group Discussion: Jesus said, "Let not your hearts be troubled" on the very night His disciples had the most reason to be troubled (v. 1). What does it mean to obey this command, and how is trusting Christ different from simply pretending we are not afraid?

Personal Reflection: Jesus promised to prepare a place and come again so that “where I am you may be also” (vv. 2–3). How real is the hope of heaven and being with Christ in your daily life, and how might holding it more firmly change the way you face your fears and losses?

Read John 14:1–31

Study Questions

1. Jesus said, “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me” (v. 1). What is the relationship between a troubled heart and trust in Christ, and how does Jesus offer His followers a place to put their fear?
2. Jesus spoke of going to prepare a place in His Father’s house and coming again to take His own to be with Him (vv. 2–3). How does the hope of being with Christ forever speak to a specific fear or grief you are carrying right now?
3. Jesus declared, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (v. 6). What is Jesus claiming, and why is the exclusivity of this claim both offensive to the world and deeply good news?
4. Thomas honestly admitted, “we do not know... How can we know the way?” (v. 5), and Jesus met his question with truth. How can honest questions, brought to Christ, become a path to deeper faith rather than a threat to it?
5. Jesus told Philip, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (v. 9). What does this teach about how fully Jesus reveals God, and what does it mean that we come to know the Father by knowing the Son?
6. Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us” (v. 8), still longing for something more when Christ was right in front of him. Where do you look for something more when Christ Himself is what you most need, and how do you refocus on Him?
7. Jesus promised, “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth” (vv. 16–17), and said the Spirit would “teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (v. 26). To whom were these specific promises first given, and what do they tell us about how we received the inspired teaching of the New Testament?
8. Jesus said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (v. 15), and “Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me” (v. 21). How does this passage tie our love for Christ to obedience, and where is your love for Him being tested by a specific command right now?
9. Jesus left His disciples a startling gift: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid” (v. 27). How is the peace Christ gives different from the peace the world offers, and how do we actually receive and live in this peace amid real trouble?
10. Look back over this chapter of comfort, from “let not your hearts be troubled” to “my peace I give to you.” What is one specific way Jesus is forming you to trust Him as the way to the Father and to rest in His peace?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Acts 4:12, salvation in no other name than Jesus; 1 Timothy 2:5, one God and one mediator between God and men; 2 Timothy 3:16–17, all Scripture breathed out by God and profitable; John 16:13, the Spirit guiding the apostles into all truth; Philippians 4:6–7, the peace of God guarding our hearts and minds.