

TUESDAY BIBLE CLASS

A study in John 13-17

John 14:1-31

October 29, 2007

Intro: As we come to chapter 14 we must keep in mind that it is a continuation of chapter 13. As Bishop Ryle has pointed out at the end of chapter 13 and the beginning of chapter 14, “the place, the time, and the audience” (II, p. 82) are all the same. The Passover Supper was ended, the Lord’s Supper had been instituted, for some reason unknown to all of the disciples except for Peter and John, Judas had departed, and the Lord had announced that He was going away, and that they were not going to be able to follow Him. It is no wonder that after all of that, the Lord said unto them, “Let not your heart be troubled.” And you can see that He repeated that comforting exhortation in the latter part of verse 27: “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” *So this clearly indicates what the Lord’s purpose was in ministering to His disciples on this very solemn occasion.* Quoting someone else, Pink described the situation in which the Lord and His disciples found themselves in the Upper Room like that of a man who was standing, facing the “glorious radiance of the setting sun, surrounded with dark clouds, and about to plunge into darker, which, fraught with lightning, thunder, and tempest, wait on the horizon to receive him” (p. 344).

Pink also pointed out a fact about this situation that our Lord faced at this particular moment in His life on earth that is easy for us to overlook. I am going to read his words to you in full because it couldn’t be said any better than he has said it. Here are his words:

Most blessedly do [our Lord’s] words here bring out the perfections of the God-Man. Any other man, even a man of superior strength of mind and kindness of heart, placed, so far as he could be placed in our Lord’s circumstances, would have had his mind thrown into such a state of uncontrollable agitation, and most certainly would have been too entirely occupied with his own sufferings and anxieties to have any power or disposition to enter into and soothe the sorrows of others. But though completely aware of all that awaited Him, though feeling the weight of the awful load laid upon Him, though tasting the bitter cup which He must drain, He not only retained full self-possession, but took as deep an interest in the fears and sorrows of the apostles as if He Himself had not been a sufferer. Instead of being occupied with what lay before Himself, He spent the time in comforting His disciples: He ‘loved them unto the end’ (pp. 344, 345).

This chapter is not easy to outline, although it is absolutely certain that the Lord had a definite plan or order which He followed in speaking to His disciples on this occasion. His repetition of what He said in verse 1, which is found again in verse 27, seems to indicate that verses 1 through 27 are one unit. In that He spoke to them in verses 1 through 6 about where He was going, what He was going to be doing, and He gave them a promise that He was coming back. In verses 7 through 14 he spoke about His relationship with God, the Father. Then from verse 15 to verse 27 He spoke of how important it was for them to obey His commandments and promised them the gift of the Holy Spirit. All of this was to comfort the disciples because of the fact that He was soon to leave them. And then in the last four verses of the chapter our Lord seemed to conclude as He had started in verse 1. So it was to give them further encouragement that they should not be troubled, but believing Him could expect to have peace in their hearts.

Now let us begin with verse 1. Let me call this:

I. The Lord’s call for His disciples to trust Him, to live by faith, and so to avoid having a troubled heart (John 14:1-27).

14:1a He began: “Let not your heart be troubled.” What does it mean to have a troubled heart? Probably most of us, if not all of us, could answer that question without having to look up a definition. It means

to be agitated within ourselves, in our hearts. Usually it is because we face some situation over which we have no control. It means to be discouraged, depressed, just plain worried. It often keeps us from doing what we ought to do. It means that we have no peace, that we are disturbed, that inwardly we are in great turmoil. It is not a condition which anyone enjoys. It means that we are thoroughly miserable.

It is interesting that this word “troubled” is used about our Lord in three previous chapters of John – John 11:33; 12:27, and 13:21. It troubled the Lord when He saw Mary and others weeping over the death of her brother. It troubled the Lord when He contemplated His own death, and before He prayed that the Father would save Him “from this hour,” the hour of His sacrificial death. Now we know that to worry is a sin. But the Lord Jesus was totally sinless, and so it could not mean that He was worried at these points in His life. However, He was a real human being who could be touched with all of the feelings of our infirmities. In all of our afflictions He was afflicted. So, for example, when it became time for the Lord to tell John and Peter who it was who was going to betray Him, it depressed the Lord. It caused great turmoil in His soul. It disturbed Him and caused deep agitation within Him. He, and He alone among men at this time, knew that Judas would betray Him, and it affected Him like it would affect us if we had a friend who had turned against us. In addition, He knew where Judas was going, not just to the chief priests and to the scribes, but to hell itself. And it troubled Him greatly. The Lord has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. In his case He did not worry. He did not sin. But He was troubled.

Here at the beginning of John 14 our Lord knew that the disciples were troubled, were discouraged, were worried about several things. They were worried (at least two of them) because of what Judas went out to do, and they were troubled because of what He had told Peter that he would deny Him. But probably the main reason for their troubled hearts, was that the Lord had told them that He was going away. And so He said to them collectively, “Let not your heart be troubled.”

Now what good does it do to tell someone not to be discouraged when they already are discouraged? That probably bothered the disciples too. Did the Lord mean that they had the power within themselves to get themselves out of their own depression?

If you pay attention to the commandments that the Lord has given us in Scripture, you will have to admit that they are all beyond what we have the power to do to ourselves. Yet we are responsible to obey the Lord. The Lord’s commandment was directed toward His disciples. He did not mean that they had the power, the ability, to do this for themselves, but He meant that they were responsible to find the means that the Lord had provided, in this instance, to get them out of the pit of discouragement. After all, the Lord had told them that He was going away. Did this mean that they had made a big mistake in leaving all to follow the Lord if now He was going to leave them?

We, the Lord did not let them wait very long before he told them the remedy for a troubled heart, in their cases, a multi-troubled heart. It wasn’t just one thing that had gotten them down; it was several things. At this point it looked like the work of the Lord might be falling apart.

14:1b But what did the Lord tell them? What was the cure for their troubled hearts? It was faith – faith in God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. “Ye believe in God believe also in Me. Had not Habakkuk the prophet already taught them, “The just shall live by faith” (Hab. 2:4)?

Now there is an interesting fact in the original Greek of this latter part of verse 1. The two times that the verb “believe” appears in this verse, they are the same form both times. Well, you might say, “They are the same for in English; they are spelled exactly alike.” But in Greek the spelling of the present indicative is the same as the

present imperative. So they could both be statements of fact saying that they were trusting in God and they were trusting in the Lord Jesus. Or the Lord could have been tell them, “Believe in God, and believe in Me. Or one of these believes could have been a statement of fact, and the other a command for them to do something. Or it could be the other way around. Different expositors have different ideas. Robertson says that probably they are both imperatives. Pink said that he thought the first was in the indicative, meaning that they were already trusting in God, but the second was an imperative meaning that they needed to trust the Lord Jesus just like they were already trusting in God.

Pink’s idea seems to be the most reasonable to me. The disciples were already trusting God, but they needed to trust the Lord Jesus the same way they were trusting God. So the verse could be paraphrased to read like this: “You are trusting in God, now trust Me in the same way that you trust Him.” The Lord Jesus knew that their trouble was a lack of faith in Him. They weren’t trusting Him like they trusted God. I believe that is why in verses 7 and following the Lord took several verses to show the relationship between Himself and the Father. It does not bother the Father if we are trusting in the Son. In fact, if we really are trusting the Father, we are also going to be trusting the Son. You can’t really be trusting the Father without trusting in the Son.

But let us look at what the disciples probably believed about God. They believed that He was the living God. They believed that He was a holy, sinless God. They believed in the power of God. They believed in His wisdom. They believed in the unchanging character of God. They would have been exposed to this teaching anyway. They undoubtedly differed in the degree to which they believed this truth. Now what the disciples needed to take all that they had learned about God and apply it all to the Lord Jesus Christ. They knew that God is a faithful God, standing behind His Word. They needed to recognize that since Jesus was God, He, too, was faithful to all that He had taught the disciples about Himself. What the Lord Jesus was saying to His disciples was that the cure for a troubled heart is to keep trusting God, and to trust Him the same way that they were taught to trust God.

If you haven’t read Jerry Bridges’ book, “Trusting God,” I encourage you to read it as soon as you possibly can. And if you will excuse me for recommending my own daughter’s book, “When Life and Beliefs Collide,” I would encourage you to read it too. Life and faith were apparently on a collision course in the minds of the apostles, and they often seem to be with us too. But the main book to read when we have troubled hearts is the Book of books, the Bible. But that is often the time when we quit reading the Lord. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17). The Lord Jesus is “the Author and Finisher of our faith,” according to Hebrews 12:2.

The main lesson in all of this is that we obey the commandments of the Lord by depending upon Him to enable us to trust Him and to show that we trust Him by walking by faith in Him.

But now let us go on to verse 2 of John 14.

14:2 Now the Lord was going to strengthen their faith by telling them where He was going, and what He was going to be doing. Now they were not to question what the Lord said, but to believe it! And when we read this in Scripture, we are not to doubt what the Lord said, but we are to believe it, and to enjoy it, and let it lift us out of our troubled state, our doldrums.

The Lord told them that He was going to prepare a place for them in “My Father’s house.” When Mary Magdalene met the Lord after His resurrection, she apparently was so happy to see Him that she did not want to

let Him go. But the Apostle John recorded for us what the Lord said to her in John 20:17:

17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

So if the Lord's Father was Mary Magdalene's Father, then He is my Father also and yours, too, if you know the Lord. What a wonderful name for heaven, our Father's house. This means it is our home. And in it there are "many mansions," or abiding places, dwelling places. And the Lord is preparing for all of the saints. I don't know how He is preparing them for us, and what He is doing, but I can tell you that it will be infinitely better than anything that you and I have had, or ever could have, on this earth. I can believe that our Lord is waiting with great anticipation until we are all there.

I was born and raised in Tacoma, Washington. My folks had eight children. The first one died at birth, and I was the first one after that. In 1930 my mother took the five of us who had been born at that time, and drove down to southern California where we stayed for about three months living by rotation with her five sisters and their families. I did not know even though I was ten years old at the time what my folks were up to. We lived in a very modest home with a main floor, a basement, and an attic, which was unfinished. There were just two bedrooms on the main floor, so the four of us boys slept in the attic.

Well, we did not know why we were in California so long, but while we were away my Dad had our attic finished like a bedroom on a ship. The four of us boys had built in bunk beds, with a drawer for our clothes under each bed. At the end of the two beds on each side were ship lights. In between the beds was a large table which was fastened to the floor where we could do our school work. My Dad flew down to California to get us because our mother had our car in California, and then all seven of us drove back in the car. We didn't know that our Dad had done anything to the house, but he was absolutely delighted, and so were we when we home and found the old rafters had all been covered up and we had a new clean, freshly painted, bedroom.

My Dad did what the Lord is going to do. He came to California to take all of us to himself at home. He was preparing our place for us through the summer. That was a great surprise for us in those days during the Great Depression. That is just a small and very imperfect illustration of what our Lord is doing. He came to earth on a mission from our heavenly Father. He came to die for our sins. He went back to heaven, as He said He would, to prepare a place for us, and some day, perhaps very soon, He is coming back to take us to our heavenly home which He is now preparing for us. And we won't have to worry about fires that might destroy those many dwelling places that He is preparing for us.

But I want you to notice how the Lord described heaven here in verse 3:

14:3 But how are we going to get to our new home? The Lord said, "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."

The Bible doesn't tell us a great deal about heaven. But it tells us one thing, and it is what this verse tell us. The Lord Jesus said that "I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." The Lord didn't leave them because He didn't want to be with them. He was not leaving them alone. He left, but He is coming back, not to stay on earth again, but to take us to be with Himself because that is where He wants us to be. It might have seemed, and probably did seem, like the Lord was leaving them because He didn't want to be with them anymore. But just the opposite was true. He left them to prepare a place where they and all of the saints on earth could be with Him in glory eternally.

There used to be an old hymn that we sang in church when I was young. I was looking for it, but could not find it in any of our hymnals. But it had the words, "Where Jesus is, 'tis heaven there." It doesn't make any differ-

ence where it is as long as Jesus is there! And He will be!

I want to read to you the last three verses of 1 Thessalonians 4 where Paul said the same thing that our Lord said here about His return, and where it will be:

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

And then the Lord said in John 14:4:

14:4 “And whither I go, and the way ye know.”

Now in these verses the Lord did not mention what was going to happen before He could “go.” He knew that He was going to die on a Cross. And he was anticipating how terrible that death would be. He knew that He would be put in a grave, which would be proof that He was really dead. But He also knew that He would be raised from the dead, and that then He would return to His Father. When we read that the disciples did not believe that He would die, we can understand that while He was prepared to comfort them, and did so, none of them offered comfort to Him. In fact, they would all run from Him to protect their own lives. He was really alone in one sense, but not alone in another. In John 16:32 we read what He told His disciples before His arrest:

32 Behold the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me (John 16:32).

From a human standpoint it must have been very discouraging to the Lord to have the disciples respond to Him as they did in these last hours before His arrest and death. It is apparent that the apostles were very deficient in their understanding of the Lord’s ministry on earth. They continued to have in mind an earthly kingdom. They had no idea of the full mission of the Messiah in His coming to the earth at this time. He had just told them where He was going, what He was going to do, and that He was coming again to take them to Himself so that where He was, they would be there too.

But when the Lord said, “Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know,” Thomas responded as we read in verse 5.

14:5 Thomas’ comment is most amazing. It is as though the Lord had not been talking to the disciples at all. It showed how it is possible to hear the Word, and for us, to read the Word, without any real understanding of what we have been reading and hearing. We have our own idea of what the Lord ought to be doing and that further blinds our minds as to what He has actually told us. We are all going to find, but probably not until we get to heaven, that the Lord has told us much more than we think that He has told us. Ryle quotes Trapp who said that Thomas was ““like people who hunt for their keys and purses, when have them in their pockets”” (I, p. 291).

Pink suggests that Thomas with his humanistic tendency may have thought that the Lord was constructing some place in the Holy Land, and that that was where He was going. How quickly people, even the Lord’s people, are inclined to put a merely human interpretation on spiritual truth.

But the Lord was very gracious and patient with Thomas, as undoubtedly He often has been with us. And

He proceeded to tell Thomas what He obviously did not understand. And we have in our Lord's response one of the greatest statements of the Gospel in the Bible.

14:6 The Lord Jesus told Thomas that He was the way to the Father's house. The Apostle Peter may have had in his mind Thomas' statement here when he wrote the words that he did in 1 Peter 3:18. This is what he said:

18 for Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

Bishop Ryle's comment on our Lord's response was this:

This wonderful saying is a brilliant example of a foolish remark calling out a great truth from our Lord's lips. To the ill-natured remark of the Pharisee we owe the parable of the Prodigal Son (see Luke chapter xv); to the fretful complaint of Thomas we owe one of the grandest texts of Scripture. It is one of those deep utterances which no exposition can thoroughly unfold and exhaust (I, pp. 291, 292).

Godet says in his commentary:

It is Thomas . . . who becomes here, as at other times, the organ of doubting thoughts and discouraged feelings which existed more or less in them all (p. 831).

The Lord's words to Thomas, were: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

I like what Hendriksen said about the Lord's word, "I am the way":

Jesus does not merely show the way, He is Himself the way. It is true that He *teaches* the way (Mark 12:14; Luke 20:21), *guides* us in the way (Luke 1:79), and *has dedicated* for us "a new and living way" (Heb. 10:20), but all of this is only possible because He is Himself the way. . . Notice also the pronoun *I*. In the last analysis we are not saved by a principle or by a force but by a Person. In the school the pupil is educated not primarily by blackboards, books, and maps, but by the teacher who makes us of all these means. . . So also the means of access to the Father is Christ Himself (p. 267).

He is the living way.

"I am the way" not only means that the way to the Father was through Christ, but this meant through the Person of Christ, and through the work of Christ, His sacrificial and substitutionary death on the Cross where He offered Himself to God on behalf of all of those for whom He died. It is not by works. It cannot be purchased with money. No one has the personal qualifications by which he could be rewarded by access to God. It was by Christ and by Christ alone. John 3:16 and 3:36 show that by faith in Christ our God-given Redeemer is not one way of salvation, but He is the only Savior from penalty of sin which is eternal damnation.

"I am the truth" emphasizes the fact that all other religions are false. He is the truth in contrast with that which is a lie. There are countless other man-made doctrines which promise heaven, or paradise, but only through Christ is the true way. "There is a way that seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" is a proverb recorded twice in the book of Proverbs (14:12; 16:25) because man is inclined to think that in some way, even just taking his chances, he will find his way to God and to heaven. Error stands in great contrast to the truth of God's Word. When the Lord claimed to be "the truth," he probably had in mind that He is the One Who is primarily the main theme of the Word of God. As the truth also He is the One toward Whom all previous shadows, type, and prophecies looked. He is the living truth.

"I am the Life" is a reminder that all men are dead in trespasses and in sins. They are separated from God by a gulf which no man can span. The Gospel alone gives us life. He is "the resurrection and the life." He alone

has overcome the devastating effect of sin in the world, and in the lives of all who put their trust in Him. We have His promise that those who trust in Christ shall never perish, but have everlasting life. He was raised from the dead never to die again. Romans 6:9 tells us “knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death has no more dominion over Him.” “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:12).

All we will ever need to find eternal acceptance with God, is found only in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is just as true as it ever was. Jesus Christ “is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.”

And, as if this is not enough, the Lord added, “no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.” Someone wrote, “Without the way, there is no going. Without the truth, there is no knowing. Without the life, there is no living.” This is what our Lord has said, and there is no salvation apart from Him, nor can there be. Scripture is in total agreement with the words of the Lord Jesus in this verse. In Acts 4:12 we read Peter’s words, “Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). And Paul told Timothy, “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:6). In Hebrews 5:9 we read that our Lord is “the author of eternal salvation to them that obey Him.” The Apostle John said in 1 John 4:14 that “the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.” And he declared in the Gospel that bears his name, in chapter 20, verse 31, “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His Name.”

Jesus Christ is the way to God, and the only way. For a Christian, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord., which is “far better” than anything that we might have or experience in this fallen world which is characterized by sin. The person who dies without having trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ, has absolutely no hope. “Today is the day of salvation.” This is all we can be assured of. We have no assurance that we will have a tomorrow. If we are going to God when we die, we have to trust Him as our Savior *now!*

Quoting Hendriksen again, speaking of Christ as “the Way, the Truth, and the Life, he said,
All three concepts are active and dynamic. The way *brings* us to God; the Truth *makes* men free; the Life *produces* fellowship (p. 268).

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14:7 Some consider this verse as belonging to the first six verses of chapter 14, or it can be the first verse of the section leading down to and including verse 14 where the Lord spoke more about His relationship with His Father.

In verse 6, as we have seen, the Lord made some tremendous claims for Himself. He had spoken to them of going to His “Father’s house.” Now He says to them, “If ye had known Me, ye should have known my Father also.” We come to the same idea here that we had Sunday morning in considering Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 1 where the Apostle Paul said that there were certain great truths that he was praying that they would “know.” Now the Lord here said, “If ye had known Me.” Of course, they were all acquainted with the Lord. They had known Him in a limited way. But, as Pink says, the reason that they were having so much trouble with what the Lord was saying was “because their views respecting Himself were so defective and deficient” (p. 357). They knew the Lord in a limited way, but they did not fully know the Lord. The whole Gospel of John has to do with bringing people to the knowledge of Christ, Who He actually was. Cf. John 20:30-31. So they knew Him, and yet in many ways they did not know Him. But the Lord encouraged them to pursue the knowledge of Himself

with the promise that this would lead them to a true and more complete knowledge of the Father. So to know Christ in His Deity, is to know the Father. And the Lord said that “henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him.” The more we learn about Jesus Christ, the more we know about God because being the Son of God, and was one in nature and in union with the Father. This is a basic truth in theology, the knowledge of God.

All through Scripture, from Genesis 1:1 all the way to Malachi we have God revealing Himself in various ways. But the final and complete way in which God has seen fit to reveal Himself, is in Christ. And only the Holy Spirit could enable them to understand even Christ. Basically this is why the NT was completed in less than a hundred years when the OT was written over a period of some 1500 years, going back to the days of Moses who wrote the first five books of the OT. That is why we can describe the Bible as not only a revelation *from* God, but it is a revelation *about* God. God has been fully revealed in Christ. You can see from this why it is so important to believe in the Deity of Christ. Moses told us about God. David teaches us more about God. We can learn about God from every writer of the OT. But there are *four books* in the NT telling us about Christ and His life on earth because He is the greatest and final revelation of God that we have in Scripture. Undoubtedly there is more to know about God which we will learn when we are in heaven, but we have our hands and hearts full with learning all that has been revealed. With all of us, knowing God is a growing experience, and we reveal how well we know God, and how well we know Christ, by the way we trust Them, and live for Them day by day.

14:8 Now Philip speaks up. And he shows by his request the truthfulness of what the Lord had just said. He had not yet really come to an understanding of the character of our Lord. He said, “Show” (*shew* is the Old English spelling of our word *show* and is pronounced just like it) “us the Father. Thayer says that Philip was asking the Lord Jesus to make God visible. That is exactly what the Lord had been doing for approximately three years, but still the disciples had not *seen* Him. Oh, Peter had said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” but he evidently did not fully understand what he had said. Philip said most accurately, “Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.” “Sufficeth” means that they would be contented with what the Lord would do if he did that. He had not yet given Philip eyes to see.

Before we jump on Philip let us stop a moment to think about how much there is about what we have been taught about the Lord that we do not fully understand. We see this by the way we live, especially by the way we react to trying circumstances when they come along. One good illustration of the depth of the knowledge that David had of God was when he was leaving Jerusalem when Absalom, his son, was leading a rebellion against him. On the way out a man by the name of Shimei began throwing stones at David and at the men who were with David, and he cursed David saying that God was judging him because he had usurped the throne from Saul. When this happened, this is what we read in 2 Samuel 16:9-12:

9 Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head.

10 And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?

11 And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him.

12 It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day.

When bad things happen to good people, it makes everyone wonder what is going on. But David revealed that his understanding of God was greater than what the disciples had at this point in the ministry of our Lord on earth. David was not fatalistic about it. He just knew that the Lord would help them some way, and He was content to leave Shimei for the Lord to deal with him.

14:9 The Lord was very gracious in his rebuke of Philip, and all the more when it was directed to Philip personally. Philip probably knew that he was speaking for the other eleven because he had said, “Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.”

The Lord, of course, knew the hearts of His disciples, and He knew that the other disciples had the same problem that Philip had. The Lord was in the flesh, and even though He was God, He experienced many of the same emotions that we experience. How would you have felt if you had been in the Lord’s place and had to deal with eleven men to whom you were committing your work after three years of intensive training, and had to realize that they had not yet “seen” who you were. It would look like the Lord needed to delay His death to spend more time with His disciples because it was very evident at this point that they were really not ready to continue what the Lord had been doing on earth. I think that the reason that the Lord was not totally dismayed at this point was because He knew, that while He would leave them after His resurrection, He was going to send the Holy Spirit to them, and that the Holy Spirit would continue the work that He had started, but had not seen it finished.

But then the Lord said to Philip essentially what He had already told all of the disciples the same thing that He has said in verse 7 – that if they had “seen” (notice He did not use the word “know”), if they had seen Him, they had seen the Father. So how could they say, “Show us the Father.”

The disciples here are a good illustration of what Paul prayed in his prayer in Ephesians 1. The disciples needed *the eyes of their hearts to be opened* so that they would clearly understand Who the Lord Jesus was, why He had come to the earth, what He had to do, and what all of this had to do with the Father, and getting to the Father’s house. I don’t want to overstate the problem that the Lord had uncovered in the hearts of His disciples, but it seems to me that they did not have a clear understanding of the Gospel. They were thinking in terms of a King, not a Savior. And they were thinking of earthly blessings; the Lord wanted them to be thinking about “the Father’s house.”

But notice how the Lord went on to talk to the disciples in verse 10.

14:10 Here the Lord questioned them about what they understood about the relationship that He had with “the Father.” He spoke of not just of their Father-Son relationship with each other, but of their living union with each other. And He spoke of it as present at that very moment. The verb “are” is not in the text, but is clearly understood to be what the Lord meant. But the word “is” is in the text, and it is a present active indicative, meaning that right now as the Lord was talking with His disciples He was in the Father, and the Father was in Him. It was not “will be” when I get back to heaven, but right now, at this present moment, I am in the Father and He is in Me. And it was true to this extent: The words that the Lord was speaking to them at that moment did not originate with Himself, but it was the Father Who at that moment was dwelling in Him, was the One Who was doing the work.

This is deep, deep truth. But it is extremely important for us to know what the Lord was saying. In just a few verses (vv. 16, 17) the Lord was going to tell them that the Holy Spirit was coming to dwell in them forever. So it should not surprise us that the Father was indwelling the Son and that the Son was in the Father just as the Lord was speaking to them.

So the words which the Lord was speaking did not originate with Him, but with the Father. And the works which the Lord Jesus did, were done by the Father. Earlier in our Lord’s ministry the Jews sought to kill Him because He claimed to be the Son of God, making Himself equal with God. What would the Jews have done to the Lord if they had heard Him saying these words? Pink said, “This is solemn.” We can’t fully explain our

Lord's words, but we must believe them as the Lord indicated in the first words of verse 10. Let us see what He said.

14:11 "Believe" is a command. But why should we believe it when we cannot fully understand it. We must believe it because our Lord has said it. We need to cultivate this habit in reading the Word. Believing leads to seeing. Isn't this what our Lord said to Martha when He was standing outside the tomb where her brother Lazarus had been buried. When He commanded that the stone on the entrance to the tomb be taken away, Martha objected saying that Lazarus had been dead four days and his body would already have started to decay. But the Lord said to her, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (John 11:40). You see, with God and with the Lord Jesus, believing precedes seeing. The disciples were in the world's mode. They wanted to see, and then they would believe.

Consistent with what we are learning here in John 14, after the Lord said what He did to Martha, *then He prayed*. And this is what we read and what He said according to John 11:41-45:

41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

The Lord prayed; the Father did the work. The Lord spoke, "Lazarus, come forth," but the Father brought Lazarus out alive. And He had to have given Lazarus life before he could have heard the Lord speak, and come out of the tomb.

I repeat – we are to believe the Word because it is the Word of God. But for those who want the evidence, the Lord honors their faith if they believe because of the works that the Father was doing through the Son. This does not mean that the Lord Jesus did not have the power in Himself, but it has to do with His incarnation when He as the Son of God became a Man that He might die for those who had been given to Him by the Father.

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14:12 As we get into this fourteenth chapter of John, I think that we can see that the Lord was seeking to comfort His disciples by encouraging them to walk by faith in a way that was going to be different from what they had become accustomed to ever since they began to follow the Lord Jesus. All of the disciples, without exception, had been walking with the Lord since He called them with the special blessing of having had His physical presence to strengthen their faith and to encourage them in their mission. But now He had indicated that He was going away, and that none of them could at that time go with Him. This meant they were going to have to learn to walk *by faith* without having His physical presence with them. It seems to have troubled them about what was going to happen to the Lord's work. They had just experienced several things that could have shaken their faith.

One was that Judas Iscariot had revealed his true self, and had departed from them to betray the Lord into the hands of His enemies. The second was the announced denial of Peter. Then both Thomas and Philip had indicated that they did not understand what was going on. And they were probably expressing how the other disciples felt as well. Could the work of the Lord succeed if the Lord were not with them? This must have been

in the minds of all of the apostles.

And so the Lord had said at the real beginning of His discourse, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me.” This could just as well have been translated, “Ye have trusted in God, not trust also in Me.” So the Lord had answered Thomas’ question, and he had responded to Philip when Philip revealed by what he said that he really did not understand the relationship between our Lord and the Father.

Now here in verse 12 the Lord was continuing to give them His encouragement. Instead of the Lord’s departure meaning that the work of the Lord was going to collapse, He told them two things: 1) They would continue to do what the Lord had done, and 2) they would do even greater works. And the Lord prefaced these remarks with that powerful word, “Verily,” doubling it to show to the disciples that what He was saying, was the absolute truth. And He concluded His words in verse 9 by indicating that the reason the work of the Lord would prosper even in His absence, was because He was going to the Father!

So instead of His departure meaning a lessening of the work of the Lord, or its total collapse, it was going to mean that the work would grow and become even greater under the blessing of the Lord. What the Lord wanted them to do was to believe Him, *to trust Him*, to continued doing what they had been doing, but with an even greater faith. This brings out a very important feature of the Lord’s teaching. All eleven of them had been saved by faith; now the Lord was telling them that they needed to continue living and serving the Lord by that very same faith. And so it has been ever since the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You and I have never had the physical presence of the Lord with us. None of us has even seen the Lord. We have had to learn the same lesson, to walk by faith, and to serve the Lord by faith, and this has been a lesson that none of us has completely learned. And the truth is, that even though we have never seen the Lord, yet He has been with us all of our lives. “We walk by faith, and not by sight”(2 Cor. 5:7). This does not mean that believing makes it so. Faith is our response to God’s Word, not by our expecting the Lord to do what He never promised that He would do.

But let us think for a moment about the words of our Lord where He said, “And greater work than these shall ye do.” On the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 it is recorded that more people were saved than ever had been mentioned being saved in the Lord’s ministry. The book of Acts tells us that miracles continued for a time after the Lord’s resurrection. And while the Lord’s ministry was confined mainly to the land of Israel, before the end of the first century the whole Roman Empire had felt the impact of the Gospel and no attempt to count how many were saved had ever been conducted. So the Ascension of the Lord marked the expansion of the Lord’s work under the ministry of the Holy Spirit in a far greater way than was ever seen during the Lord’s time on earth. Today we see people who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for their salvation in all of the nations of the earth. Earlier, the first time the Lord spoke about His Church, about building His Church, He promised His disciples that not even “the gates of hell” would “prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18. The word that the Lord used for “hell” is the word for Hades, or the OT Sheol, which speaks of the grave. That is, people come, are saved, and people go, but this last enemy of ours, death, will not prevail over what the Lord is doing in the earth even today. Great saints come, and they all die, but the work of the Lord continues today right on schedule under the power and blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But what the Lord went on to say in verses 13 and 14, was to be of special importance to the apostles, and it needs to be just as importance to us. Let us see what the Lord said.

14:13 It might be difficult for us to see the connection between verses 12 and 13, but the word “and” at the beginning of verse 13 shows that there is a connection. What does a verse on prayer, followed by another verse on prayer (v. 14) have to do with the departure of the Lord Jesus Christ?

The Lord was teaching His disciples that although He was leaving them, yet they could not do the work of the Lord without Him. He was departing from them, but He was always within listening distance. They needed to know that they would be in constant need of His guidance, His encouragement, and His blessing, and so prayer to our Lord would be a constant necessity for them in doing the work of the Lord. In most verses dealing with prayer, we are taught to address our prayers to the Father, and this is the idea here. But our right of access to the Father is our Lord Jesus Christ. The blessing of God must be sought from God, but *in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*, and here it is the Lord Who promises that He will answer. And the object of true prayer is that “the Father may be glorified in the Son.” We are not to pray that we might glory in the number of our prayers that are answered, but that God may be glorified in our Lord Jesus Christ. We may be the Lord’s servants, the instruments that the Lord uses to accomplish His will, and so the glory does not come to us, but it goes to the Father. Perhaps one reason more of our prayers are not answered, is because we are not seeking God’s will and God’s glory, but, even though it be a small part, that we might take the glory for the answer to prayer.

But the point is that there is definitely a connection between the service that we render to the Lord and the fact that we seek God’s blessing in prayer. The Lord did not just present this as a good idea, but as an absolute necessity. Work without prayer will usually be fruitless work.

To ask in the Lord’s Name is to ask what He would ask. The assurance of an answer is promised, but the answer may not come immediately. So we are to pray, and we are to pray in the Name of the Lord Jesus, that God’s will would be done, that God would be glorified, but the timing is left to our Lord Who has promised that He will do it. Sometimes the answer may be immediate, but most often there is a delay. In such a case we continue to wait upon the Lord, and we continue to trust Him. We may have to go back to the Lord with the same request more than once, but that is to show that our expectation is from the Lord. And so we continue to look to the Lord for our help, trusting in Him.

14:14 The truth of verse 13 is repeated for emphasis. It is like our Lord’s, “Verily, verily.” We need to take the promises of God seriously. He never breaks His promises. God never has never made a promise that He cannot fulfill, nor has He ever made a promise that He does not intend to fulfill. But the point of these two verses is to teach us the absolute necessity that our service and our praying go hand in hand. The one is never complete without the other. As Pink brings out so well, these verses are not a blank check with God’s signature already affixed to it for us to fill out in any way and for anything that we might choose. The Lord was discussing here the work of the Lord, the absolute necessity of prayer, but prayer that is consistent with the Person of Christ and the will of God, for the glory of God. Hudson Taylor, the founder of the China Inland Mission, used to say, “God’s work done in God’s way will never lack God’s supply.” This is true not only of money that is needed for the Lord’s work, but for every other kind of blessing that a particular work of God needs.

Then we come to another verse which seems to introduce an abrupt change. But, although it seems like this verse does not really belong here, we know that because it is the Lord’s statement, it is right where it belongs.

14:15 When the Lord said, “If ye love Me,” was He questioning their love for Him? Or was He introducing the condition under which their obedience would be acceptable to Him? Or, was He saying, “since ye love Me,” which the Greek would allow here?

I prefer to think that it was the latter. It seems to me that what has taken place, especially from Peter’s declaration at the end of chapter 13 on through the first part of chapter 14, that all of these verses were statements expressing the disciples love for the Lord. Surely when Peter said to the Lord, “I will lay down my life for Thy sake,” this was an expression of Peter’s love for the Lord. Peter’s problem was not that he didn’t love the Lord. His problem was that he didn’t understand how weak he was in himself. And when the Lord spoke of leaving

them, they were all grieved at that! Doesn't that speak of their love for Him? And when they were grieved because He told them that they couldn't go at that time where He was going, didn't that speak of their love for Him? When Judas left the Upper Room, I believe that the Lord was left with eleven men who deeply loved Him, and that there wasn't anything that they wanted any more than to be with Him, and to die with Him if that was necessary. So I would translated verse 15 to have the Lord saying, "Since ye love Me, keep my commandments." The last part of the verse should be translated, "ye will keep My commandments." The only kind of obedience that delights the Lord's heart, is the obedience that is motivated by our love for Him. Any other kind of obedience is legalism.

Both of these verbs in verse 15 are in the plural, and so it seems to me that that the Lord was saying, "*Since you all have express your love for Me, then all of you will keep my commandments.*" There is no question but that the Lord measures our love by our obedience to His Word. How convincing would I have been to my Dad if I had said to Him, "I love you, Dad, but I'm not going to do what you want me to do." That wouldn't have been very convincing to my Dad, would it? If we love a person, we are going to want to please that person. And the way we please him or her, is by doing what is pleasing to them.

The main thing that the Lord was teaching His disciples in this passage, was, "Trust Me, believe Me." Since the Lord was leaving them, they could have argued that the Lord did not love them like He had previously. There are times in our lives when the Lord seems to withdraw from us, or even abandon us, but in times like that we need to continue trusting Him, believing that He is doing the best for us even though it doesn't seem like it is. We need to keep serving Him, trusting Him, praying to Him, and obeying Him. All of this is what it means to walk by faith. These were most important lessons for the disciples to learn, and they are important lessons for all of us to learn. The Puritans used to talk about "God's desertions." Times when it seems like the Lord has deserted us. The Psalmists spoke of those times which were so confusing to them. But we can be sure from Scripture that the Lord's love for us never changes, and it never will! Our Lord was not talking about the commandments of Moses, but His own commandments, some of which are traceable to the law of Moses, but hundreds of which are found in the NT.

But then the Lord made another wonderful promise to them.

14:16 Before we examine the truth that is found in this verse, let me point out that this is one of several verses you will find in the NT which speaks of all Three Members of the Godhead. So that makes it very special, very, very important. But let's see what the Lord had to say here.

The first thing He said was that He would pray to the Father for them. "I will pray the Father" for you (understood).

In John 17 we have a wonderful illustration of the Lord's prayer for us, His elect. See vv. 9, 11b, 15, 20-22, 24, See also Hebrews 7:25.

But in our text, John 14:16, what did the Lord Jesus ask the Father to give us? You can see it in your Bible: "another Comforter." The Greeks had two words for another – one mean, another of a different kind, and the other meant, another of the same kind. This is the word for "another" that the Lord used –another of the same kind. The Holy Spirit Who is the One Who the Lord Jesus was referring to, is just like the Lord Jesus. This is evidence of the Deity of the Holy Spirit and of the unity of the Godhead. But what is a "comforter." We come to this word in 14:26; 15:26; 16:7. The word translated Comforter is the Greek word from which we get our English word, Paraclete. Basically it means He is our Helper. Literally He is One Who is *called to our side to help us*. And He is just like the Lord Jesus.

The Lord Jesus would pray to the Father, and the Father would give us the One Who is called in the first part of verse 17, “the Spirit of truth,” the Holy Spirit. And He will “abide with you forever.” You don’t have to pray that He will come because the Lord Jesus has already done that. He was poured out on all believers on the Day of Pentecost which was observed in Acts 2. And to a greatly troubled and disobedient people in Corinth the Apostle Paul could write, and did write in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20:

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Paul wrote to the church at Rome, saying that “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us” (Rom. 5:5b). And he added in Romans 8:9b, “now if any man have not the Spirit of God, he is none of His.”

We all, who know the Lord, have the Spirit of God in us, not just a part of Him, but all of Him. We can’t understand how this can be, but we believe it and can surely profit from all that He does in us and for us.

Our Lord continued in the next verse.

14:17 “Even the Spirit of truth.” The Greek actually has “the Spirit of the truth.” Our Lord called the Holy Spirit the same thing, “the Spirit of the truth, in John 16:13, and then went on to say that He guides us into “all truth,” which has to mean the truth of God’s Word, the revelation of which He is the Author. Cf. 1 Peter 1:21 where we read that “holy men of God spake as they moved by the Holy Spirit.”

So the Holy Spirit is “the Spirit of truth” because His main ministry is to guide us into all of the truth of God’s Word, and especially to take the things of Christ and show them to us.

Bishop Ryle says on this point, “Here our Lord teaches that it is one great mark of the unbelieving and worldly that they neither receive, nor know, nor see anything of the Holy Spirit . . . The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the true dividing point between the wicked and the godly” (Vol. II, p. 304). The unregenerate people of the world do not have the Spirit unless and until they are drawn to Christ and saved. The Holy Spirit in the OT dwelt *with* the saints of God, but now He *indwells* us and will never leave us. We will learn more about the Holy Spirit as we continue on in John 14, 15, and 16.

Arthur Pink, in commenting on this great truth, points out how amazing it is that the Holy Spirit would come to indwell believers we are still capable of sin, and do sin. He said that it is “not because of any personal fitness which He discovers there, for the old nature still remains in the believer.” But he says, and rightly so, that it is “as the witness to the excellency and sufficiency of that one offering of Christ’s which has perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14) (p. 372).

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14:18 We must remember that not a great deal had been said about the Holy Spirit earlier in the ministry of our Lord on earth. Limiting ourselves to the Gospel of John, the Holy Spirit is only mentioned in chapters 1, 3, 4, and 7 up to – a total of ten times in all. These were in connection with the baptism of our Lord, then concerning salvation in chapter 3 in our Lord’s conversation with Nicodemus, in 4:24 concerning the worship of God, and then in chapter 7:39 concerning the gift of the Holy Spirit which had to await the return of Christ to the Father. So in these three chapters 14, 15, and 16 we are covering new ground regarding the relationship of the Holy Spirit to believers which would change and become very important after the Lord’s ascension.

Here in 14:18 after the Lord had said in verse 17 that the Holy Spirit would take permanent residence “in” those who believe, He was stating a change for His disciples and for all who believe. Previously in OT times the Holy Spirit had been “with” the people of God; but the time was coming when he would come to dwell “in” them “forever.” (Review verses 16 and 17.)

Here in verse 18 the Lord said that He would not leave them “comfortless.” The Greek word that the Lord used was ὀρφανούς. This word is used only one other time in the NT, in James 1:27 where it is translated “fatherless.” It speaks of one bereaved, bereft, and so that is where the KJ translators came up with “comfortless.” It shows how grieved, and perhaps confused the disciples were at the Lord’s word that He was going away, but that they could not come with him.

But then He said, “I will come to you.” This has been interpreted in various ways. Some feel, like Bishop Ryle that the Lord was speaking of His return for them as He had promised in verse 3 – which is a strong possibility. Others think that it had to do with the coming of the Holy Spirit, this “another Comforter” Whom the Lord had promised in verse 16. I am inclined to think this is the right explanation. Although I also believe that the Scriptures teach that we are indwelt by all three Persons of the Godhead. But we are living in a period of time in God’s dealings with His people was mainly through the Holy Spirit, from Pentecost until the Lord comes for His Church.

Whatever may be the true explanation, it definitely was spoken by the Lord as a message of comfort for them.

14:19 “Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more.” This means that the Lord was going away and the world would not be able to see Him at all. Those who were in Israel at the time had looked upon the Lord with great interest, trying to figure Him out, both from His teachings and from the miraculous works which he did. But it took a work of God upon their hearts for them to realize Who He was, and why He had come. But they were not given eyes to see. Many saw; many more did not! Some, as we learn from Acts 2, were given that sight, but for the most part the world did not see Him so as to recognize that He was the Son of the living God.

But to the disciples He said, “But ye see me.” Ryle reminds us that the present tense here means “a fixed. steady. habitual gaze” (p. 310). But their sight would be spiritual. It had been physical and spiritual, but it was to be that they would “see” Him with the eye of faith. Their understanding of Him would increase. They would be blessed with His spiritual presence in their lives, which would become a great reality. They would see His ways in the providential work of the Lord in their lives. They were to enter into a period for the rest of their lives when they would see the Lord as we see Him. They would see His guiding, strengthening, sanctify-power in their lives.

And then He revealed to them what was to be their assurance and the great source of their strength all of their days upon the earth. Our security is in our living Savior. Because He ever lives, our lives are secure in Him. The only way that we could lose what we have in Christ would be for Christ to die. But in His resurrection “death hath no more dominion over Him” (Rom. 6:9). “Because I live, ye too shall live.” In this statement both the “I” (singular) and the “ye” (plural) are emphatic.

14:20 “At that day” must refer to the day when our knowledge of the Lord will be complete. The Apostle Paul said in 1 Cor. 13:12,

12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

“At that day” then we shall know what we are not really capable to understanding now, that Christ was in the Father, and that we are in Christ, and that Christ is in us. We are in union with both Christ and the Father. The

fact that we are in Christ is our justification. This is salvation. And the fact that Christ is in us is our sanctification. While we may not be able to understand this fully, yet remember we start by believing what we cannot understand. And as we believe it, we prosper from it, and the meaning of it all will become more understandable and more precious to us as we wait the full understanding that will be our “at that day,” the day when we are with the Lord and see Him as He is! The Lord could certainly pack a lot of wonderful truth in a few words.

It is important to see that the Lord in teaching His disciples, did not hesitate to teach them what He knew they could not fully understand. And we must do the same, even teaching what we do not fully understand. The Word itself gives us light, and in the light of the Word shining upon us and in us, we see light. Psalm 35:9; 119:130.

But notice now as we move on to verse 21, we see that it is through obedience to the Word of God that the Lord is pleased to manifest Himself to us. This is how we “see” Him. And the importance of this verse is seen in the fact that it is repeated, although in slightly different words, in verse 23.

14:21 I couldn’t begin to tell you what these two verses have meant both to Lucille and to me even before we were married, but when we knew that the Lord wanted us to get married. We were students at Baylor University, but it was not through the school that these verses were brought to our attention. As I think back over those years it was through our contact with Dawson Trotman of the Navigators and Jim Rayburn of the Young Life Campaign that these words were really drilled into our hearts. In the years that we have known Jerry and Jane Bridges these verses have been underlined in our thoughts. Jerry has emphasized with all of us that we have definite responsibilities in our relationship with the Lord, and that is what the Lord was talking about when He said the words in these verses to His disciples. It all has to do with how much we love the Lord. The first commandment of the Christian life is given us in Scripture in Deuteronomy 6:5, but it was given first place by our Lord when a Jewish lawyer, who was expected to be an expert in the interpretation of the Law, asked the Lord Jesus, not sincerely, but trying to get Him to say the wrong thing, asked Him what was “the great commandment in the Law.” The Lord knew that he was not sincere, but the Lord answered him sincerely, quoting Deuteronomy 6:5. This is the way it appears in Matthew 22:37:

37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment (Matt. 22:37-38).

In Mark and Luke’s account of this event, they added the word “strength” to what the Lord said.

Now what does this verse mean to us today? Let me answer that question this way. Suppose a person comes to you or to me, wanting to become a Christian. We talk to that person, explaining the Gospel to him, or to her, saying that it is necessary to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ that our sins might be forgiven and we could be saved. Then what if that person would ask us, “What is the main thing that I should do as a Christian?” Well, we might say, “You need to get a Bible, read it every day, and learn to pray.” We might also say, “You need to get into a church where they believe and teach the Bible so you can grow and become strong as a Christian.” We could add, “You need to have regular fellowship with other Christians.” And then we could add, “You need to learn from God’s Word how He wants you to live.” Now all of that is good advice. But we still haven’t told that person *what is the main thing that I should do as a Christian*. All that I have said is good advice, but it all has to be done with a particular motive in mind. What is the main thing that you and I should do as Christians. **The main thing is that we are to love the Lord with all of our hearts, souls, strength, and mind.** All of those things you and I have told that wrong Christian to do are good and should be done, but what gives them real meaning is that I read my Bible because I love the Lord. I need to pray because I love the Lord. I need to go to church because I love the Lord. I make my other Christians my best friends because I love the Lord.

Do you remember that in our Lord's letter to the church at Ephesus in Revelation 2 He commended them for the works, and for their labor, and for their patience, and for the way that they couldn't stand to be with people who were sinning. He praised them for the perseverance, and that they had done their works for His name's sake, and had not fallen by the way. But then the Lord said this: "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. 2:4). In the Weymouth Translation which was first published back in 1929, Mr. Weymouth translated verse 4 like this: "Yet I have this against you – that you no longer love Me as you did at the first."

You see, with all of the good things that the Ephesian believers were doing, they had forgotten what needs to come first. What gives meaning to my Bible reading, and to my praying, and to my teaching, and everything else that I do as a Christian, cannot really satisfy the Lord if He doesn't come first, if I am not doing what I do as a Christian because I love Him.

The other morning my Psalm or the day was Psalm 84, and I read those words in verse 2 where the Psalmist said, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." And I asked myself, Is that the way I feel about the Lord? Then I went on in my reading and came to verses 4 and 5:

4 Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.

5 Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; **in whose heart** are the ways of them.

And then I got down to verse 10:

10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

If God didn't want our love, He never would have had Moses tell the Israelites that that was what He wanted. And if He hadn't wanted it even from that sly Jewish lawyer, He never would have answered him as He did.

Some of you have heard me tell about a young lady who was in my Tuesday Bible Class at Central Bible. She was wealthy. She was beautiful. She had a very handsome husband. He built her a million dollar home which probably would have cost five times that today. He gave her a new luxury car ever year. But she was a very, very unhappy lady. Why? She told my why one day when she came to talk to me. She said this: "My husband has given me everything but himself." I have never forgotten her words. Eventually that marriage ended. Things alone don't make a happy home. That's why the Lord gave the advice to husbands and wives in chapter five of Ephesians because of the great importance of love.

But how do I show the Lord that I love Him? Verses 21 and 23 of John 14 tell us how we show that we love the Lord. Remember that this is how we express our love, and even doing what these verses tell us, is not sufficient if we are not motivated by our love for the Lord.

(Read verses 21 through 23.)

Notice: "He that hath my commandments." What is a commandment? A commandment is an order given as to what I am to do, or what I am not to do. Whose commandments are we talking about here? The Lord Jesus is the Speaker. What right does He have to tell me what to do? Well, He is God, the Son. But beyond that He is my Savior. He is the One Who has purchased Me for Himself. He is my Lord. He is the Sovereign of the whole universe. I am His creature. Why has He given us commands? Because all of us started out life doing the wrong things, and we have often continued to do the wrong things even after we have been saved. They are commands because He want to change the whole course of our lives. He knows where peace of heart comes from. He knows where true happiness comes from. Man left to himself is going to make all of the wrong choices. We all need the Lord to show us the right way to live. We are all the product of the way we live. If we are going to be happy, we need to be holy, and we can only be happy as the people of God if we love Him

and do what please Him because we love Him.

Now the Lord spoke of *having* His commandments. What does this mean? Where do we have them? All of you could give me the answer to that question. The Lord's commandments are in His Word – all through His Word. Well, does it mean that you *have* His commandments just because you own a Bible, or two or three or four or five different translations. Yes, in one way you do, but there is more than that to *having* His commandments. *To have them you need to know what they are! When we read our Bibles we pay attention to what God wants us to know and to believe, but are you and I as concerned about being obedient as we are about being orthodox? It is important to know the truth of God's Word, but one evidence that we believe the right thing is that we are doing the right things, and not doing the wrong things.* The only person who is going to make it his, or her, business to find the commandments of Scripture, and “keep them,” is the person who is motivated by love for the Lord. “We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

You see, we need to pay attention to every word of verse 21, as we do of all of the Bible. Here in this passage the Lord was seeking to bring comfort, and to restore joy to the hearts of His disciples who were unhappy because He told them that He was going away, and they could not follow Him then. A happy Christian is an obedient Christian, obedient to the Word. But His obedience must be because He loves the Lord, and His love is evidence of His love.

But there is still more meat in this verse. One thing that we need to notice about the commandments of Scripture, is that there is often a promise connected with them. The commandment is for me to do (by the grace of God); the promises are His response with blessing when we seek to do His will.

What are the promises that the Lord gave here? There are three of them:

- 1) “He that loveth Me shall be loved of my Father,
- 2) “And I will love Him,
- 3) “And will manifest Myself to him.

Does this mean that the Lord doesn't love us, or that He will stop loving us, if we don't show our love for Him by our obedience to His commandments? Absolutely not! The Lord loved us from eternity past. It is an eternal love, meaning it is like God, unchanging. But the child of God who love the Savior, and shows His love by His obedience to the Word, is the person who will receive added blessings as further evidence of His amazing love for us. Bishop Ryle said, “There is more of heaven on earth to be obtained than most Christians are aware of” (II, 313). The obedient life is the life of blessing, special blessings, especially having to do with knowing the Lord.

The verb that the Lord Jesus used here is the verb, ἐμφανίζω. It means, *to make yourself known to another*. We only do this to special friends, and it is usually done after an extended acquaintance. This is what Paul had in mind when he wrote to the Philippians about his relationship with the Lord, saying, “That I may know Him” (Phil. 3:10). And it is what Peter was exhorting all believers to do when he wrote, “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). “Will manifest” speaks of a growing acquaintance with the Lord. It is when we respond to the Lord's love for us with our love for Him, expressed in doing His will. Every Christian knows the Lord, but through fellowship with Him, the Lord has promised to make Himself known to the obedient child of God. It is like Job said, “I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine seeth Thee” (Job 42:5).

The Lord was not talking about visions or anything of that sort, but, since today the Lord reveals Himself primarily through the Word, this means that loving obedience to the Lord prepares the way for us to have greater insight into the Word. Some read the Word, but obtain very little profit from it. Others read the Word

and experience great blessing in the understanding that they receive. The difference can always be found in the lives of the two classes of believers – to the extent to which a child of God shows his, or her, love for the Lord by obedience to the Lord. Habitual obedience to the Word of God also produces a greater awareness of the Lord’s presence and power and grace, so that we see His hand in every aspect of our lives, and trust Him, and commune with Him, although we cannot see Him. There is more in this verse than anyone has ever been able to anticipate, but it shows how the Lord delights in us, and especially when we show our love for His beloved Son.

Back in John 5:39 the Lord in speaking to a group of Jewish leaders who were very hostile to Him, wanting to kill Him, the Lord said this:

39 Search (or, ye search – the present imperative and the present indicative are the same in form, so it is the expositor’s decision to determine which the Lord meant) the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Now we would never expect that unregenerate Jews or even unregenerate Gentiles would ever see our Lord in the OT, but how many of us can read the OT and not really see the Lord. It is when we are walking in fellowship with the Lord, therefore, lovingly obeying His Word, that the secrets of the Word are opened up to us.

November 26, 2007

14:22 At this point Judas spoke up. John tells us that it was not Judas Iscariot, so that the readers might think that Judas Iscariot had come back into the Upper Room. Judas, or Jude, was a very common name at that time. In some of the lists of the Apostles he is called Lebbaeus, or Thaddeus. See Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18. In Luke 6:16 he is called “of James,” which the translators have interpreted as meaning “the brother of” James. This has caused many to think that he was the writer of “the epistle of Jude,” but we can’t say that for sure.

What we do know about this Judas is that he had the same idea that most of the apostles had, that our Lord had to come set up His kingdom on earth, which would have been a very physical kingdom. So his question to the Lord was, “How is it that Thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?” But the Lord did not let Judas sidetrack Him from what He was saying to His disciples. Many times we can be diverted in our teaching of the Word by a misconception which someone else may introduce because of their lack of understanding. This is a good lesson for us. The Lord was speaking of the most vital truth concerning their personal relationship to Himself, truths which would make the difference between being fruitful and unfruitful. This is truth that we all have the greatest possible need to learn. The Lord wants our love first. Then He wants our continual obedience. This is what brings us into the closest possible fellowship with our Lord. So in verse 23 that Lord simply repeated what He had just said in verse 23. This is one reason that Peter spoke in the first chapter of his second epistle about the need that believers have of having the truth repeated to them. Most of us have heard more truth than we have applied to our lives anyway. Or we are like the Athenians who “spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing” (Acts 17:21). The Lord had been telling His apostles about His death, but that did not fit in with what they thought was to happen next, and so they were not hearing what the Lord had been telling them.

Well, what does verse 23 tell us?

14:23 Notice that the Apostle John in writing about this perhaps 50 or 60 years later, said that Jesus “answered” Judas. He said what He said in this verse specifically for Judas. When the Lord said, “If a man love me,” He was saying something like this: “Suppose that we have a case where a man professes to love Me, what can you expect to see in his life?” And the Lord went on to say, “He will keep my words.” We all know, or should know, that if you love a person, you are going to want to please that person. So if a person

claims to love the Lord, you can expect to see that he will do all that he can to find out what pleases the Lord, and then that is what he will do. Where this person that the Lord was talking about is going to find the power to do the Lord's will, was not the question here. Nor was the absolute impossibility for an unsaved person to please the Lord. The Lord knew that He was talking to ten men who were saved. And He directed His answer to one of them knowing that there were ten others who were hearing what he said – for the second time.

So when the Lord spoke of keeping His words, He was back to what He had been saying in verse 21. Where do we find His words? We find them in the Bible. That is the only place that we will find them. If those of us who know the Lord, or profess to know Him, do not keep His words, then we are sinning. And the Apostle John Himself made it very clear that a person who knows the Lord will not live in sin. We all know that we can still sin, but we can't live in sin! The person who is living in some known sin, and yet claims to be a Christian, does not know what a Christian is.

According to our Lord's words here a Christian is a person who loves God, and who loves the Lord Jesus Christ. And you can tell that he, or she, really loves the Lord because he, or she, is busy searching the Scriptures to find out what the Lord has commanded him, or her, to do. And then knowing that he, or she, has to depend upon the Lord for the desire and the strength to do the will of God, sets out to do it as his, or her, daily way of life. And think of the reward: "My Father will love him (or her), and WE will come unto him, and make our abode with him." What is your abode?" *It is wherever you are! You see, it's not just your house that the Lord concerned about; it's you!*

Don't ever forget these verses? And if you have never paid much attention to the commandments of Scripture, *then begin today!* In your daily Bible reading, look for the things that the Lord wants you to do, *or not do!* Take even one commandment a day, and ask the Lord to enable you to obey that one commandment. All of you already know a lot about what the Lord wants you to do, or not do. But focus on them. And then notice how your fellowship with the Lord will be the delight of your life, and even look for greater fruitfulness. When you read John 13, 14, 15, and 16, look for the commandments. When you read Ephesians, look for the commandments. Pastor Will is going to be teaching 2 Corinthians on Sunday nights, look for the commandments in that great epistle. We have in these words of our Lord Jesus Christ the way to a life of the greatest fellowship with the Lord.

But let us move on.

14:24 We need to realize that if those who love the Lord "keep," that is obey, our Lord sayings, then it has to be true that those who do not obey His Word, do not love Him. And the Lord was using "love" here in the sense of *knowing* Him. In other words, you can tell whether or not a person knows the Lord by the place that the Word of God has in His life. So many different methods have been used to get people to say that they want to be saved that I know that we have countless numbers of people in our churches who don't really know the Lord. They think that they are, but you ask a lot of professing Christians if they read the Bible, and they will tell you that they do once in a while, but not regularly. And their lives are not guided and directed by the Scriptures. We have big evangelistic campaigns in our cities, and hundreds go forward supposedly to profess their faith in Christ, but a month later you can't find most of them.

We need to set the truths of John 14 before people in our churches constantly. People need to know that the Gospel of Jesus Christ has a transforming effect upon the lives who truly know the Lord. They become new creatures. They can't possibly go on living like they used to. True Christians are people who have been brought out of darkness into the light of God. They are people who were spiritually dead, but if they are saved they have eternal life. You and I would be surprised how many couples are living together, man and woman, unmarried, but claim that they know the Lord. If there is such a thing as a homosexual church, then my Bible is not true.

The name of God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are dragged in the filth of this world by people who claim to know Jesus Christ in salvation, but go on living in sin. And it's almost as bad in the church as it is in the world.

But what did our Lord mean when He said, "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." What did He mean? He meant that every word that He spoke was what the Father had sent Him to speak. Many thought that because the Lord Jesus was a Man, that He was no more than a man. But He was the Son of God in human flesh, and every word that He spoke, He spoke because the Father had sent Him to speak like He did, to speak the very words which He spoke. And the majority of Jewish leaders who heard Him speak, hated Him for what He said. Nobody could turn their backs on what Jesus Christ taught without guaranteeing that they would spend eternity in hell. Oh, how thankful you and I should be if we love the Lord and love His Word, and if we want to live our lives doing what the Lord has declared in His Word is pleasing in His sight. We didn't do this for ourselves; God has done a work of salvation in our heart. Oh, we are far from perfect, but at least we are not what we would have been if we were still living in sin. This is what is wrong with our country. We are going our way, and shutting our eyes and our ears and hearts to anything that has to do with God and His Word. How the Lord treasured His time with those eleven men who has tasted and seen that the Lord is good. Let us ask the Lord to search our hearts so that we can be sure, very sure, that our profession of faith is Jesus Christ is real, and not just a lot of empty words.

But let us move on to verse 25.

14:25 Now you and I could have learned all of this even from the OT. Not all of the commandments there apply to us because we are not under the Law like the Jews were in OT times. We don't have certain feast days that we are to observe like the Passover, or the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We aren't under the Law of the Sabbath. But throughout Scripture, in the OT and in the NT, we find the commandments of our Lord. They may have come to us through the people who wrote the Bible, but their message came from the Lord. But nothing should be more convincing to us than the words of the Lord Jesus. But notice the tenderness of the Lord's words when He said, "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you." The Lord was saying in so many words, "I wanted you to hear these words from me so that you will understand a little better how much I love you, and want to be with you." There is nothing like hearing the truth from the Lord Jesus Jesus Himself. Let's take these words from the Lord as having been spoken for us, too. As we go through these chapters of our Lord's last hours with His apostles, let us take them as for us as well.

But there were more good things to come. Look with me at verse 26.

14:26 The last words of verse 25 were, "being present with you." These words would be a reminder to the apostles that the time was coming when He would not be "present" with them, that is, not visibly present with them as they had always known Him to be. "But" He did not want them to forget what He had already told them about the Holy Spirit Whom He had called, *the Paraclete*, or, as the word is translated here, "the Comforter." The word translated in the KJV "Ghost" is the Greek word for *spirit* – Πνεῦμα. And I prefer to read it, Holy Spirit. The Greek word for "spirit" is a neuter word, and that is why sometimes the Holy Spirit is sometimes referred to by the word *that* or *which*. The "whom" after "the Holy Ghost" in the KJ is actually a neuter pronoun, but the Holy Spirit should be referred to as "whom" because He is a Person, a Member of the Godhead and just as much a Person as the Father or the Son. He does the work of a person, "He shall teach you all things." It takes a person to teach.

The Lord here spoke of the Holy Spirit being sent by the Father, as He did in verse 16.

But note that the Father will send the Holy Spirit *in the Name* of the Lord Jesus. What does this mean? This

expression has been a great problem to expositors because the Holy Spirit was not sent as a replacement for the Lord. The Lord Jesus did not come to replace the Father even though He came in the Father's Name. So the Holy Spirit was not sent as a replacement for Christ. The Father, the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit all have a vital place in the life of a Christian and cannot be replaced, but all exercise equal authority in the lives of believers. They all are indispensable. The Holy Spirit came "in the Name" of the Lord Jesus to join with the Lord in carrying on with the same authority the work which the Father sent the Son to do. We will learn more about this as we come to the other Comforter passages. The Holy Spirit actually came to glorify Christ, and to take the things of Christ and show them to the Lord's people. There is a marvelous oneness among the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit that is difficult for us to explain or to understand because there is nothing in human relationships that can even begin to compare with the relationship between the Three Members of the Godhead. They are Three Person Who are One.

The Holy Spirit was given to do two things:

- 1) To "teach you all things," and
- 2) To "bring all things to their remembrance."

But the words "whatsoever I have said unto you" go with both expressions:

- 1) To "teach you all things" – "whatsoever I have said unto you."
- 2) To "bring all things to your remembrance" – "whatsoever I have said unto you."

Pink, in his commentary on the Gospel of John, cited two examples of this very thing happening to the apostles. In John 2:22 we read these words:

22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

Then notice what we are told in John 12:16:

16 These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

So this work of the Holy Spirit was going on even before the Holy Spirit was given to believers on the Day of Pentecost.

This verse brings with it a great deal of practical truth. The Holy Spirit often reminds us of what we have read in the Word even when we have not asked Him to. But He also does it when we specifically pray for help. Usually when I read the Word in the morning, I ask the Lord to show me what He wants me pay particular attention to in my reading. When I am studying to prepare for a Sunday service, or a Tuesday Bible Class, or any other speaking engagement, I ask the Lord to help me to understand what I am studying, and then to help me as I teach. Often I have noticed in speaking, verses have come to my mind that I had not intended to use, or suddenly I will get some insight into a verse that I have not seen before. I don't blame the Holy Spirit for the many mistakes I have made during my years of ministry, but I surely give Him the credit for anything that I say about the Word that is a blessing to you. And I know that you all have experienced such blessings many times.

Like some of you, I read a chapter in Proverbs every morning so I can read through the whole book every month. But I take the Lord as my witness that often when I have finished my chapter, I tell the Lord that there is more in that chapter than I can possibly remember throughout the day, and I ask Him to bring to my remembrance whatever there might be in that chapter that I would need during the day. And not every day, but more often than for it just to be by chance, I remember something that I read that morning just when I needed it.

Now none of this is what we are to think of as extraordinary. This is the way we are to live, depending upon the Holy Spirit to teach us, and then to bring to our remembrance what we have read, or what we have heard as someone else has brought the Word to us.

December 3, 2007

Bishop Ryle reminds us that no less than twenty-two times the Lord refers to “the Father,” or “My Father” some twenty-two times in this chapter. And then he added, “In this respect the chapters stands alone in the Bible” (II, 319). My computer tells me that there are something like 259 references to the “Father” in the Bible. This should tell us a great deal, especially since reference to God as the Father in the OT are very rare. I often think about that passage in Luke 11 where we are told that the Apostles asked the Lord to teach them to pray, as John also taught his disciples. That was quite an unusual request in the light of the fact that the OT, and especially, the Psalms gives us many prayers. Perhaps one of the reasons that they asked for such teaching was because of the frequency with which our Lord referred to God as “the Father” or “My Father, or even as “your Father.”

Think of all of the ways that God can be addressed. He has many names accordint to the OT. I once traced in the life of Abraham the different ways in which he addressed God. That is quite a study in itself. Many people addressed God by His glorious attributes. And there is nothing more wonderful than that. But it seems that the more intimate a child of God becomes with God, the more he will simply say in approaching God in prayer, as the Lord taught His disciples, “When ye pray, say, our Father.” Mark tells us that when the Lord left Peter, James, and John in the Garden of Gethsemane, and went farther into the Garden where He could be alone with God, this is what happened:

35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt (Mark 14:35-37).

The word Abba is used only three times in the NT, here in Mark 14, the second is in Romans 8:15, the third in Galatians 4:6. Each time it is translated into English. Dr. Chafer used to tell us that it was the Aramaic word for Father, similar to our word, Papa, a word that a little child could speak before he had all of his teeth. It showed how very dependent the Lord Jesus was upon the Father. Probably there is no title that the Lord loves to hear from us any more than the simple word, “Father.” It is a family word, isn’t it? It is a word in which we recognize the close relationship we have with God. It is an affectionate word. To understand the word Father is to learn one of the most important lessons in prayer. We all have only one earthly father. He is special to us above every other man that we know. And all of us who know the Savior, just have one heavenly Father, and He is the same Father for all of us. (Re-read John 14:26 noticing the place that the Father has in our relationship to the Holy Spirit.

14:27 It seems from the repetition of verse 1 in the last part of this verse, that we have reached something of a conclusion to the first part of this fourteenth chapter. But it is introduced with, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.” We all know these words very well, but how many of us have really stopped to meditate on their meaning.

We give gifts to those we love. God gives gifts to everybody. The air we breathe is a gift from God. We can’t live without it. The food we eat is a gift from God. That is why we need to bow in thanksgiving to Him before we eat what He has provided for us. But the gift of peace is a special gift which the Lord gives to His people. The apostles were in great need of peace. Their questions revealed that they were in great turmoil of heart. And so this was a special provision to meet their special need. The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 119:165, “Great peace have they which love Thy law, and nothing shall offend them.” And they had just heard what the Lord had to say to them, and it was all designed to bring peace to their troubles hearts. The Lord was going away, but He was leaving them with His peace. He was giving them His peace as a free gift. Matthew Henry had this comment about the Lord’s gift of peace to His disciples:

John 14:25-27

When Christ was about to leave the world he made his will. His soul he committed to his Father; his

body he bequeathed to Joseph, to be decently interred; his clothes fell to the soldiers; his mother he left to the care of John: but what should he leave to his poor disciples, that had left all for him? Silver and gold he had none; but he left them that which was infinitely better, his peace.

He was giving them peace with God, meaning their justification. He was giving them the peace which was to be found in His promises. His peace is a peace which passes all understanding, a peace that is sufficient for all of the trying circumstances of life. And they did not know the full extent of that peace because it was to be a peace of His presence with them.

But what did the Lord mean by the words, “Not as the world giveth, give I unto you”? Ryle said,

What He gives the world cannot give at all, and what he gives is given neither unwillingly, nor sparingly, nor for a little time. Christ is far more willing to give than man is to receive. What He gives He gives to all eternity, and never takes away (II, 320).

The peace that the world gives is a peace that is dependent upon people and circumstances which are to our liking, but at what time in our lives are our relationships with people what we would like them to be? And how often are our circumstances pleasing to us? They never are completely. But the peace that the Lord gives is a peace that flourishes when things are going wrong. The peace that the world offers is a deceptive peace. It promises much, but produces only disappointment, and often shame, and sometimes death. In the beginning of time it was the Devil who got Eve to believe that she would be better off by disobeying God than she would be if she obeyed Him. How many young girls make a contact with some man on the internet, who after meeting this one, they turn up with their names in the Bureau of Missing Persons.

But the Lord gives His Word again based upon Who He is and what He can do: “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Now we come to the last four verses of the chapter. Charles Erdman calls them, the positive side of the Lord’s departure (John 14:28-31).

Up to this point in our Lord’s ministry to His disciples His message had been one of comfort for His disciples who were grieved that He was leaving them, and not taking them with Him. The Lord was telling them how they could be spiritually fortified in spite of such a loss. He had commanded them not to be troubled. In fact, He had told them not to be trouble twice, once in 14:1, and He had just said it again in 14:28. He had told them the place that obedience to the Lord’s commands would have in their lives for bringing them into an even closer relationship with the Father and with Himself. He had spoken to them about the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell them forever, and He was coming as a Comforter, a Paraclete, a Teacher, and a Remembrancer (a good English word). The Spirit of God would not let me forget all of the wonderful teaching that they had received from the Lord, nor the commandments, nor the promises. *Consequently, in the light of all of this, instead of being overcome with grief, the Lord now commands them to “rejoice.”* On the surface that seemed almost totally lacking in sympathy on the Lord’s part for what the apostles were experiencing in their hearts. It seemed bad enough to tell them not to have troubled hearts. Solomon said in Proverbs 25:20,

20 As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart.

Telling His apostles not to be troubled when they were very sad because He was going away, sounded like adding insult to injury, like taking a person’s coat away from him in freezing temperature, or like pouring vinegar on an open wound. As we have seen, what the Lord was appealing for was them to trust Him (“believe in Me”). But they had not gotten that far yet. Was the Lord unmindful of how much their hearts were hurting when He said, “If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice”? Of course the answer to that question was, NO! He is always touched with the feeling of our infirmities, as we read in Hebrews 4:15. What was the answer then?

Often in our sorrow we are so concerned about ourselves that we really forget about the Lord. The disciples

were not thinking about what our Lord's departure meant to Him. Surely what caused sorrow for them could not be a source of joy to Him!

Well, we all need to remember that whatever God does is good. He is a good God, and He delights in doing good for His people. Romans 8:28 tells us that God works all things together for good" – our good, our eternal good – even when things look bad to us.

Let me take you also to John 16:7 although we haven't gotten that far in our studies. Notice that here the Lord said, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; 'It is expedient for you that I go away.'" What does "expedient" mean? It is translated in other verses, to be good, to be profitable. It can also mean that it is better for you, or to your advantage. The apostles could not believe that anything could be better than for them to continue with the Lord like they had been for the past three years. Things will often appear to us this way. Something unfortunate can happen to us, and we are inclined to say, "Where was the Lord when this happened? Surely He could have kept it from happening!" And it is true, He could have, but He didn't. So we must believe that this, whatever it is, is better for us because it happened than it would have been if it hadn't happened. That takes a strong faith, often a very strong faith. And that may be what the Lord is doing, seeking to strengthen our faith when it seems like He is seeking to destroy whatever faith we might have.

So let us learn from what the Lord was doing with the apostles. (Read 14:28.)

December 10, 2007

We now come to:

II. Our Lord's Concluding Words in the Upper Room (John 14:28-31).

14:28 At this point the disciples still did not understand *how* and *why* the Lord was going away, and so they persisted in having troubled hearts. "Troubled," as in 14:1 means *stirred up, shaken*. It is the same verb, in the same form. It suggests that the condition in the hearts of the apostles had not changed from what it was when the Lord made that statement in verse 1. It was a condition which they did cause; it happened to them as a result of what the Lord had been telling them about His departure. It seems doubtful that they even understood that His departure would be through death, even the Lord had told them more than once that this was His mission. And they had missed statements like "I will come to you" in verse 18. And He had just repeated it again in this verse. (Read the first part of verse 28.)

Now the question could be raised,

- 1) Was the Lord talking about His second advent?
- 2) Or, was He speaking of how He would appear to them after His resurrection, and before His ascension?
- 3) Or, was He speaking of the manner in which He would be with them following His ascension?

I don't think it was the first – His second advent. Nor do I think that it was His post-resurrection appearances after He was raised from the dead. I believe that it was His continuing presence with them after He ascended, that which presence with which Matthew concluded His Gospel: "And, lo, I (ἐγὼ, emphatic) am with you alway (or, all the days), even unto the end of the age." The Lord was speaking of His indwelling presence with them.

Now some might raise the question, were the apostles saved at this time even though they did not understand why the Lord had to die? I would answer that question by saying, "Yes." I say that for three reasons. First, the Lord said in verse 1 that they were believing in God. But I would also cite your experience and mine. How much did we understand about the Cross when we were saved? Probably in most of our cases we understood

very little about how it was that Christ could save us. But, in the third place, the Lord did not turn from what He was saying to preach the Gospel to them. His point all through these chapters we are considering was to show what their coming relationship would be Him. I think that it can truly be said that we don't find anywhere else in the Gospels what the Lord was telling His apostles here. Christ is our life, and therefore this means that we can never be separated from Him. The Apostle John said in his first epistle, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12). So if we have life, we have Christ because He is our life. The apostles' problem was not that they were unsaved and so unable to understand spiritual truth, but it was that their hearts had not been opened to see the true nature of salvation. In the verse I quoted to you from Matthew 28:20, even there before His ascension, He did not say, "I will be with you," but "I am with you," present and continuing tense. What the Lord was speaking about was our union with Him in our salvation. Look back at verse 20 where we read, "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." Right after the ascension of Christ the apostles began teaching this truth, but we surely will not understand it the way we need to until we are with the Lord.

And so, instead of being troubled, they should have been rejoicing.

When I think of the joy that these truths should have brought to them, I can't help but think of the rather strange way the Luke concluded the Gospel which bears his name. I say "strange" because of how the Lord left the disciples. The Lord had repeated His promise about the coming of the Holy Spirit, and then we read this in the last four verses of Luke's Gospel. The reference is Luke 24:50-53:

50 And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy:

53 And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

You would have thought that the disciples would have been weeping uncontrollably, but just the opposite was true. They "returned to Jerusalem with great joy." Evidently the teaching of the Lord was beginning to bear fruit in their lives.

At the end of verse 28 we see that the Lord gave them a gentle rebuke, but it may have shocked the Apostles when the Lord said, "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I."

The Lord was saying that they did not love Him as they should, or they would have been rejoicing at the things that He was telling them. Our love for the Lord is one of the conditions that must prevail in our hearts if we are to be open and receptive to the truth. His going to the Father not only meant that that His mission was accomplished, *but that it was accepted!*

But I believe also that Pink has made a good point about the love of the apostles in these words:

But their love was not yet sufficiently *dis-interested*: they were occupied too much with the thought of their own bereavement, instead of the heavenly joy into which the Redeemer was about to enter. If they had loved Him with a pure love, they would have been happy at His exaltation and forgotten themselves (p. 387).

This is often a problem with us, too, isn't it? We fail to rejoice in many things that bring joy to others, because we are so self-centered. And that is true of our relationship with the Lord as well. The disciples were not thinking of the Lord and what it would mean to Him to be back in heaven with the Father. They were thinking of the loss that it was to them. If we really love the Lord, whatever pleases Him will make us rejoice. This can be a real source of comfort and even rejoicing to us when someone we love very much is taken to heaven. Of course the Lord's departure was a great loss to the disciples, and when someone we love dies, it is a staggering loss to us. But when we read, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints," we are to think of what the

death of some child of God means to God, and to Christ.

I hope eventually to get to John 17 in these studies. The last request that the Lord Jesus made of the Father was, as you probably remember from your reading, is in verse 24 of that chapter, where we read,

24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world (John 17:24).

We need to remember what it means to our Lord every time a child of God is called home. It is sorrow for us when we get left behind, but there is great joy in heaven. We need to think of what joy it brings to the Lord when His people are called home, and that will enable us to find joy in our sorrow. But add to that the joy that believers experience when we are at last with the Lord. It will surpass all of the joys we have ever experienced here on earth when we are at last with the Lord.

So one way we can test our love for the Lord Jesus is to look into our hearts to see if we are more concerned about what things mean to the Lord than they mean to us, even when they mean everything to us!

The last statement of this verse has given enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ a basis for saying that Jesus Christ was not God. They argue that if the Father were greater than Jesus, then Jesus was not God. If Jesus were less than God, then He, they say, could not be God.

When the Lord Jesus became a Man, He did not cease in any sense of the word to be God. But our Lord, for the purpose of our redemption made Himself even “a little lower than the angels.” This is stated in Hebrews 2:7 and repeated in 2:9. As a Man, He was lower than angels. Most people mistook Him for being just another man.

What did our Lord mean when He said, “My Father is greater than I.” And note again that He prefaced that statement by saying, “If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father . . .”

The Lord Jesus took a place when He became a Man that was far less than He had had when He was with the Father from all eternity, and displayed the glory of the Father, a glory equal with that of the Father’s glory. But in becoming a Man, He did not give up any of His glorious attributes, but He did not exercise them. Even the Devil felt that the Lord Jesus had put Himself in a position where He was no longer the sovereign, omnipresent Lord that He had been, and He sought to destroy Him. His glory was veiled while He was here on earth except for that brief time when He met with Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration and His glory was displayed when He was transfigured before them and before Peter and James and John. But as He finished His work on earth, He would return to the Father and to heaven where He would be known by all as the eternal Son of God by the display of His glory. While He was then a Man in heaven, He was not limited in His presence as He had been on earth. The victory over sin and death and the grave had been won, and it would be fully evident that He was the eternal Son of the ever-living God.

Paul stated both the humiliation and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in that familiar passage in Philippians 2:5-11. (Read.)

As we worship God and the Lord Jesus Christ, we need to rejoice in the humiliation of our Lord in becoming a Man, taking upon Himself the likeness of our sinful flesh, that He completely fulfilled the work on earth that the Father sent Him to do, offering Himself to God, taking upon Himself our sins, that we might be justified, and sanctified, and glorified. And having finished His work of salvation for us, He returned to the Father, is seated at the Father’s right hand, displaying again the glory of heaven, the glory that He had with the Father before the foundation of the earth.

14:29 This verse speaks of the prophetic ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. In OT times there were true prophets, but there were also false prophets. The test of a true prophet was that the message that he claimed had come from God, came to pass. See Deuteronomy 18:15-22 which is actually prophetic of Christ. If his message did not come to pass, he was a false prophet. In John 14:10 the Lord had made a claim that the words that He spoke did not originate with Him, but they had been given to Him by the Father. (Read John 14:10.) The Lord Jesus in this verse, verse 29, indicated here that the fulfillment of all that He had been teaching His disciples, would be a confirmation that He was truly the Son of God, and that His work had been assigned to Him by God the Father. They are fantastic claims in every way, but this verse stands as confirmation that He was speaking the truth of God.

Fulfilled prophecy is one of the greatest evidences that the Bible is the Word of God. Prophecy, true prophecy, occupies as much as twenty percent of all of Scripture. There were many prophetic predictions that were fulfilled in a short time; others are yet to be fulfilled. But the large number of prophecies that have been fulfilled, are indications that the rest of them will be fulfilled in God's own time.

14:30 What we have in these chapters in John 14-16, are among the last words given by our Lord to His apostles before His death. Last words given by responsible people are usually important words, and that was particularly true of our Lord's words here.

I want to give you Pink's comment on the first statement of this verse. Obviously the Lord was concluding His remarks to them in the Upper Room. But here He said, "Hereafter I will not talk much with you." This was on the eve of His arrest. The next day He would be crucified. Here is Pink's comment:

In a very short time He would be cut off from them, while He undertook His greatest work of all. In reminding them that it would be impossible for Him to say much more to them, He hinted at the deep importance of their pondering over and over what He had just said, and what He was on the point of saying to them. This was to be His last address in His humbled state, and during the next few hours they would sorely need the sustaining and comforting power of these precious promises if they were not to faint (p. 389).

These points are important for us to remember in our reading of the Word. We need not only to read the Word, but we need to re-read it, and to meditate on it. Through meditation the Spirit of God will help us to understand the meaning of the Word, and its importance to us in our lives today. The more time we give to the Word, the more we will love it, the more we will understand it, and the more likely it will be that the Word will become a part of our lives.

"The prince of this world cometh" is an obvious reference to the hand that the Devil had in the crucifixion of our Lord. Bishop Ryle said on this statement,

It is very striking to observe that our Lord does not say, "Judas, the Romans, the Pharisees are coming."

It is only the Devil. He, as at the fall, is at the bottom of all. Others are only his tools. (II, 325).

The Devil is God's enemy, and the enemy of our Lord Jesus Christ. He sought by tempting the Lord to put an end to the Lord's ministry before it even began. Several times during the Lord's ministry we see the activity of the Devil, often through his demons. At this point the Devil must have felt confident that he at last would be able to defeat the Lord, not knowing to what extent our Lord's humanity may have made him liable to the attacks of the Devil. But there was no way that the Devil could defeat the Son of God. He still is going about seeking whom he may devour. But he knows that he has a short time, and that he is ultimately to be cast into the lake of fire. But he is still very powerful, and very active. We need to be clothed in the whole armor of God, as Paul informed us in Ephesians 6:10-20.

The Lord said about Himself what none of us could say about ourselves, that the Devil "hath nothing in Me." Our sinful nature makes us very prone to fall before temptation. Our hope of victory over Satan and all of his

ways, is in the Lord, and only in Him.

14:31 Before the Lord has opposed all that Satan has done in opposition to Him. The Lord resisted His temptations. Why does He submit to him here? It is “that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.” Briefly this means that the Lord submitted to what the Devil wanted to do *so that there would be a Gospel, a Gospel for the whole world*. The Lord did not come to die in order that the whole world might be saved, but that wherever throughout the whole world in every generation, those who sought salvation from sin would realize that there is only one Savior. The whole world has evidence in the death of Christ, not only of God’s love for sinners, but the love of the Lord Jesus for the Father. Let us not lose sight of this when we think of the Cross of Christ. Loving God came first with Christ; loving sinners in an ungodly world was the way the Son displayed His love for those whom the Father had chosen for salvation, but primarily it showed His love for the Father.

Lenski said about this verse that

The aorist “gave” refers to the time when Jesus came into the world, and the present “I do” covers all the work of Jesus down to the act now about to take place (p. 1023).

“Arise, let us go hence.” Not all expositors think that the Lord and His disciples left the Upper Room at this point, and they cite John 18:1 as evidence. But does this mean that the Lord prayed the prayer of John 17 in the Upper Room. That hardly seems possible since it was always His practice to pray alone. But whatever the case might be (and it seems to me that they left the Upper Room at the end of chapter 14), in either case the message of these chapters remain the same.

If it is true that they left the Upper Room and the end of chapter 14, the Lord did not say where they were going. But He led the way, and they followed. He knew that He was going to His death. His death was terrible beyond anything we could imagine because “He was made sin for us, Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21). “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their tres-passes unto them; and hath committed unto us the word reconciliation.”