

May 29, 2022

“The Way, the Truth, and the Life”
Lesson 4 of Unit

John 14:1-14

Intro

Most of us have either asked for directions to some place, or have used our phones to get those directions. Both have potential problems. Is the person we're asking for help knowledgeable / reliable? Does my phone's GPS have all the correct information? Many of us have used one or both of these sources to find out how to get somewhere, only to have that source turn out to be flawed and inaccurate. If finding out how to get somewhere on Earth is important, then finding the way to God, to eternity, is critical.

Today's passage comes in the midst of the section often referred to as “The Farewell Address”, in chapters 13-17 of John's gospel. This section of chapter 14 is the last of the “I am...” that Jesus makes that we will be studying in this unit. Almost all of what is said in John 13-17 is unique to John's gospel. These are Jesus' final words to His disciples, just prior to going to the cross. In today's verses, Jesus discloses to them His true identity and the purposes of His mission on Earth.

Read John 14:1-14

1. vs. 1: Jesus tells them in the first part of this verse not to be troubled

He has just predicted that one of them will betray Him (13:21-26)

He has just predicted that Peter will deny Him three times (13: 37-38)

He is about to tell them something worse, from their point of view

He is about to leave them (14:19, 28-30)

He tells them in the second half to trust in God and also in Himself

The Greek word translated “trust” can suggest several possible ways to take this verse

1) A command: “You disciples need to trust both God and Me”

2) Indicating belief: “You guys already trust in God, and you also trust Me”

3) Combining both: “You already trust God; now you need to trust Me as well”

Whichever one is used, they all show a close relationship between the Father and Jesus

2. vs. 2: Jesus here promises a place in heaven (“my Father's house”) for His disciples

He makes several statements here

There are many rooms in the Father's house—plenty of room for all who want it

He is reliable and trustworthy in what He is saying

Quick note: in the KJV, the word “mansions” is used here

We naturally think of a large house; how can a house be inside another house?

The word “mansion” in older English simply meant a “dwelling place”

The same Greek word is used in John 14:23, and is translated “abode” or “home”

These are the only two verses in the NT that use this Greek word

3. vs. 3: Jesus makes another promise

He will go and prepare a place for His followers, then will come back for them

Heaven for Christians is all about being together with the Father and the Son forever

This verse would give comfort to the disciples at the time, as it comforts us now

The word “if” doesn’t indicate that these things might not happen

The word “when” is a good modern word to use here

The meaning of the sentence is that when the first thing happens (Jesus going to prepare a place), then the second thing will happen after that (coming back to take them away)

4. vs. 4: Jesus tells the disciples that they know the way to this place He is going to prepare for them
Verses 5 and 8 will show that the disciples don’t completely understand this saying
Jesus is still in teaching mode here, expecting the disciples to ask questions about this

5. vs. 5: Thomas asks, “How can we know the way?”

He’s likely not the only disciple that doesn’t understand Jesus here

Most Jews at this time were expecting an earthly king, not who Christ actually was

They may know how to get there (vs.4), but they don’t know that they know

They have some understanding, having called Jesus “the Christ” previously

Their understanding is incomplete at this time

6. vs. 6: A very well-known verse: “I am the way and the truth and the life”

The context here is as an answer to Thomas’ question—“How can we know the way?”

Jesus is saying HE is the way to the father, implying two things:

1) Faith in Christ is required to be admitted to Heaven

2) Christ’s teachings/actions show perfectly the type of life that pleases God

Jesus is saying people need to both believe correctly about Christ, and also live as He did

We believe in Christ and strive to imitate His example

7. vs. 7: Jesus said in John 10:30 that “I and the Father are one.”

Therefore, anyone who has seen Jesus also has seen God

He then tells His disciples, “From now on, you do know Him and have seen Him.”

He’s essentially telling them, “Now that I’ve made all this clear, there can be no more doubt, right?”

8. vs. 8: Philip’s question seems odd, given what Jesus has just said to Thomas

Philip appears in John’s gospel four times

1:43-46: He tells Nathanael that Jesus is the one promised by Moses

6:5-7: He tells Jesus there isn’t enough food to feed the 5000

12:20-33: Philip brings some Greeks to see Jesus after the Triumphal Entry

In these and this verse, Philip’s actions/questions lead to Jesus explaining more deeply

His relationship to God

Why accepting/acting on His teachings is critical

9. vs. 9: Jesus’ tone seems to be both a little frustrated and incredulous

Philip was one of the first disciples

Jesus repeats here what he said to Thomas

It’s bad enough that His enemies don’t recognize who He really is

It’s worse that one of His closest disciples also fails to recognize who He truly is

10. vs. 10: In this verse, Jesus says three things that support vs. 6 “I am the way and the truth and the life”

First, He says, “I am in the Father, and the Father is in me”

This shows His unity with the Father

Second, He says, “The words I say to you are not just my own”

Everything Jesus says comes from the Father

Since Jesus and the Father are one, Jesus says nothing contrary to God’s will

When Christ speaks, His listeners are hearing God’s words

Third, He says, “It is the Father, living in Me, who is doing His work.”

Jesus’ works are expressions of the Father’s will and power, words and actions

These three phrases support Jesus’ claim to be “the way and the truth and the life”

Jesus is God’s Son, sent by Him to the Earth

As His Son, His words and actions are the way to truth and salvation

11. vs. 11: Jesus is telling His disciples to believe in Him because of the miracles He’s done

Our commentary brings out an interesting comparison

In Matthew, Mark, and Luke’s gospels, miraculous healings follow faith expressed

The woman healed of a blood issue (Matt. 9:20-22)

Bartimaeus receiving his sight (Mark 10:46-52)

The leper who returned after being healed (Luke 17:11-19)

In all three cases, Jesus concludes by saying, “Your faith has made you well”

In John’s gospel, miracles happen first, and people may or may not believe in Jesus

The wedding feast at Cana (John 2:1-11)

The healing of the nobleman’s son (John 4:46-54)

The healing of the man by the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-18)

All these miracles should result in belief

His disciples have seen all these miracles themselves

In this verse, Jesus still needs to encourage them to believe on Him based on the miracles

12. vs. 12: Jesus says those who have faith in Him “will do what I have been doing...even greater things than these”

On one level, we know we can’t do what Jesus did:

Raise the dead, stop the winds, feed 5000 with 2 loaves of bread

On another level, though, we are going exactly what Jesus said we would

Jesus said we would do these things “because I go to the Father”

When we tell others about Jesus, we are doing what He has done

The “greater” is the greater number of people who hear about Him

Jesus only spoke to a fraction of the number that His follows have reached

13. vs. 13-14: These two verses follow vs. 12 about doing greater things than Jesus

This is the context to understand Jesus saying, “I will do whatever you ask in My name”

It’s not a blank check to get anything we want

It’s a guarantee that He will help us in doing His will to reach a lost world

The goal of this is in vs. 13: “to bring glory to the Father”

Our commentary provided an interesting insight into “in Jesus’ name”

“Having my own children has given me a bit more insight into what it means to be “in” someone’s name. Because my children are related to me, they share my family name, but they don’t have to remind me of this fact in order to persuade me to do things for them. Because I love them dearly, I will gladly do what they ask me if I am able and if it is good for them. There is no “magic formula” to get my response—our relationship is secure enough that they can come to me freely, without formalities.

“A vital part of praying specifically “in Jesus’ name” is that this phrase reminds us of whose we are. Problems arise, however, when we merely tack on this phrase at the end of a prayer as if it were a way to “push the God button” and be heard. We do need to show God the ultimate respect he deserves, but treating him like a cold computer that does not respond unless the proper buttons are pushed is not the way.”

Application: An old saying said, “All roads lead to Rome.” In the time of the Roman Empire, they built many roads for their troops to get where they needed to go. Since the road led from Rome to somewhere, a person could go from that somewhere to Rome. So it was true in the Roman Empire—all roads did lead to Rome.

That is not the case with Heaven. In God’s way, all roads do not lead to Heaven. There is only one road, Christ—the way, the truth, the life. As Peter says in Acts 4:12, “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

Prayer: Father God, we never could have found You without Jesus. Thank You for helping us to hear Your call. Please help us to access the power You’ve given us through Jesus to reach the world and glorify Your name, as Jesus did. In Jesus’ name, Amen.