

**Reading:** John 14:1-14

**Theme:** Heaven is secure!

It is said that the most stressful thing is a bereavement of someone close to you and after that it is moving house. We moved just a few years ago after being settled for 26 years, we found it stressful. It was also stressful when our children moved out of the family home, especially to get them to take all their things stored in our loft! The Lord Jesus spoke of His departure, of leaving the disciples and they could not, at that time, be with Him. It caused them distress, but in chapter 14 He gives them great reasons for encouragement and comfort. We saw last time that v1 set the theme, was the overture of this chapter which is full of reasons for encouragement and comfort. The Lord Jesus knew the disciples - the way they worried, fretted, became so easily full of care and concern. So, He gives them these words of comfort.

He knows, as well as Christians throughout all the ages and knew we would be prone to the same cares and worries to different degrees and the Lord Jesus guided John, by the Holy Spirit, to write these things down, for the continuing comfort of His children throughout the years. He did it because none of us have any idea what lies ahead or what the future holds for any one of us. Thankfully we have the comfort this passage gives, the first area of encouragement that Jesus gave in v2-3- of that **heaven is secure for us**.

In the late 1800s account was told of a wealthy man who lay dying and his solicitor was called. He dictated his will - such and such to so-and-so, the home to my wife and young daughter. His little daughter said in reply "*Have you got a home where you're going?*" He had no hope of such. What of us? If our last hour was upon us, or came upon us unexpectedly, would we have the

comfort and encouragement of the home in heaven which the Lord Jesus speaks of in v2-3?

These verses are a comfort and encouragement to us who believe on the Lord Jesus as our Saviour, that we have a secure home in heaven ahead for us. Let's look at these verses briefly to glimpse something of our wonderful home in heaven. Let's note 3 main things:

### **1. Heaven Revealed.**

The Lord Jesus was well aware of the grief and sorrow of heart the disciples felt - He had announced His leaving them, of Peter denying Him, but here He comforts them by showing that His going away was not the disaster, or catastrophe they imagined, but was so necessary for the greater good. He was going away to His Father's house with the express purpose of a joyful reunion. His departure was for their and our advantage and it is spelled-out in these verses. Often, we may grieve over things we imagine are to our loss or harm and yet our Saviour has designed them for our benefit and advantage!

In v2 the Lord Jesus reveals great things of heaven to them, for He reveals **the nature of heaven** - "my Father's house". Here is a lovely, sweet and attractive view of heaven "Father's house". Some fathers on earth have not been worthy of the name, but God the Father is everything that is right and good and heaven is described in this warm, glowing way "Father's house". Heaven is indeed Father's house and in that sense is home for us who are Christians for we are His children. Yes, we know God is not contained by any geographical space - the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. He is described as present everywhere and is even in hell in His holy wrath, justice and power. He is present in

a remarkable way with His people on earth, but heaven is **the** place where God's glorious presence is known in a way that is not possible even to His dearest ones while they are here on earth.

Father's house, heaven is full of God's magnificent, eternal, limitless glories in all their soul ravishing wonders. There are the elders, the beasts, angels and glorified believers gazing in ecstasy on their God and Saviour. That is Father's house - heaven. Where sin, sorrow, death, pain, suffering will never enter, but those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus as their Saviour can and will; they and they only will be able to enter and be there.

There will be no shortage of room or space for them, as Jesus **reveals the extent of heaven** - Father's house has many mansions, rooms, dwellings. The word translated as mansions, rooms, dwellings, literally means "*abiding places, dwelling places*". The Greek word was translated into Latin as mansions and carried over into the KJV. To be honest, I like the word mansions as it carries with it the idea of riches, greatness, sumptuousness, but abiding, dwelling place is the accurate word - NIV says "rooms" (same word in v23 is translated "home" in NIV "abode" KJV).

We live in a glorious world, yet it is often hostile and harsh for the Christian. We are aware the world is just a temporary state, we may view our lives as camped here, but one day all Christians will go to Father's house and there will be room for us all as His children. There are "many" rooms, dwelling places. There is room, not only for the Lord Jesus, but for you and me if we have Him as our Saviour. There is room for **all** who trust Him as their Saviour - little saints and great ones, the weak struggling believer and the strongest believer. The feeblest child of God should have no fear that there would be a place for them. No child of God will

be shut out of heaven. Only those who have never trusted the Lord Jesus as their Saviour are excluded.

Do you have this hope? If not, then realise that at this moment the door is open, there is room for you, yes even you, no matter who you are what you have done. You cannot earn your way, nor do enough to deserve entrance. The way in is open to whosoever will believe on the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. Father's house has room enough for everyone who trusts the Lord Jesus as their Saviour and He, the Lord Jesus, promises and guarantees it.

Jesus **reveals these things as a reality** - He says "*if it were not so, I would have told you.*" Heaven is Father's house and has room enough for all who are God's children. I say that on the authority of my Saviour and Friend - the Lord Jesus, for He said so and He never lies, is never wrong. His Word, the Bible, says it to be so too. I have read it many times, not always understood all that it means, but I read that heaven is the reality for all who trust the Lord Jesus. God's word is reliable and if God has said it, I believe it and that settles it! That is briefly something of heaven revealed, moving on we see:

## **2. Heaven Prepared.**

If family or friends you've not seen for some time come to stay, you would get things ready, everything prepared for their arrival. The Lord Jesus says to all His people that He was going to prepare a place for them. What does that mean? I heard someone preaching once and He said something like "*Jesus has been preparing heaven for us nearly 2000 years and it will surely be a splendid place.*" I was impressed! Over the years I think he was wrong in what he said - for if he was right, what would heaven have been like for the dying thief who believed? Why couldn't the Agent of

Creation prepare heaven in all its wonder in an instant? What was Jesus meaning here?

Basically, it means that Father's house will be prepared and ready to receive His children **whenever** they go there! It intimates that every child of God will have a place and there is no shortage of room for them. Realise that heaven is not our natural place to go. Not one of us would naturally be welcome at Father's house, we would all be excluded, shut out of heaven and away from God and His presence. None of us could ever say "*I deserve to be in heaven!*" All of us deserve hell and if left to ourselves, even with all our morality, religion, niceness, lovely personalities etc., we would all end up in hell and could never do anything to alter our final destiny.

Yet Jesus in His life, death, resurrection and ascension, has prepared the way to heaven for us; has prepared heaven for us and thankfully us for heaven. He has made the way, He is the Way and has entered heaven as our representative head, as our older brother, as our Redeemer and we can go there through and with Him. The high priests in the OT went once a year into the holy of holies and after offering a sacrifice for themselves, they offered a sacrifice for the sin of the people. On the heart of the high priest was the breastplate and engraved on precious stones on it were the names of the tribes of Israel - he in that sense prepared the way for them to go to God and took them into His presence. The Lord Jesus is the Great High Priest, who entered into the holiest of all, heaven itself and was the sacrifice for the sin of the world and He bears our names on His heart and pleads for us there before the throne of God and makes access to heaven for both our prayers and one day to be there in person.

All His life, death and resurrection accomplished prepared heaven for us and us for heaven. Heaven is ours as God's child because it has been thoroughly prepared and secured by Jesus. We can have a sure and certain hope, certain title deed and know we have a home in heaven. Do you know you have such?

Yet, in another sense, heaven is still being prepared - for more family members are going there all the time, even close loved ones of our own. Heaven becomes richer and more precious to us as Christians we know die and go home ahead of us. The old children's chorus says *"Away far beyond Jordan, we'll meet in that land, oh won't it be grand. Away far beyond Jordan, will meet in that beautiful land. If you get there before I do, look out for me, for I'm coming too..."* It will be great to see loved ones who have gone ahead of us in the Lord, there will be times of rejoicing for things that are sweet on earth will be sweeter in heaven.

Yet the greatest thing about heaven is not that will be with and see loved ones, but Jesus will be there. Heaven would not be heaven if He were absent! Our eyes will gaze on the King in all His beauty. We are to realise heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. We are prepared for heaven in this life by having the Lord Jesus as our Saviour. The encouragement and comfort of this secure home in heaven is not applicable to you unless you have believed personally in the Lord Jesus as your Saviour; if you have done so then see:

### **3. Heaven Reserved.**

The Lord Jesus is concerned for you and me, that we will be with Him. He says so in 17:24 *"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world."* Here in v3 the word "If" does not indicate a condition of

doubt, but statement; perhaps it should say “*Because*” to get its sense. Because He went to prepare the place and the only way to the place for us, Jesus will come back and take us to be with Himself.

I know in the church here that many people are longing to meet face-to-face again – to see one another again in the flesh and not just online. A good translation to catch the force of the verse would be “*I will come again and will take you to be **face-to-face** with me*”. Jesus wants us to be in His presence, close presence. If we were to go to heaven, live on its borders, be there as a servant or a slave, but be in heaven, that would be great and wonderful. Yet for every Christian, heaven means we will be in the presence of the Lord Jesus and the Father as His dearly loved children and we will know and enjoy His company. Heaven is pictured as a wedding feast, a place of joy, of being close to our Saviour. Jesus is saying in v3 that heaven is for the likes of us and He will make sure of it, guarantee we will get there as He will take us there and welcome us there.

Yes, we might have to go through death - on death our mortal body and eternal soul will separate, but our souls do not float around in some limbo or be in soul sleep, but are either in the presence of God delighting in Him if we His child, or we are judged and condemned to hell. In that intermediate state the Christian is in heaven, our Saviour makes sure of it, angels are sent to give a royal escort to His children on their death. Yet at the end of time all souls will be reunited with their resurrection bodies one day. That sounds good, but do we realise that unbelievers will face eternal punishment in their resurrection bodies, but believers alive at Jesus’ return will be caught up and transformed and those believers who have died will be raised and all of us be changed,

be given resurrection bodies and will meet the returning Saviour in the air and we shall be forever with the Lord.

We shall be with Him where He is, be there face-to-face with Him, made like Him on our death and then in glorious resurrection bodies when time is no more. This is something of our comfort and joy. The world rightly has many good things to delight us, to enthrall us, to captivate us, but such things do not always last long as they fade, or our pleasure in them diminishes, things can affect our comfort and enjoyment of them. Yet, heaven is a place of unceasing joy and pleasure in the presence of the Lord Jesus - no fading pleasure, no ageing, no pains, no Covid-19, nothing at all to spoil our delight of heaven, its joys and wonders. We will be ever able to enjoy the infinite eternal wonders of the infinite God through all that our Saviour has accomplished for us.

To the disciples at that time, as they faced a dark, fearful, uncertain future, these words of heaven secure must have been a great encouragement and comfort, especially as they thought more on them. Yet the same truths are to encourage and comfort us also. We do not know what the time ahead holds for anyone of us and we may be facing it with fear and uncertainty. Yet having the Lord Jesus as our Saviour, we can know real encouragement and comfort not only for a short time ahead, but also for many years ahead and especially for eternity. I pray we would all know this Saviour as our Saviour and that the encouragement and comfort He gives would be with us this day and forever more - until He takes us home to Father's house.