

Reading: John 14:1-14

Theme: The Father revealed.

Last week we started looking at the 2nd area of comfort and encouragement in this chapter – **In Christ there is a sure and certain way to heaven (v4-11)** and noted 2 of 3 main headings – **1st Known, But Unknown!** (v4 & 5) – Jesus spoke more highly of His disciples than they felt about themselves. **2nd Exclusively Centred on Jesus.** (v6) – He and He alone is the way to the Father and therefore to heaven. Moving on we will see:

3rd The Father completely revealed. (v7-11)

This needs to be recognised and noted, as many today speak of “*their ideas*” of making God known, of making known the hidden depths of God, or seeing new things concerning God. Yet the Lord Jesus is the way, the truth and the life and tells us in v6 that He alone is the One who reveals the Father and does so completely and finally. Here we are confronted with powerful and enormous truths - truths we will not be able to measure or fully grasp. Truths that in my preparation I thrilled over and yet because of their complexity and enormity, I wished I did not have to preach on them - but my heart was stirred and warmed in looking at these things and my mind stretched. Let’s note 3 things in v7-11 to inform, stretch and warm our hearts and minds:

A. The instructive rebuke.

What Jesus says in these verses were prompted by Philip’s owning his own ignorance and that of the other disciples (v8) after what Jesus had said in v7 about knowing the Father. Philip, possibly seeing the reactions of the others to what

Jesus said, knowing his own reaction and thoughts, asks for Jesus to “show **us**”, not just “show **me**”.

Possibly this is the basic desire of every person - to see God, to know if there is a god and what He is like. It is a right desire. Here Philip is like Moses - “*Show me your glory*”. Philip wants to have a display, and immediate display of the divine glories of God the Father - to have a full authentication of their Master’s divine mission, calling and standing. They all probably realised Jesus had a special relationship with the One He called Father and all wanted a glimpse of that glorious One and to have their doubts and fears removed.

In Philip we notice a strange mixture - common to most of us - of the fleshly and the spiritual; the natural and of grace; of the earthly and of the heavenly. Philip believed in the Lord Jesus to the saving of his soul and desired the things of God, but his request shows weakness, unbelief and imperfections, as he hears Jesus say “*and have seen Him*” (v7), he thinks of and want some visible sign – a vision, heavenly wonders or a demonstration of glory.

This vision, demonstration could be expected if God was but was only power; but He is not. For He is holy, just as well as being Almighty; He is love, goodness, all knowing and ever living. So how can such a One be known, be revealed most clearly? It would have to be in a living person, who by His words and actions shows and reveals the very character and being of God. That living person is the Lord Jesus and yet even with all their privileges, Philip asks v8 and so Jesus’ reply in v 9-11 is that of a gentle, instructive rebuke to Philip and the other disciples.

See how much we learn of the disciples in the upper room - Peter with his love and passion, yet so impetuous and full of self-confidence. Thomas - also full of love, but so weak, timid and doubts so much that he cannot give himself credit for knowing anything. Here we learn of Philip (*one of the first disciples*) he loved his Lord and yet wanted spectacular demonstrations of power and glory. Things like that still go on within God's people, including us - all of us have a love for the Lord, but some are too full of self, others full of doubts about themselves and their abilities, others are like Philip - always want the spectacular and sensational. These ones all evidence grace and such should encourage us to keep going on and growing in trust and in faith.

To those disciples Jesus answered their various needs by pointing them to Himself - we see this as He deals with Phillip's question by this gentle, instructive rebuke of the ignorance that he and the others had. There are many things we could cover in Jesus' answer. Now briefly see 2 more things:

B. The unity of the Father and the Son.

In v 7-11 we are told on 4 times of the close and mysterious union of God the Father and God the Son: "*If you really knew me, you would know the Father*" (v7a); "*Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.*" (v9); "*that I am in the Father and that the Father is in me*" (v10); "*I am in the Father and the Father is in me*" (v11).

How can we explain this mysterious and glorious truth in a few words, in words we can easily understand? Here we are

dealing with things we cannot measure or even take in fully! We are dealing with the mysterious and glorious union between 2 of the members of the triune Godhead. From the Bible we see there are 3 Persons who are distinct, separate and yet fully God. What is true of God as God, is true of them all as distinct Persons. They are seen as distinct and not the same One doing different things at different times. There are occasions when the 3 appear as distinct at one-and-the-same-time e.g. at the baptism of Jesus, when the Holy Spirit descends, the Father speaks of His Son who was being baptised. The Bible, Scriptures, says there is only one God and yet also teaches us, by piecing together Scripture with Scripture, that the 3 divine persons constitute the Godhead, but they are one in substance, power and eternity. Each are fully God, but the godhead is One and indivisible and so they have this try-unity (Trinity).

I hope you are still with me - at least you can go back and rewind this to have a quick review of what I said! The Trinity is a most glorious truth we learn from God's word, but it does not mean we can fully grasp, understand or explain it. We have to take in what we can, apply illustrations and realise our inabilities as finite creatures. This will lead us to worship the glorious triune God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In these verses we are told of the unity between the Father and the Son as Jesus speaks of the mutual indwelling of Father in the Son and the Son in the Father. The words of Jesus in 10:30 express it most clearly "*I and the Father are one*". Here in these verses we see something of the self-conscious understanding which the Lord Jesus had regarding Himself - we mentioned this previously as we looked at 13:1 & 3. What

Jesus was emphasising here for Philip, the disciples and for us, is that all that the Father is, is to be found in Him, the Lord Jesus. The writer to the Hebrews tells us of this 1:3 *“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word. After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”*

The disciples saw the humanity of Jesus i.e. His body and would see Him betrayed, would hear of His mock trial, His beating, His crucifixion, death and burial. These were God’s ways and purposes, but the eye of faith was needed to see the love and compassion of God, the holy justice and wrath of God, the power of God, the foreordained purposes of God, the character of God, to see the teaching and miracles of Jesus as displaying God the Father and yet He is God the Son, one with God the Father..

Often, we are so much like Philip - whether we own it or not - we need visible demonstrations to our visible senses, we need to feel moved, excited, happy, feel rejoicing welling up in us. Yet are Jesus and God any less marvellous, mysterious, mighty, glorious and loving if we do not feel or understand such things? Not at all. Those same truths stand, the same relationship is in place between Father, Son and Holy Spirit; the same relationship is in place if we are His child (*whether we appreciate it or not!*) We need to linger long on these truths, chew them over and have this growing sense of wonder and joy - that in knowing Jesus, we know the Father. We cannot easily logically reason such out; it is by the eye of faith we see, appreciate and grow in our faith, but to dwell on things in these verses will expand our minds and hearts.

Very often we will recognise we know something of such things, but also see we have forgotten the greatness of these things! Jesus had taught His disciples these things. Those of us who teach children, young people, our families, who preach and teach, we are not to be disheartened if our ‘pupils’ appear to forget so much about the spiritual things we teach them - the disciples were so forgetful - even with the Lord Jesus teaching them. We who are pupils of God’s word, should also strive to learn in a right way. These verses show us the glorious unity between God the Father and God the Son. Finally, we see:

C. Two proofs to recognise this unity.

Jesus said these amazing, staggering things to His disciples and their minds must have been struggling to grasp what He said. To help them understand, Jesus says in effect “*Let’s ground these claims in things you can at least understand and relate to...*” He gave them 2 things to prove He and the Father are one – His words (his teaching) and His works (the miracles, the things He had done). He encourages faith on these 2 foundations, even saying believe because of the works, the miracles He had done. Let’s look at these:

The words: Jesus claimed that the things He said were given to Him by the Father - such was their unity. It is not that He was as a ventriloquist’s dummy, but that He spoke the mind of the Father because that was also His own mind, but in the plan of salvation this is attributed to the Father.

Jesus spoke the mind of God’s eternal counsels. Even His enemies said “*Never man spoke like this man.*” He was

stirring up, challenging His disciples to think of all the things He had said and taught, both in private and in public. These words would show, evidence the Father dwells in the Son and the Son in the Father and they were united.

The teaching of the Lord Jesus in the NT does not contradict the OT; rather it explains it, amplifies it, shows its true significance before and with God. The claims of the Lord Jesus deserve our attention, for they speak of Him as God, as one with the Father and therefore He has claims equally upon us as our God, our Lord and Saviour - whether we are a believer or an unbeliever.

The works: Jesus did not speak and leave it at that, but His words were linked to His miraculous actions and works, often these highlighted truth about Him: He claimed to be the resurrection and the life, and He raises Lazarus who had been dead for 4 days; He claimed to be the Light of the world and He opened a blind man's eyes; He claimed to be the Bread of Life and He fed at least 5000 people with a few loaves and a few fishes. His deeds, His miracles, His works all pointed to the Father being in Him and He and the Father.

John, in contrast to the other writers of the other Gospels, usually uses a different word for miracles than they did. Its most simple translation is "signs" - having the force of miraculous signs. One writer says "*These miracles are non-verbal Christological signposts*" – signposts pointing out who Jesus really is - the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed one of God.

The disciples needed to think on such things as they are important. They were going to face fear, doubts, unbelief and Jesus encouraged them and encourages us to look at His miraculous works and believe because of them. The Lord comes down to His disciples' level and says *“Look, no-one could do these things unless the Father was with Him - so believe because of these!”*

In our own lives, we need to pause and consider God's faithfulness to His word which has been proved in our lives also. Our Christian forefathers would record such instances, answers to prayer, fulfilment of God's word, promises kept and help given. Do we take time to record God's words as true and reliable in our experience and lives? It would be a great encouragement to us and others if we did so and wisely share such.

What about the works of God in our lives? His works are so often related to His word fulfilled and yet we easily forget, even overlook such. We are to consider the way God has worked in our lives. Realise the devil - a real being and enemy of God's people, will seek to cause us to dwell on our failures and failings, but we are to consider the works of God in our own lives, life, our family and even our church. Such things are to encourage and grow our faith more and more. I pray that we would have an ever-growing faith and we go on in this certain and secure way to heaven and delight more and more in such a Saviour is ours.