

# Wisdom to Follow

John 14:1-14

SS Lesson for 07/26/2020

**Devotional Scripture:** Prov 3:13-18

## OUTLINE

### LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

*Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*

*Key Verse: John 14:6*

*Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary*

### MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

#### FOLLOW THE WAY TO GOD (JOHN 14:1-6)

##### *The method (1)*

- Method of looking to the Son and believing in Him (John 6:40)
- Method of the precious blood of Jesus (1 Peter 1:17-21)
- Method of belief in Jesus that removes condemnation (John 3:18)
- Method of belief in the gospel of salvation (Eph 1:13)

##### *The preparation (2-3)*

- Preparation for a later following of Jesus (John 13:36)
- Preparation for being where Jesus is and the seeing of Jesus' glory (John 17:24)
- Preparation by entering the inner sanctuary on behalf of believers (Heb 6:19-20)
- Preparation of a heavenly home (Heb 11:13-16)
- Preparation of a new Holy City for the Church (Rev 21:2-3)

##### *The proclamation (4-6)*

- Proclamation of being the gate (John 10:9)
- Proclamation of being the only Name by which believers can be saved (Acts 4:12)
- Proclamation of being the access to God's grace (Rom 5:1-3)
- Proclamation of being the access to God and the Holy Spirit (Eph 2:18)
- Proclamation of being the new and living way into the Most Holy Place (Heb 10:19-22)

#### FOLLOW THE TRUTH OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SON AND THE FATHER (JOHN 14:7-11)

##### *Knowing the Father is knowing the Son (7-8)*

- Knowing Jesus is the way of knowing God (John 8:19)
- Knowing God and Jesus is having eternal life (John 17:3)
- Knowing that Jesus is the image of God (Col 1:15)
- Knowing that Jesus is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of God's being (Heb 1:3)
- Jesus made God known to show God's love (John 17:26)

##### *Seeing the Father is seeing the Son (9)*

- Seeing Jesus is seeing the One who sent Him (John 12:45)
- Seeing Jesus makes God known (John 1:18)
- Jesus is the only One who has seen God (John 6:46)
- Satan has blinded unbelievers from seeing Jesus for who He is (2 Cor 4:4)

##### *Believing in Jesus is believing in the Son (10-11)*

- Believing in Jesus and God by being indwelt by Them (John 17:21)
- Believing that there is only one God and Son and that Jesus is the Son (1 Cor 8:6)
- Believing Jesus is God by acknowledging Him as such (1 John 2:23)
- Believing by honoring Jesus as God (John 5:23)
- Believing in Jesus means believing in God also (John 12:44)

#### FOLLOW THE LIFE IN THE GLORY OF THE FATHER (JOHN 14:12-14)

##### *Greater works (12)*

- Greater works of healings (Acts 5:15)
- Greater works of faith (Matt 21:21)
- Greater works through spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:7-11)
- Greater works through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Acts 2:3-12)

##### *Answered prayer (13-14)*

- Answered prayer through asking in the Name of Jesus (John 16:22-24)
- Answered prayer for wisdom (James 1:5)
- Answered prayer through being righteous (James 5:16-18)
- Answered prayer through obedience (1 John 3:21-22)

Answered prayer through asking according to God's will (1 John 5:13-15)

## CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM BOB DEFFINBAUGH

*The Answer to Peter's Question: "Where Are You Going" (14:1-4)*

*Thomas' Question Answered: "How Can We Know the Way?" (14:5-7)*

*Philip's Request: "Show Us the Father and It Is Enough" (14:8-21)*

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE ECHOES COMMENTARY

## Lesson Background and Key Verse

### Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Of the four New Testament's four Gospels, John's is the most distinctive. All four agree that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah. When telling the gospel story, Matthew, Mark, and Luke narrate many of the same episodes, usually with very similar words. John's Gospel shares much less material with the other three and offers many teachings that are not found elsewhere. He tells of extended conversations between Jesus and His opponents, as well as between Jesus and His followers. These provide perspective on Jesus' identity and mission as the divine Son of God who became human. John connects these conversations to Jesus' miracles, which John calls "signs" (John 4:48; 20:30) to emphasize that they point to Jesus' identity and mission. Like the other Gospels, John arranges his material to focus on Jesus' death and resurrection, in which we see Jesus' mission come to its amazing fulfillment. Our lesson text comes near the beginning of the chapters in John's Gospel that focus on Jesus' words and actions on the night before His crucifixion (John 13-18). Much of this material is Jesus' private teaching to His followers. Hanging over the discourse is the shadow of Jesus' looming crucifixion (John 13:1). By what seems to be Satan's defeat of Jesus (13:21-27; 19:16-30), is actually Jesus' defeat of Satan. Though Jesus would no longer be present as He had been, His followers would not be alone, for Jesus promised to send God's Holy Spirit (14:16, 17, 26). By the Spirit's power, they would continue the work that God had begun in Jesus (16:7-14). This section of John begins as Jesus washed His disciples' feet. This was to show them, in part, that in His death He, their Lord, would be serving them (John 13:1-17). As Jesus brought His teaching to a close, He prayed for His followers, asking the Father especially that they be unified as He and the Father are unified (17:6-26). As Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, He was willingly surrendering to a death that would free His disciples from the guilt of sin (18:2-9).

### Key Verse: John 14:6

*Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

### Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

The disciples were completely bewildered and discouraged. Jesus had said He was going away (7:34; 8:21; 12:8, 35; 13:33), that He would die (12:32-33), that one of the Twelve was a traitor (13:21), that Peter would disown Him three times (13:38), that Satan was at work against all of them (Luke 22:31-32), and that all the disciples would fall away (Matt. 26:31). The cumulative weight of these revelations must have greatly depressed them.

**14:1-2.** To comfort the disciples, Jesus gave them several exhortations along with promises. **Do not let your hearts be troubled**, He said. "Troubled" is *tarassesthō* ("stirred, agitated") from the same verb translated "troubled" in 11:33; 13:21; 14:27. One's heart is the center of his personality. Each believer is responsible for the condition of his heart (cf. Prov. 3:1, 3, 5; 4:23; 20:9). By a firm trust in God the Father and Jesus the Son, they could relieve their soul-sorrow and be sustained in their coming tests. When Jesus said, **Trust in God; trust also in Me**, He was probably giving commands, not making statements (see NIV marg.). Death should not be a terror to them because Jesus was leaving **to prepare a place for them in heaven, the Father's house**.

**14:3-4. I will come back** refers here, not to the Resurrection or to a believer's death, but to the Rapture of the church when Christ will return for His sheep (cf. 1 Thes. 4:13-18) and they will be **with Him** (cf. John 17:24). Jesus said nothing about the nature of the place where He was going. It is sufficient that believers will be with the Father and Jesus (cf. 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 1 Thes. 4:17). The disciples knew how to get to

heaven. He told them, **You know the way to the place where I am going.** Throughout His ministry, Jesus had been showing them the way, but as Thomas indicated (John 14:5), they did not fully understand.

**14:5-6.** Thomas' statement (**We don't know where You are going**) and his question (**So how can we know the way?**) reflected the perplexity of the Eleven (cf. Peter's similar question; 13:36). They would remain puzzled until His death and resurrection and until the advent of the Spirit. They had all the information but they could not put it together. Jesus' words, **I am the Way and the Truth and the Life,** are the sixth of Jesus' seven "I am" statements in the Gospel of John (6:48; 8:12; 10:9, 11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1). Jesus is the "Way" because He is the "Truth" and the "Life." As the Father is Truth and Life, Jesus is the embodiment of God so people can come to the Father (cf. 1:4, 14, 18; 11:25). By His words, **No one comes to the Father except through Me,** Jesus stressed that salvation, contrary to what many people think, is *not* obtainable through many ways. Only one Way exists (cf. Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5). Jesus is the only access to the Father because He is the only One from the Father (cf. John 1:1-2, 51; 3:13).

**14:7.** The first sentence in this verse may either be a promise ("If you really knew Me, you *will* know My Father as well") or a rebuke (**If you really knew Me, you would know My Father as well**). The Lord seems to be rebuking them for a failure to understand His person and mission (cf. 8:19). The following dialogue (14:8-9) indicates a failure on the disciples' part. **From now on, you do know Him** is a promise, which looks beyond the Cross and the Resurrection (cf. 20:28, "My Lord and my God").

**14:8-9.** Philip expressed a universal desire of mankind: to see God (cf. Ex. 33:18). In a perverted form this desire leads to idolatry. Philip was probably longing for a theophany (cf. Ex. 24:9-10; Isa. 6:1) or some visible display of God's glory. Jesus' statement, **Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father** (cf. John 12:45), is one of the most staggering claims He ever made. The Father is in Jesus and Jesus perfectly reveals Him (1:18). Hence no theophany was necessary, for by seeing Jesus they **were seeing the Father!**

**14:10-11.** The proof of the union of Jesus and His Father is threefold. They should **believe** Jesus (a) because of His character (**I am in the Father** [cf. v. 20] **and... the Father is in Me**); (b) because His words are the Father's (**The words I say to you are not just My own** (cf. 7:16; 12:49-50; 14:24); and (c) because the miracles reveal God's working through Him (**the Father, living in Me... is doing His work.... believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves**; cf. 5:36). One of the key elements in John's Gospel is the stress on the signs as gracious pointers to faith (cf. 5:36; 10:25, 38; 11:47; 12:37; 20:30-31).

**14:12-14.** The apostles would not necessarily do more stupendous miracles than Jesus did (e.g., feeding 5,000) but their outreach would be greater (e.g., Peter in one sermon had 3,000 converts). This was possible **because** Jesus had gone **to the Father** and had sent the Spirit. Miracles are important, but some evangelists have done **even greater things than these** by preaching the good news to many thousands of people. **In My name** (vv. 13-14) is not a magical formula of invocation. But the prayers of believers, as Christ's representatives doing His business, will be answered. John expanded this teaching in his first epistle. He wrote, "If we ask anything according to His will... we have what we asked of Him" (1 John 5:14-15). To **ask Me for anything in My name** means to ask according to His will (cf. "in My name" in John 15:16; 16:23-24, 26). The word "Me" is omitted in some Greek manuscripts but it is probably correct here. Prayers in the New Testament are usually addressed to God the Father, but prayer addressed to **the Son** is proper also (e.g., Stephen's prayer to the "Lord Jesus" [Acts 7:59]). The goal of answered prayers is to **bring glory to the Father**. Also bearing fruit glorifies the Father (John 15:8).

## Major Theme Analysis

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

### **Follow the Way to God (John 14:1-6)**

- 1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.
- 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.
- 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.
- 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know."
- 5 Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"
- 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

## **The method (1)**

### *Method of looking to the Son and believing in Him (John 6:40)*

40 For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

### *Method of the precious blood of Jesus (1 Peter 1:17-21)*

18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. 20 He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. 21 Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

### *Method of belief in Jesus that removes condemnation (John 3:18)*

18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

### *Method of belief in the gospel of salvation (Eph 1:13)*

13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,

## **The preparation (2-3)**

### *Preparation for a later following of Jesus (John 13:36)*

36 Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later."

### *Preparation for being where Jesus is and the seeing of Jesus' glory (John 17:24)*

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.

### *Preparation by entering the inner sanctuary on behalf of believers (Heb 6:19-20)*

19 We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, 20 where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

### *Preparation of a heavenly home (Heb 11:13-16)*

13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. 14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. 15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 Instead, they were longing for a better country — a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

### *Preparation of a new Holy City for the Church (Rev 21:2-3)*

2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

## **The proclamation (4-6)**

### *Proclamation of being the gate (John 10:9)*

9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture.

*Proclamation of being the only Name by which believers can be saved (Acts 4:12)*

12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

*Proclamation of being the access to God's grace (Rom 5:1-3)*

5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

*Proclamation of being the access to God and the Holy Spirit (Eph 2:18)*

18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

*Proclamation of being the new and living way into the Most Holy Place (Heb 10:19-22)*

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

### ***Follow the Truth of the Relationship between the Son and the Father (John 14:7-11)***

7 "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."

8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."

9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.

11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

### **Knowing the Father is knowing the Son (7-8)**

*Knowing Jesus is the way of knowing God (John 8:19)*

19 Then they asked him, "Where is your father?" "You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also."

*Knowing God and Jesus is having eternal life (John 17:3)*

3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

*Knowing that Jesus is the image of God (Col 1:15)*

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

*Knowing that Jesus is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of God's being (Heb 1:3)*

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.

*Jesus made God known to show God's love (John 17:26)*

26 I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

## **Seeing the Father is seeing the Son (9)**

*Seeing Jesus is seeing the One who sent Him (John 12:45)*

45 When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me.

*Seeing Jesus makes God known (John 1:18)*

18 No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

*Jesus is the only One who has seen God (John 6:46)*

46 No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father.

*Satan has blinded unbelievers from seeing Jesus for who He is (2 Cor 4:4)*

4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

## **Believing in Jesus is believing in the Son (10-11)**

*Believing in Jesus and God by being indwelt by Them (John 17:21)*

21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

*Believing that there is only one God and Son and that Jesus is the Son (1 Cor 8:6)*

6 yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

*Believing Jesus is God by acknowledging Him as such (1 John 2:23)*

23 No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

*Believing by honoring Jesus as God (John 5:23)*

23 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

*Believing in Jesus means believing in God also (John 12:44)*

44 Then Jesus cried out, "When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me.

## **Follow the Life in the Glory of the Father (John 14:12-14)**

12 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

## **Greater works (12)**

*Greater works of healings (Acts 5:15)*

15 As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by.

*Greater works of faith (Matt 21:21)*

21 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done.

### *Greater works through spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:7-11)*

7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

### *Greater works through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Acts 2:3-12)*

4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. 5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs — we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"

## **Answered prayer (13-14)**

### *Answered prayer through asking in the Name of Jesus (John 16:22-24)*

23 In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. 24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

### *Answered prayer for wisdom (James 1:5)*

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

### *Answered prayer through being righteous (James 5:16-18)*

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. 17 Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

### *Answered prayer through obedience (1 John 3:21-22)*

21 Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God 22 and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.

### *Answered prayer through asking according to God's will (1 John 5:13-15)*

14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him.

## **Conclusion and Other Thoughts**

### ***Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh***

#### **The Answer to Peter's Question: "Where Are You Going" (14:1-4)**

Verses 1-4 of chapter fourteen are an answer to Peter's question in chapter 13, "Lord, where are You going?" (John 13:36). Our Lord had revealed that He was departing and that His disciples would not be able to follow Him for a little while. Peter confidently assured His Lord that he would follow Him anywhere, even to death. Chapter 13 closed with Jesus' disturbing prophecy of Peter's denial. The first four verses of chapter fourteen contain our Lord's fuller response to the question raised by Peter as to where He was going.

This 'going' was a return to the heavenly Father, but more than this it involved an agonizing death by crucifixion. What prompted Peter's question was not a lack of information, for our Lord had already spoken

clearly of His death. The problem was the disciples stubborn refusal to accept the clear teaching of Christ. Suffering and death did not fit their preconceived ideas of Messiahship or of the coming Kingdom. Jesus couldn't mean what He was saying. And so the questions persisted, always seeking some other answer than what they had consistently been told.

Jesus began by dealing with the underlying cause of their unrest and spiritual agitation—a lack of faith. God's prescription for fear is faith. "Let not your heart be troubled, believe in God, believe also in Me" (John 14:1). Just as the disciples had trusted in God, so they must believe in the Lord Jesus. They could not help but question in their own minds the wisdom of the Savior in virtually precipitating His own death. This seemed to the disciples to be a foolish and senseless casting away of all their hopes.

To undergird the diminishing hopes of the eleven, Jesus first assured them of the final outcome of the immediate events of the future. He urged them to consider the final chapter of history before drawing hasty conclusions about the events of the immediate future. The final destination of our Lord was to return to the Father's house, that is, heaven. The ultimate outcome of our Lord's going was that He prepared a place for us there with Him and with the Father. He will go, but He will also just as surely return to take us to be with Him forever.

The events of the immediate future were not contradictory to this ultimate goal of history, but complimentary to it. It was true that Jesus *would* go, but more than this we should understand that he *must* go. This 'must' is not so much a necessity so far as the physical preparation of heaven is concerned, for Jesus said, "In My Father's house *are* many dwelling places" (verse 2). Heaven already exists with more than adequate accommodations for all true believers.

There is a two-fold sense in which we must understand the preparation of heaven for men. First, it was necessary for heaven to be prepared for man. This preparation was not meant to be understood in a physical sense as I have already suggested, for it was physically more than adequate for human habitation (verse 2). In the book of Hebrews, especially in chapter 9, we are informed that the high priestly work of Christ involved entering into heaven to cleanse it (Hebrews 9:23-28). It is on the basis of this preparation that our Lord will return again to take the Christians home to be with Him (Hebrews 9:28).

In another sense, we must realize that the death of Christ prepared us for heaven. Every man, woman, and child is born in a state of rebellion against God, doomed to eternal punishment apart from divine intervention (Ephesians 2:1-3; Romans 3:9-20). It was the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross that provided the eternal redemption which makes every believer fit for eternity in the presence of God (Romans 3:21-26; Ephesians, 2:3-10; Colossians 1:12-22; 2:13-14; Hebrews 9:23-28).

Not long ago a friend of mine went to a very fine restaurant in Dallas. He was not allowed to dine there because he did not have on a coat and tie, which was a requirement of that establishment. Heaven is something like that, I believe. Sinful men are not properly attired to enter into it. The death of Jesus Christ has removed the filthy rags of our self-righteousness. We have been clothed in His righteousness and thus prepared to spend eternity in heaven by faith with Him.

Our Lord did not spell out in detail the means for the preparation of heaven for men and men for heaven, for they were not yet able to grasp it (cf. John 16:12). The Holy Spirit would make these things clear in time to come (John 16:13ff.). The going of our Lord was a physical departure, a return to the abode of the Father. But Jesus' leaving was also the sacrificial death of the sinless Lamb of God, on Whom would be laid the sins of men. It was for this reason He had come, and so He must leave His disciples for a while.

Jesus was going, by means of a tortuous death upon a Roman cross. It was a departure far worse than the disciples were capable of imagining. Yet while this going was far worse than they feared, the outcome was not what they feared. They viewed Jesus' departure as a permanent separation from the One they deeply loved. While His departure would mean a temporary end to His physical presence, it was the means of establishing a much deeper and more intimate relationship.

To use the analogy of marriage for a moment, Christ's physical presence among the twelve had been something like an engagement. The departure or going of the Lord meant an end to this kind of relationship. But it also brought about a marriage, in which a much fuller and more permanent union would be accomplished. Think of the devastating results if Jesus had given the disciples what they wanted! He would continue in His physical presence, but they would continue in their sins. He could never take them home with Him to live with His Father, because they were not fit for it.

Jesus' departure was a painful one. There was nothing pleasant about it. But it was both necessary and preparatory. It brought about the possibility of a greater and more permanent union and communion with Him.

He would leave them for a while; He must leave them for a while. This would be painful for them and Him, but it would be profitable in the results which it would accomplish.

In Jesus' answer to the question of Peter, there is a principle which may bring us great comfort in facing the future: **GOD OFTEN EMPLOYS TEMPORARY PAIN TO BRING ENDURING PLEASURE.**

Think of the birth of a child. For nine months after new life is conceived it lives in the protection of the womb. This idyllic existence cannot continue indefinitely. Through a painful process, the baby is brought into the world. And yet it is this pain which introduces the greater pleasure of a far more intimate and lasting relationship as parent and child.

So it is with the Christian life. We may fear the future. The future may be even more difficult than we imagine it to be. We may face great trials and testing and undergo great pain. In the face of such frightening possibilities we need not lose our spiritual composure because we know that our ultimate destiny is to spend eternity in the presence of God in eternal fellowship with our Savior. If there should be suffering and pain in our pathway, we may be confident: that God will use this to further us along the path to our heavenly goal.

#### **Thomas' Question Answered: "How Can We Know the Way?" (14:5-7)**

Thomas was the hard-headed realist of the group. He would not believe Jesus was raised from the dead until he saw the evidence first hand (John 20:24-25). Here he was not content with the answer given by our Lord. So far as he was concerned, Jesus had not yet answered the first question satisfactorily. They did not know where He was going. They surely did not know the way.

To Thomas, the issue was a simple one, but he could not seem to hear the answer. How can one know how to get somewhere when he doesn't know his destination? How can one find the path without knowing the place? The disciples still did not comprehend Jesus' words concerning His departure. They refused to accept His predictions of His death. They were unwilling to think of the Master's departure as anything more than getting out of the country, perhaps until they had cooled down. They were thinking in the most literal and physical terms. They didn't know His destination; they surely could not know the directions as to how to get there to meet Him.

Jesus' reply was almost too simple. He not only claimed to be the goal but the guide. The ultimate destiny of the disciples was to be with Christ. They puzzled over the details of getting to where He was. Jesus informed them that He was the guide as well as the goal: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (John 14:6). Our final destination, if we are truly born again, is heaven, the Father's house. No one knows the way to the Father's house better than the Son. He was soon to make His way back to be with the Father, later to return for His own to share in His riches. It was enough for the disciples that they know the Son and He would be their guide. In the final analysis the way is not our responsibility, but His.

There is a very important principle here, I believe. **JESUS CHRIST IS BOTH OUR GOAL AND OUR GUIDE. THE 'SECRET' OF GUIDANCE IS TO KNOW THE GUIDE.**

In a day when the future looks dim and dangerous there is great interest, even undue concern, about guidance. Here is one of the great obsessions of our day, knowing the specific will of God. In the process we have come to place more emphasis on guidance than on the guide. All of us should listen to the words of our Lord, for He is the all-sufficient Savior. He is the giver of life, the energizing force of the Christian (cf. John 1:1-4). He is also the embodiment of truth, the perfect reflection of the Father. His is finally the way. We need not know every fork of life's road or every bend in the path so long as we are close to the guide.

The only way to the Father is through the Son. Here is summarized in a sentence the purpose of the Life and Ministry of our Lord Jesus. All men are sinners, under the condemnation of God. The only way to the Father is through the atoning work of the Son on the cross of Calvary. That is the one point where the disciples would have wanted Him to abort His mission.

In the matter of initial salvation, the Son is the only way to the Father. And, so far as the Christian is concerned, the Son is the only way to the presence of the Father as well. We need to consistently rely on Christ as the source of our sanctification as well as our justification.

#### **Philip's Request: "Show Us the Father and It Is Enough" (14:8-21)**

Again and again the unbelieving Jews sought signs from the Savior (cf. Matthew 12:38). The words of promise of the Lord Jesus were not sufficient for Philip (or I suspect, for any of the other disciples). If only Jesus could perform a spectacular sign by revealing the Father to them in all His splendor, that would be enough. That would set their hearts and minds at rest. This was the request of Philip.

The issue was one of confirmation. The future looked so threatening and the words of Jesus seemed so abstract. If only there could be some kind of spectacular confirmation. If they could just see the Father ...

In this request Philip revealed the frailty of the disciple's faith at this point in their lives. They had missed one of the primary purposes of Christ's coming, for He had come to reveal the Father.

"No man has seen God at any time; but the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him" (John 1:18).

"And he who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me" (John 12:45).

Throughout the Old Testament man had been forbidden to make idols or images because they were fashioned by human hands. Man can never accurately reflect the perfections of God. But Jesus Christ, the God-Man, is the product of divine creation, by means of the virgin birth. He alone rightly reveals God to man. Thus we can worship the Son as God (cf. Matthew 2:11; 8:2, etc.).

Divine confirmation of the identity of Jesus as Israel's Messiah had already been accomplished. Jesus reminded His followers of the two main streams of His authority, His words (verse 10) and His works (verse 11). His teaching had been marked by an authority far above that of Israel's religious leadership (cf. Matthew 7:28-29). His miracles were a divine seal of approval upon His claims (cf. John 3:2; 11:41-45; Acts 2:22). Even His enemies had to acknowledge the convincing force of His works (John 11:47-48; 12:9-19). His opponents refused to accept His claim to be God, but since He demonstrated supernatural powers, they had to attribute His works to the power of Satan (Mark 3:22).

In addition to the confirming evidences of Jesus' words and works, there was yet another attestation to the presence of God to be revealed. It would come at a future time. "In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you" (John 14:20). The day of which Jesus spoke was not the day of His return for His own, nor of His second advent to establish His Kingdom. It was the day in which the power of the Holy Spirit would be released in the lives of Jesus' followers. That day began at Pentecost and has continued until the present. Because of this spiritual power in the lives of true believers Jesus could promise: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father" (John 14:12).

How foolish our requests and desires are. The disciples desperately hoped that what they feared would not come to pass. If our Lord had not died upon that cross and ascended to be with the Father, we would never spend eternity with God, nor could we have entered into the intimate relationship we now have with the Son. More than this, had the Savior not departed, the assurance of His presence in us through His Spirit would not have been available. These 'greater works' were the direct result of the departure of the Son (cf. Ephesians 4:7-16). The presence and power of the Lord Jesus Christ is multiplied in His physical absence through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

There are at least three prerequisites for the release of God's power in the life of one of His own which are made clear in this passage. First, the acts which are done with great power must be those which bring glory to the Father (verse 13). Second, supernatural power is provided only for those things which are done in the name of the Lord Jesus. By this I understand that our requests of God must be consistent with the character and purposes of the Son (John 14:13). We must come to understand that our work is, in reality, the work of our Lord Jesus through us. Finally, works of power must always be the product of the ministry of the Holy Spirit (verses 17ff.).

There is behind the request of Philip and the answer of our Lord, a principle which we must never forget: **THE REQUEST FOR A SPECTACULAR CONFIRMATION OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD IS OFTEN PROMPTED BY A LACK OF FAITH IN WHAT GOD HAS CLEARLY REVEALED TO US IN HIS WORD.**

Many of us desire that God reveal Himself to us in some spectacular way, to prove to us that He is real. God has disclosed Himself to man through the final and compelling revelation of His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2). To ask for anything more is to challenge the sufficiency of what God has done.

There is additional confirmation of our faith, but it does not come from 'out of the blue.' It comes from the blessing of God as we are obedient to His Word. "If you Love Me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever" (John 14:15-16).

God does disclose Himself to His children, but normally it is not in a once-for-all spectacular way. (Spectacular confirmations had occurred in the sight of the disciples, but how quickly they were forgotten in the light of

present or imminent adversity. Such was also the case in the Old Testament.) God normally affirms our faith as we are obedient to His Word and seek to fulfill His purposes in our lives.

*(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/facing-future-prescription-peace-john-14>)*

### **Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

In Jesus of Nazareth, we indeed see God! Fully human and fully divine, Jesus spoke and acted with authority that belongs to God alone. For this reason, His followers came to understand that God was personally present in Jesus. The God who is incarnate in Jesus is patient, as Jesus was patient with His disciples. He is just, as Jesus was just with the mighty and the lowly. He is gracious, generous, and merciful beyond comparison, as Jesus willingly gave His life for the unworthy, even for His enemies. To know Jesus is to know God. To reject Jesus is to reject God. To follow God's path of wisdom is to follow in the path of Jesus, to love and serve as He did.

### **Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary**

Trusting in Jesus - At His last supper with His disciples, Jesus announced His departure and plan to return to His Father in heaven. This caused great anxiety for the disciples and troubled hearts. Therefore, Jesus offered encouraging words and promised to calm their fears. He talked about firmly placing trust in Him. He spoke about God's plans for their future once He departed. He assured them they would one day be in the Father's house with Him. He promised plenty of rooms for everyone who believes in Him. With great love, Jesus is even now preparing a home for God's children. These verses are also teaching about an anticipated time when Jesus ultimately returns at the end of the age when all believers will gather together in heaven, united with Christ.

Asking Questions - All the disciples were probably perplexed by this information. Thomas bravely asked Jesus a question: Where exactly are you going, and how do we get there? Jesus emphatically stated, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6, KJV). He is not a map or a signpost pointing in the direction of heaven, but the true causeway that leads to heaven and eternal life. Then Phillip asked Jesus to show the disciples the Father. Jesus, once again, attempted to explain the connection between God the Father and God the Son: they are the same in essence. Jesus came to earth to display the Father's love, mercy, and goodness, His very nature. Jesus entirely depended on God for each step of His ministry and existence on the earth. The power displayed through Jesus came only under God's authority and His ability.

Living for Jesus - Jesus offered the disciples more information. First, He said, God's work will continue. Amazing things will be done through Jesus' followers. Second, His followers can ask anything in His name. Tacking on "in Jesus' name" to the end of a prayer is not a magic formula, guaranteeing God's answers. What we ask in His name must be in His will and glorify the Father. A wise person searches out these statements and claims of Jesus and sees the truth in them. The fool dismisses Him and ignores the truth.