
Day 1

Learn: Prayerfully read John 13.36-14.14. Jesus and his apostles ate their Passover feast, and Jesus washed their feet. Jesus taught them about being humble and sacrificial toward each other, Judas left to betray Jesus, and then Jesus taught the eleven other apostles about his new commandment of loving each other just as he had loved them. They had no interest in this new commandment at this point! They were consumed with fear and confusion about Jesus planning to leave them. They did not understand why he had to die or why he would leave; they believed he was the Messiah-savior from God, who had come – not only to deliver individuals from sin into relationship with God – but also to deliver Israel from foreign rule into the Messianic kingdom. Peter asked where Jesus was going. Jesus knew that someday Peter would violently die for the gospel [see 21.18-19] and join Jesus in Heaven, but none of them could follow Jesus at this time. Peter blustered he was willing to die for Jesus, by which he meant he would sacrifice everything to go anywhere with Jesus. This was ironic because it was Jesus who would die for Peter the next day. This betrayed Peter’s ignorance about his own weakness, which Jesus pointed out by predicting that Peter would deny affiliation with him. This was a rebuke; but Jesus also was preparing the way for Peter to accept his forgiveness after the resurrection: it is evidence of *grace* if Jesus knows ahead of time about this betrayal and yet loves Peter anyway. The same is true for us: when God chose to save you, when Jesus died for you, when the Holy Spirit gave you rebirth, they knew every sin you would commit afterward, but they chose to love you and save you anyway. Thus when you do mess up, it does not damage their love or your salvation. They forgave you long ago.

Reflect: Jesus told them not to let their hearts be disturbed. They were afraid and confused, but Jesus would comfort them. How? *with revelation from God!* We often feel confused about life, ourselves, others, or God and his ways, so we should comfort ourselves [or someone else] *with God’s truth*. The apostles would be even more disturbed the next night, when Jesus had been arrested, tried, killed, and buried, and they had not supported him at all. Right after Jesus told them not to be disturbed, he gave them the antidote: faith; faith in God the Father and in him. And their faith could be strengthened by the revelation he would share with them. How does worldly counseling differ in approach? How do we usually try to comfort ourselves and how is that different? Will you make changes in how you prepare yourself for hard times and comfort yourself in hard times?

Day 2

Learn: Prayerfully read John 13.36-14.3. Jesus knew of their internal turmoil and told them to have faith. English translations differ on the second half of 14.1, in which Jesus started talking to all of them together: “You believe in God, believe also in me” [statement-command] or “Believe in God, believe also in me” [command-command]. In English, the command form and the statement form for this verb are the same [you must *believe*; you do *believe*]; the same is true in Greek. There actually are four ways we could translate this sentence: command-command; command-statement; statement-command; statement-statement. Try each and see which you think makes the most sense! In any case, the point is that the answer to fear and confusion is faith. And the answer to weak faith is to consume more of God’s revelation, because that is how Jesus comforted them. What Jesus shared with them was that he had to go, had to die, to prepare a place for them with God the Father. It was not that Jesus went to build them a house, it was that he went to die so as to reconcile them with God the Father. He had to go, but this would benefit them, as he would make provision for them, and they would see him again in his Father’s house. His death would make eternal life possible for them, to be with him, whether in Heaven or on the renewed Earth.

Reflect: Because Jesus was resurrected from the dead, he could return to the apostles knowing they now could be fully saved through their faith in what he had accomplished on the cross. In that sense he *came again* to them, to *take them to himself*, to complete the preparation of their place with God. He also takes us to himself: we do not get to see him here, but we can experience him, have union with him, be saved by him, and be destined for Heaven through him. Does it comfort you to know Jesus prepared the way for you and a place for you? How would more frequent reflection on this strengthen your faith and resolve? In what areas of your life could you adopt a more eternal perspective? How would that perhaps help keep you calm and joyful?

Day 3

Learn: Prayerfully read John 14.1-7. Jesus was going to Heaven through his sacrificial death on the cross. They would die as martyrs for the gospel mission, though their deaths could not atone [make peace with God] for anyone as Jesus' did. More broadly, *the way* to Heaven for them was *through faith in Jesus*. People today try to argue that all religions are equal or everyone should find his/her own spiritual pathway, but this ignores the revelation of God that only God can provide a way for us to reconcile with himself, and he has chosen one specific way: faith in the identity and accomplishment on the cross of Jesus. Jesus is the truth of God because he is the supreme revelation of God as the divine Son who represents God the Father perfectly. Jesus is the life of God because he is the giver of both physical and spiritual life. Being both the truth and the life, he is the way of God: only he can reconcile imperfect and sinning people with the perfect and righteous God the Father, only he can provide forgiveness and deliverance through his blood shed on the cross. This is the only way God has provided for forgiveness and reconciliation with him, so nobody can come to God the Father except through faith in Jesus.

Reflect: If Jesus is the only way God has provided for salvation, eternal life, and a relationship with himself, then no other religion will suffice, only biblical Christianity. Jesus is the only way. Have you ever had a favorite movie star or musician die, and then realize, "Wow, that person is now in Hell"? Do you have loved ones you desire to know Jesus? Can this passage help you show them who Jesus is and the way to God? Are you praying for them, loving on them, encouraging them to consider God's truth? Should you be doing more of this or something else for them?

Day 4

Learn: Prayerfully read John 14.6-11. Part of saving faith is to believe in Jesus' identity as the divine Son of God, who is in total unity of essence, character, and will with God the Father, such that to know Jesus is to know God, to witness Jesus is to perceive God [see 10.30]. We have learned in this gospel that Jesus spoke exactly the words God the Father would have him speak and did the works God the Father would have him do. Here Jesus says he is "in" God the Father and the Father is "in" him, and the Father "remains in" him [see 10.38]. This language was used in this gospel about the Spirit remaining on Jesus [1.32] and remaining with believers [14.17], God's wrath remaining on nonbelievers [3.36] in whom God's word does not remain [5.38], the one who relies on the sacrifice of Jesus remaining in Jesus and Jesus in him [6.56] and remaining in Jesus love [15.10]. Even if the disciples cannot see this for themselves or understand Jesus' teachings, they should believe in his unity with God the Father because of the miraculous signs relating to Old Testament prophecies, which God the Father has been giving them through Jesus.

Reflect: Even if people earnestly pursue the one true God through the Old Testament revelation [Judaism] or other sources of information [cult spinoffs; Islam; later Roman Catholic traditions], without accurate faith in the identity and saving work of Jesus, they cannot reconcile with God or be forgiven. How important is it that we accurately teach the Bible in worship services, to our children and youth, and even to people we run up against in life? What is your next step in developing your knowledge, understanding, and ability to communicate God's truth? It might be more individual Bible study, using some of the study tools available today, joining a small group discussion, attending a class, finding a mentor, asking your questions, or something else... what do you think you should do?

Day 5

Learn: Prayerfully read John 14.12-14; 1 John 3.21-23; 5.14-15. There is a connection between getting the desires of your heart and having a heart after God, between getting what you ask and pursuing God's will. To do something "in Jesus' name" is to do it by his will, by his authority, by his direction, for his glory. To pray for something in his name is to ask something in unity with Christ's will and direction for you, by his authority, and for his glory. Not all requests fit those criteria. Even so, this is an astounding promise. When we yield our will to God's, we become tools for his work, we learn to ask according to his will. The contrast in 14.12 is not between the works of Christ and the works of believers, it is between the works Christ did while here and what he will do now through us. Because Jesus went through the crucifixion and resurrection, he can empower us to accomplish even more for the gospel than he did while here, because now there is clarity to the gospel, motivation for all of us to multiply our faith into others, and Spirit empowerment to reveal the truth about Jesus. Now the gospel will spread throughout the Earth.

Reflect: Which prayers of yours are really "in Jesus' name" and which are not even if you include those words? What do you think about this promise? Do you believe in this promise? Have you experienced it being fulfilled?