

Daily Devotions    Wednesday 3rd June (very special day!)

John 13v31 - 14v14

Yesterday we finished our study of the book of Ezekiel with the words of Jesus, '...that you also may be where I am.' This passage in John is part of Jesus's final tutorial for his disciples before his death. I'm interested to look at what Jesus said in Chapters 14-17 during these precious moments between the Last Supper and his arrest in Chapter 18.

Jesus had washed the disciples feet, had a meal with them during which Judas left to betray him. He'd already told them he was going to die but that he'd rise again and here he tells them that this is a journey he must do alone.

Amazingly he says to them, 'Do not let your hearts be troubled.' (14v1) Easy to say but so much harder to put into practice. Is worrying our default setting? Worry about family, job, income, health, reputation, the future?

Prior to these words Peter has been bragging that he will stick up for Jesus even if it means having to die for him. But Jesus knows Peter better than Peter knows himself. Peter, in effect, says you can trust me, I am reliable, I will sort it out! Jesus knew Peter was going to come down to earth with a bump by the time morning came!

'Do not let your hearts be troubled. .... believe in me.' We, like Peter, need to trust Jesus more than we trust ourselves. Jesus repeats 'I' several times in verses 2&3. He is the one in charge, He will do what is needed!

Do we depend on our own abilities like Peter? Are we D.I.Y. Christians who think we can fix anything? Do we struggle to accept that salvation is not something that we have to contribute to? We may need to focus less on ourselves and more in the one who knows us better than we know ourselves!

June is always such a great example of this trust. She tells me regularly that she never worries because she knows that, 'the Lord looks after me'. As I see her most days she often tells me stories of the little ways in which Jesus honours that simple trust she has in him.

Daily Devotions      Thursday 4th June 2020

John 14 1-14

Despite having been with Jesus for 3 years now, the disciples still hadn't fully understood Jesus's identity or mission. 3 more disciples now have questions for Jesus. First Thomas then Philip then Judas. Thomas's question echoes Peter's, who asked where Jesus was going. Here Thomas wants to know how they can know the way if they don't know where he is going. It almost seems he actually wants directions similar to Tony Christie who asked, 'Is this the way to Amarillo?'

Jesus had already told them that they knew the way and in v6 he explains why. He IS the way!

We sometimes complicate Christianity by talking about atonement, reconciliation, redemption, propitiation and the like. Jesus wants to make it simple. It's just all about one person. Himself!!

The disciples had heard him use the phrase, 'I am', 5 times prior to this occasion. Now he says, 'I am the way, the truth and the life.' (v6)

He doesn't use the phrase, 'I am', lightly. It is a derivative of Yahweh or Jehovah so not only is he telling his disciples it's all about him, he's also telling them he is God.

They had shared life with Jesus for the past 3 years. They had witnessed his way in his relationships with people and with his heavenly Father. They had heard nothing but truth from his sinless lips and they had experienced in him a taste of eternal life abundant. Jesus is telling them to just focus on him and trust him because he is God.

Praise God for all the 'I am's' that Jesus could rightfully lay claim to.

I am sufficient. I am sovereign. I am the God who sees you. I am your provider. I am faithful. I am righteous. I am gracious. I am compassionate and merciful. I am eternal. I am your refuge. I am your healer. I am your restorer. I am your defender. I am your rock. I am your redeemer. I am love.

I am who I am (Ex 3 v14)

Daily Devotions      Friday 5th June 2020

John 14 vs 1-14 (esp v 6)

The claim that there is no way to God apart from through Jesus is certainly not popular in our multi faith, multicultural society. Even strong Christians today feel guilty about asserting that Jesus is the only way to God.

The media and government strive to create harmony in our pluralistic world but miss the point if they expect each faith to accept the truth of other faiths! Tolerance is not loving people as long as we all accept what we believe is true. Tolerance is loving people regardless of what they say, do or believe is true!

We may feel arrogant proclaiming that ours is the only true faith but we have to believe when Jesus says, 'No one can come to the Father except through me', that it is either true or not true! Jesus never spoke an untruth.

As C.S.Lewis wrote about Jesus, 'This is the teaching of an egotistical maniac or an evil manipulator or God in the flesh.'

All of history, all the evidence and all of human experience, including those martyred for the cause, supports the latter.

Society views religions as a choice we make and nothing more. We browse the supermarket shelves stacked with various religions and take our pick. There is no love or tolerance in allowing someone to make bad choices with something so important. If your friend was with you in a burning building and you knew the way out, wouldn't the most loving thing be to direct them to the unlocked door rather than the ones that are locked?

We need confidence in our message. It has behind it, the Creator of mankind, the Creator of the universe and the Saviour of the world.

Love is the key when we share the message. Sometimes saying nothing is our best option! (I distinctly remember that when Lynda was telling me about Christianity before I was saved that it was what she didn't say that impressed me as much as what she did say).

Someone once said, 'A stranger is just a friend you've not yet met'. As believers of a Saviour who died for the world he loved we should maybe adopt this adaptation.

'A friend is a Christian who Christ has not yet met.'

Daily Devotions      Saturday 6th June 2020

John 14 1-14 (esp 8-11)

Do you sympathise with Philip's request? He wants evidence for God! I'm sure we'd all love to see God writing a message in the sky that fits our present circumstances or hear his voice booming from heaven with a personal instruction for us. In our hearts we probably think, 'Show yourself to me God in a clear, miraculous way and then I'll definitely obey you!'

This was Philip's position. He wants just a bit more information! Yet he has seen Jesus turn water into wine, heal a lame man, feed thousands with a small packed lunch, heal the blind, calm a storm and raise Lazarus from the dead! Still he wants more!

Jesus's reply is a loving rebuke. 'How can you say show us the Father.' (v9) It's interesting that Jesus doesn't say, 'The words I speak are the words the Father speaks.' Instead he says that when he speaks that God is at work in him. The words of Jesus are amazing and stand strong despite years of scrutiny. Jesus is telling Philip to look no further than his words and his works in order to see the Father because he and the Father are one! Miraculous words and miraculous works. Philip had witnessed them first hand but still wanted more.

Equally we should also be satisfied with what we already have. We can turn to his words and his works at anytime and in them we can see the Father.

If Philip wanted more even having physically been with Jesus, we can be forgiven for the same thoughts. Thomas had the same problem even after seeing the resurrected Jesus. Jesus's words to him pre-empted our doubts and concerns. 'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.' (John 20 v 29)

We may look at other Christians and think they are more spiritual than us, have a deeper communion with him or just have something we haven't got! The result can be that we go off looking for the missing spiritual ingredient! Jesus basically tells Philip, he already has all that he needs. The same applies to us!

'His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.' (2 Peter 1v3)