



G R A C E

REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

SOLI ♦ DEO ♦ GLORIA

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Sermon Notes

Jesus is the Way the Truth and the Life

John 14:1-6

March 12, 2006

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I. **Setting of Confusion and Uncertainty**

- Jesus has washed His disciples' feet, foreshadowing the Cross [although, the disciples do not yet understand the symbolism].
- Jesus has told the disciples that one of them would betray Him [and Judas has left; however, the disciples do not yet suspect him]
- Peter is told that he will deny Jesus three times before the rooster crows.
- Jesus has told them that He will leave them, and they cannot go where He is going.
 - i. Consider how difficult it must be for the disciples, who left everything to follow Jesus, to hear that He is now leaving them.

- ii. One scholar [Luthi] correctly puts it this way, “Peter and Thomas and the others are thoroughly shocked, and with good reason. They have followed Jesus, burning their boats, and blowing up the bridges behind them, so to speak ... And now He has disclosed to them that He is about to go where they cannot follow Him as yet. That means that they must part from Him. The reason why they are so deeply shocked is that separation from their Lord is absolutely unthinkable to them.”

All of this being said, the disciples are likely worried, stressed, fearful, and greatly confused as they face an uncertain future. Yet, Christ is not oblivious to this.

II. Comforting Command of Jesus

- In Verse 1, Jesus says, “Do not let your heart be troubled...”
 - i. This is a fascinating statement from our Lord, because **He is the one** who is being betrayed [as He speaks]; He is the one who will be arrested, tried, and brutally tortured; and He is the one who faces the torture and agony of the Cross, bearing the wrath of God, laying down His life for His sheep [and He is well aware of this]
 - ii. Further, Jesus is “troubled” in heart (12:27) and spirit (13:21).
 - iii. Yet, rather than seeking the support of His disciples, Jesus comforts **them**.
 - iv. He says [commands], “Do not let your *heart* be troubled...”
 1. For the Jew, the “heart” often referred to the “seat” of a person’s will and emotions.
 2. There is no doubt that, given the events that are about to occur [the arrest, trial, crucifixion, and burial of Jesus], the disciples will be [if they are not already] highly emotional.
 3. Yet, knowing what has already occurred, and is about to happen, Jesus tells His disciples, “Do not let your heart be troubled...”
 - a. Throughout the Old Testament, God’s chosen people are told not to be afraid, such as when entering into Canaan (Deuteronomy 1:21, 29, 20:1, 3; Joshua 1:9); or when facing a daunting enemy (2 Kings 25:24; Isaiah 10:24)
 - b. Furthermore, men such as Isaac, Jeremiah, and Paul were told not to be afraid (Genesis 26:24; Jeremiah 1:8; Acts 27:24).

a. Jesus Explains *How* to Obey His Command

- He says, “Do not let your heart be troubled; **believe in God, believe also in Me.**”
 1. In other words, Jesus explains **how** the disciples are to obey the command to “not let your heart be troubled.”
 2. The answer is clear and simple: “Believe in God, believe also in Me.”
 3. This statement is incredibly significant.
- First of all, notice what Jesus does NOT say.
 - He doesn’t say, “Get over it!”
 - He doesn’t say, “It’s all going to be ok...”
 - Or, “It will all work out...”
 - Or, “Just have faith...”
- Further, Jesus does not encourage them to try and think of all of the ways that *they* can change their circumstances so that they will feel better.
- He doesn’t tell them to try and get their minds off of their circumstances by pouring themselves into another activity.
- He doesn’t give them advice out of the “secular” world of pop psychology.
- He doesn’t offer cliché phrases in an attempt to comfort them.
- He doesn’t try and minimize the situation.
- He doesn’t turn away and ignore them.
- Also, Jesus, being fully God, could have [because He is sovereign] done something supernaturally so that they would not hurt or grieve...but He doesn’t do this either.

As the darkest hour in the lives of the disciples quickly approaches, their spirits are, and soon will be genuinely troubled. They will fear, they will hurt, they will mourn. And Jesus, knowing this, gives them the **ONLY** genuine way to deal with genuine pain: Believe in God.

However, what Jesus is telling them is not simply to casually believe in God, but to consume themselves with the truth of God, as revealed in His Word. Get lost in His immensity, in His character, in His nature.

When we hurt, the world tells us to rearrange our circumstances, change our perspective, whatever it takes so that the pain will go away.
However, Christ says, "Believe in God..."

✳ Consider the situation with the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 12.

In his book, *Finding God*, Larry Crabb states, "**We are more committed to making life work now than we are to finding God and living for a later hope. We turn to God only to use him to improve our present lives.**" He goes on to say, "**Christ offers hope, not relief, in the middle of suffering, and he commands us to pursue him hotly even when we'd rather stop and look after our own well-being.**"

- Yet, Jesus says, "Believe in God, believe also in Me."
 - In other words, Jesus equates belief in Himself with believe in God.
 - For, Jesus is the perfect revelation of God.
 - Many people will say, "Trust God," yet such an encouragement can often seem cold and impersonal; but, it is much more comforting to "Trust in Jesus Christ...for He is our Immanuel and able to help us in our time of need."
- The Reformed tradition is often criticized for having too much of an academic view of God – we know the difference between communicable and incommunicable attributes; we know the difference between His aseity and His immutability; however, when it comes to comforting those who are grieving (so the argument goes), our theology does little to help.
- **However, there is nothing more comforting to the grieving and hurting people of God than knowing God.**
- But, one of the most difficult lessons for Christians to learn is that we will never be free of hurt and pain this side of eternity. We cannot find our way back into Eden. But, once again, our hurt and pain should drive us to our knees that we may know God more.

b. Jesus Addresses their *Particular* Situation

- Jesus, knowing the hearts of the disciples, comforts them in the particular point they need most.
- For, Jesus knows that the disciples are and will be the most grieved about the fact that Jesus is "leaving."
- Therefore, in Verses 2 – 4, He addresses this very point:

1. For He says, “In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go and prepare a place for you.”
 2. In other words, one of the reasons Jesus is “leaving” His disciples is because He goes to prepare a place for them (with Him).
 3. Jesus is making a clear reference to heaven, pointing out that there are many dwelling places there, so, take heart.
 4. Another point that Jesus is making is that the disciples are “not of this world.”
 5. Finally, the words of Jesus parallels those of Deuteronomy, where God promises to go before His people and prepare a place (Canaan) for them (1:29-33).
- Then, Jesus promises [in Verse 3], “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.”
 1. This is a rather clear reference to the Second Coming.
 2. Therefore, the departing of Jesus from His disciples will only be temporary.
 - Jesus concludes this portion by saying [in Verse 4], “you know the way where I am going...”
 1. Now, its seems rather clear that, to some degree, His disciples do not know the “way.”
 2. However, the point that Jesus is making is that, since they know Him, who is the Way, the disciples know the way.

V. Questions from a Disciple

- As is normal in this Gospel, following the words of Jesus, the disciples, or at least one of them, express confusion of what the Lord has just said.
- This is no exception, for Thomas, (in Verse 5) says, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how doe we know the way?”
 1. Thomas is certainly known for his bluntness and, no doubt, speaks for the rest of the disciples.
 2. The reason for this is because he says “*we* do not know where You are going...”

VI. Jesus Reveals a Truth about Himself

- As Jesus prepares His disciples for the grief that they will surely experience, and the uncertainty that they currently do, He makes a powerful **revelation concerning Himself**.
- It should be no surprise to the discerning reader of the Gospel of John that this revelation is another *ego eimi* [εγω ειμι] statement. Read Exodus 3:14.
- Jesus says, “I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life, no one comes to the Father but through Me.”
- This Verse is a direct response to the question posed by Thomas.
- Therefore, it is likely that “way” should be slightly more emphasized than “truth” and “life” (although it is no more truthful).
- This sixth *ego eimi* statement combines some of the major themes of revelation concerning nature and identity of Jesus in this Gospel.
- What is important, here, is that Jesus does not merely **show** the disciples the way, He **is** the way.
 - However, Jesus is the Way **because** He is the Truth and the Life.
 - These latter two truths have already been revealed in this Gospel.
 - Jesus is the “truth”
 - ✧ Jesus is the truth of God (“full of grace and truth”), the supreme revelation of God, the one who “exegetes” the Father (John 1:14).
 - ✧ So much so is this true that Jesus is called “God” (John 1:1, 1:18, 20:28)
 - Also, Jesus is “the life”
 - ✧ In Jesus was life, and the life was the Light of men (John 1:4).
 - ✧ Jesus has “life in Himself” (5:26)
 - ✧ He is the “resurrection and the life” (11:25).
 - ✧ Further, Jesus came that we might live to the full (10:10).
 - ...and such life begins now.

- “‘I am the Way,’ said one who would shortly hang impotent on a cross. ‘I am the Truth,’ when the lies of evil people were about to enjoy a spectacular triumph. ‘I am the Life,’ when within a matter of hours his corpse would be placed in a tomb.”
Leon Morris
- Jesus concludes this verse by making one of the most exclusive statements in all of Scripture: “**No one comes to the Father but through me.**”

Therefore, when we grieve, let us believe in Christ, for He IS the WAY the TRUTH and THE LIFE.