

JOHN 14

JESUS, THE GENTLE CONSOLER

Having announced to the disciples His approaching separation from them, Jesus now speaks to them words of cheer and counsel. These are contained in the conversations of chapters 14, 15, and 16. Each of these chapters is concerned with the three dominant themes that we have traced all along throughout John's Gospel – namely, testimony to the Divine nature of Christ, the character and development of true faith in Him, and the experiences and qualities of that everlasting life which results from such faith. It may also be noted that each of these chapters emphasizes one of these truths, and in the same order that we have just listed them. As to the Person of our Lord, no miracle could bear such testimony to His Deity as the words which are recorded in this present chapter. Here Jesus claims to be one with God, to be worthy of trust as God, to be the sole Revealer of God, and to be an abiding and Personal presence – inseparable from the Holy Spirit of God. These claims are part of the very fabric of the narrative, but the immediate aim of this part of John's Gospel is to record the words of comfort which Jesus spoke to His disciples on that last evening before His sufferings and death. These words are contained in a dialogue, in which the thought centers largely in the promise that Jesus is to be with His disciples in a real but spiritual presence.

Reunion! This word, in its very nature, is a note of cheer! Jesus tells His disciples that separation is at hand, but there is to be a reunion that is speedy and endless. "Let not your heart be troubled!" He says. But was there not reason for dismay? Jesus had just assured His followers that one of them would betray Him, that Peter would deny Him, and – most distressing of all – that He was about to go where they could not come. In spite of all, they were to trust in the goodness of God, and in His own purposes of love. "Believe in God," He tells them; "believe also in me." This is the one remedy for troubled hearts. "In my Father's house are many mansions"; there is room for all, and a welcome for all, in that beautiful place where Jesus is going. And by His death and ascension and glorification, He was opening a way of access to the Father and His blissful abode. But the disciples were bewildered. They could not understand why He should die, and they did not believe that He would die. Their confusion is voiced by Thomas: "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?" The question gives Jesus an opportunity of giving a spiritual and profound interpretation of His words. "The way to the Father," He is essentially saying,

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ Jesus talks to His disciples of heaven and of Himself as the Way there – verses 1-14
- ❖ He tells them of the coming of another Comforter after His own departure – verses 15-26
- ❖ He speaks words of peace to them – verses 27-31



“is by way of death for Me; but for you and for all people, I am the Way, because I am the Truth and the Life!” He makes it clear that no one can come to the Father, except through Himself. Philip asks for a direct vision of the Father; and by His reply, Jesus shows His distress that His disciples have not already seen Him to be the true Revelation of God. He declares that His oneness with the Father has been attested by both His words and His works.

Another ground of comfort for the disciples is stated in the promise that Jesus’ going away is not putting an end to the work which He has begun. He explains to them that He would send the Holy Spirit to work in and through them; and His work would continue to be accomplished in answer to prayer, which would be offered in His name.

The supreme ground of comfort, and the main message of this chapter, is found in this promise: “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever!” (verse 16) The word *Comforter* – or *Paraclete*, or *Advocate*, as it is sometimes translated – means “one who is called to the side of another” to give help, protection, and deliverance. This promised Comforter was the Holy Spirit. Jesus had been a true Comforter for the disciples; but now that His bodily presence was about to be withdrawn, His Spirit was to do for His disciples all that Jesus had been doing for them. He was to guide, inspire, strengthen, and sanctify. This promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit does not imply that He was not on earth already. He had always been in the world, and He had always been performing the same work for the people of God; but after the ascension of Christ, He was to manifest Himself in new power. He was to have, as an instrument, the truth concerning the crucified and risen Lord; and His resulting work was to be like a new “coming,” or a new “gift.”

Jesus assures His followers that the Comforter – the Holy Spirit – will teach them all things, and He will bring to their remembrance all the words of their Master. In view of such promises, Jesus bequeaths to His disciples a legacy which He takes from the treasure-house of His own experience: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful” (verse 27). And He adds another word of comfort in verses 28-31. In spite of His promised spiritual return, the disciples were to endure the anguish of seeing Him depart by way of death. They were to lose His bodily presence. Jesus assures them, therefore, that His going away was a necessary condition of His spiritual return; and that His very prediction of death would later strengthen their faith. Although they would now have to separate and Satan was to assault Him, that demon would gain no abiding victory, but only aid in manifesting to the world the loving obedience of the Son to the will of His Father!

Thank You, dear Lord Jesus, for being our Way, our Truth, and our Life; for there is not one of us that could ever enjoy access to the Father, except by You! Amen.