

John 14:1-14 - The Way

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[0:00] We're going to be reading John 14 verses 1-14. You know the way to the place where I am going.

Thomas said to him, Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way? Jesus answered, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him. Philip said, Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.

Jesus answered, don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, show us the Father?

Don't you believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father living in me who is doing his work.

[1:27] Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing.

And they will do even greater things than these because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name and I will do it.

Good morning everyone. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Ray. I am going to be reading with you today that chapter, that passage we just looked at.

John chapter 14 verses 1 to 14. If you want a title, you can take this or leave it. I have called it A Place Prepared, A Task to Continue.

Because this is about mainly those two things I believe. Let's pray. Let's ask God to help us as we read his word together. Father, we are very conscious as we come to open the pages of scripture now.

[2:39] And to read and to consider them that we need your help. Father, I do pray that you would make my words clear. And that you would make all of our minds focused.

And understanding what you have to say to us today. Lord, bless us we pray through your word. In Jesus' name. Amen. Last instructions are very important.

If you're going on holiday, you might say to your neighbour or somebody looking after your flat or looking after your house. Don't forget to water the plants. Don't forget the cat needs feeding twice a day.

Not once, twice a day. Or you might have been particularly rushed and you say to them, I've left some washing in the washing machine. Please can you make sure you hang that up. But if it was your last wish, your last words to someone on your deathbed, it would obviously be more earnest and more serious things that you want to share with them.

In our passage today, Jesus wasn't going on holiday. What was he to tell his disciples before he was arrested and crucified?

[4:03] It wasn't do this or do that. You might have thought that he would want to give them a list of things they've got to remember and do. But he doesn't say do this, do that. He says believe.

If you keep your Bibles open, it's on page 101082 and follow through with me. I don't have any slides or PowerPoint.

So if you can focus on the words, that would be really helpful to both of us. The context of this passage, Jesus speaking to his disciples the day before his death.

He had already told them he was going to die. And if you flick back a few verses to chapter 13, verse 33, he told them that it was going to be soon.

He said, my children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me. And just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now, where I am going, you cannot come.

[5:11] Added to this, the disciples had heard Jesus tell Peter that Peter would deny him three times. So you can imagine, can't you, amongst that group of 12 followers of Jesus, 11 now actually, 11 followers of Jesus, the mood was sombre.

They were sad. They were confused. In fact, they were overwhelmed with sorrow. So Jesus says to them this, do not let your heart be troubled.

Isn't that amazing that the night before our Lord was going to be crucified, with the knowledge of the cross now in sharp focus, he doesn't become self-absorbed and think about himself.

He takes time to comfort his disciples. So these words meant very much to them. Do not let your heart be troubled.

And I pray as we read through this together, for you and I, that will speak to us too as well. So what does he say there in verse 1? Do not let your hearts be troubled, but believe.

[6:30] Believe in God, the Father. Believe also in me. But what are they to believe? If we skim through this passage, we will see at least three things there.

Believe that Jesus has prepared a place for us. Believe that Jesus is one with the Father. And believe that Jesus carries on his Father's work through us.

Now they are three things that Jesus says to believe. And so they're the three things I'd like us to look at this morning. First of all, believe that Jesus has prepared a place for us.

And you'll see that in verses 1 to 6. Verse 2. What's Jesus saying here?

What pictures come to your mind as you read these words? Do you imagine that the Father has a big palace somewhere?

[7:44] Somewhere we don't know. Presumably somewhere in the sky. And in that palace there are lots of rooms. And every room, or rather one room, has your name on it.

And that's where you're going. And that's where you'll stay in your eternity in heaven. That sounds a bit boring really, doesn't it? Is he saying that? What the verses are conveying to us are spiritual truths in earthly pictures.

The word translated room means dwellings. And when Jesus gives a glimpse into our future state, he's framing this in images, in words we can understand.

The spiritual truth being conveyed is this. You will live with God. Heaven is not primarily about physical objects, bricks and mortar, but it's about our deepened relationship with God.

If you look down there at verse 7, this speaks particularly about knowing Jesus and knowing the Father. To know someone, if you think of your closest friend, to know someone is relational.

[9:09] And when the Bible uses that phrase, to know someone, it's talking about, it's usually talking about an intimate, close, deep relationship. relationship.

Not a casual one, a deep relationship. This will be the believer's relationship with God in heaven. They will know God.

They will know Jesus. So what should the disciples hear, hearing this joyful news, although they are weighed down with sorrow and trouble, what should they be comforted and excited about?

How big their room will be? Perhaps what's on the celestial menu? What am I going to eat? No, no, the fact is, God will be there.

That is what is going to comfort them. That's what they should have fixed in their mind. They will live forever in God's presence, and in the presence of his son, Jesus.

[10:09] Now, some of you will know, and some of you might disapprove, but my team is West Ham. And earlier this year, I had the joy, and it was a joy, it was a thrill, to go to the London Stadium to see them play Wolves.

It's a marvellous evening, and as I approached the building there, or the stadium rather, it's absolutely spectacular. It's one of the best stadiums in Britain, probably.

Probably not the best, but one of the best in Britain. And as an architect, I was kind of amazed, you know, looking at this building. It was truly great. But what was the joy that stayed with me that evening?

It was this, let me tell you this clearly. Even though it's West Ham, let me tell you this clearly. I was there to see my team. That's why I was there.

To stand with the other supporters, and sing my heart out. That's what heaven's going to be like. It's going to be much greater, of course.

[11:14] And I do believe we've had a glimpse of that this morning, as we've sung praises to God this morning. How wonderful it will be to stand in God's presence, and sing his praises. I can clearly say that it's going to be a greater joy than watching West Ham any day.

In heaven, we won't be amazed at the surroundings, but with the king himself, God's glory is the wonder of heaven, and it will be our wonder.

And his presence will be the disciples and our joy. But we have a problem. And Nathan touched on it earlier in the family Bible slot.

Thomas was bold enough to raise this problem, which maybe the others were thinking, but didn't want to say. I don't know. And he said this, we don't know how to get there.

In fact, we don't know the way. We don't even know where this place is. We don't know where to start. Jesus answered, and you can look down at his well-known words in verse 6, I am the way, and the truth, and the life.

[12:32] No one comes to the Father except through me. Jesus' exclusive claim was that he is the only way to the Father.

Not a way, notice, but the way, the only way. Christianity is an inclusive faith that it will welcome all who repent and believe, and they will be saved.

They will be in his kingdom one day. But it is exclusive in the way we have access to the Father and heaven.

The disciples were to believe his claim that he was the only way. I wonder this morning, have you grasped that? Have you seen that though there are other religions, other paths, other ideas, which claim to have a way to God, Jesus' claim, he's either telling the truth or he's a liar?

Jesus' claim is he is the only way to God. We'll see that he tells the truth in a minute. But let me read to you and try and focus on this.

[13:49] I haven't got an overhead, so I can't sort of amplify it for you. But it's something that a bishop, an Anglican bishop in the 19th century wrote. His name was J.C. Ryle and he was spot on.

He was spot on with his belief. He was spot on with being a thorough evangelical. He said this, It counts for nothing that a person is clever, learned, highly gifted, amiable, charitable, kind-hearted, and zealous about some sort of faith.

All this will not save their soul if they do not draw near to God by Christ's atonement and make use of God's own Son as their mediator and saviour.

There is only one door, one bridge, one ladder between earth and heaven, the crucified Son of God. Whoever will enter in by that door may be saved.

But to the one who refuses to use that door, the Bible holds out no hope at all. So in answer to Thomas' question, how can we know the way, Jesus is quite clear.

[15:10] I am the way. But read the text. He doesn't stop there. That's what Thomas was asking. But Jesus feels the need to tell him more.

He says, I am the way and the truth and as if you needed more again and the life. Three things he's saying in answer to the one question of Thomas.

Truth is a big thing in John's Gospel and if you skim through and try and pick out all the times that that's mentioned, it's about 22 times at my count.

22 times truth is mentioned in the Gospel of John and its first mention is in John 1, verse 14. You can turn to it or you can hear me.

It's just one verse that I'll read to you. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son who came from the Father, this is what I want us to hear this morning, full of grace and truth.

[16:19] He was full of truth and he knew the truth of what he was saying because he was the Son who had come from the Father or literally with the Father.

He knew what he was talking about. He'd come from the Father. He knows the way to the Father. Believe him because he is the truth. He's also the life.

In John chapter 11 we see a tragic story of Lazarus. You may well be familiar with that. He became sick, he died, was buried, was put in a tomb, was mourned.

Four days later, Jesus turns up and speaking to Mary he says this, I am the resurrection and the life.

Well we know how he proved that don't we, just a few verses later. He told Lazarus to come out of the tomb and in obedience the dead man came to life and came out of the tomb.

[17:29] Because Jesus is the life, he is able to give life. Believe him because he is not only the way, the truth, but he is the life giver.

So Jesus has prepared a place for us and can take us there because he is the way, the truth and the life.

Why did Jesus tell the disciples this? Why should they believe this? Why did they need to believe this at this particular time? And why should we believe this?

Sitting here thousands of years later, why should we believe this today? Because whatever our sadness, our present problems and trials, and I do know some of the trials that some of you are going through, whatever our problems and trials and sadness, remember this, Jesus will return to take us to glory where we will be with him for eternity.

Friend, do you believe that this morning? He is coming back to take his loved ones to be with him forever. Christian, do you believe this in your head, but honestly struggle to really believe it in your heart?

[18:58] Is it something that fills you with anticipation and joy? joy? Or are you kind of a bit lukewarm? It's possible to be a Christian sitting in this church this morning, or when you go home, to be sitting at home, and to be a little bit cloudy of this, to believe it in your head, but not really totally believe it so much that it fills your heart with joy.

if that's you, take these verses home, pray them through, take time to let them soak in, and let them do your heart good.

Whether we can believe it or take joy in it or not, it's the truth. It's the fact, which will be before our eyes, not just before our ears.

if you're not a Christian yet, I'd say the same to you. The way is open to you if you only come to Christ and accept his forgiveness and give up your sin.

The way is not barred to you. The way is open to you if only you would take Jesus at his word. So the disciples are to believe that Jesus has prepared a place for us, but secondly they're to believe that Jesus is one with the Father.

[20:32] We see that in verses 7 to 11. Believe that Jesus is one with the Father. I'll read those verses to you. Please follow along with me in your Bibles.

If you really knew me, if you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on you do know him and have seen him.

Philip said, Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us. Jesus answered, didn't you listen to the family Bible slot?

No, he didn't say that. He said, don't you know me, Philip, even after I've been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.

How can you say show us the Father? Don't you believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father living in me who is doing his work.

[21:36] Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. Do you feel for the disciples at this time?

I do. Jesus had said he is going away but they don't understand this and Thomas says we don't know where you are going. Philip joins in but clearly he doesn't get it either and he says Lord show us the Father and that will be enough for us.

The disciples had spent three years following Jesus at this point eating with him walking with him listening to him listening to his teaching seeing the miracles he performed they knew him and his relationship with his father but their understanding was still lacking.

Jesus says at the end of chapter 14 that they wouldn't understand some of what he was saying now but after the resurrection and Pentecost when the Spirit comes they would.

The Holy Spirit will make it clear to them but for now Jesus wants them to grasp that he and his father are one and that the father works through his son.

[23:01] Jesus says it clearly in verse 9 if you have seen me you've seen the father and then in verse 10 I am in the father and the father is in me.

So there's a complete unity between Jesus and his father. They are indivisible two persons yet one God.

Jesus is not asking them to fully comprehend this. These things let's be frank are a struggle to get into our own heads.

They're beyond human experience and therefore beyond our full understanding. But he is asking them despite the difficulty in understanding fully he's asking them to believe.

Why should they believe? They should believe it because he is saying it because of who he is and if they can't manage that they're to believe because they have seen the miracles the teaching and the perfect life he lives in cooperation with his father so they're to believe.

[24 : 21] What they've seen was obvious to them what was obvious to them was that he lived a perfect life and for those three years they followed him they saw him live that perfect life day by day they saw how he always cared for others he met their deepest needs he provided for them just like the father who loves people just like him those who love him and those who hate him he showed mercy and kindness for some I don't know how you're finding that claim this morning yourself but for some at Jesus time this was too much in ministry on earth some tried to kill him just because of this claim what are you making yourself equal with God and they would pick up stones to stone him what do you think do you believe he is one with the father deserving of our worship or this morning do you still believe he is somehow less than that he is calling you to believe just as the disciples are trying to get their heads around what he is saying about the complete unity between him and his father he says that when he departs the disciples themselves will do the amazing work of the father and that's our third and last point this morning believe

Jesus carries on his father's work through us and we're taking that from verses 12 to 14 which follow in your bibles I'll read to you now very truly I tell you whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing and they will do even greater things than these because I am going to the father and I will do whatever you ask in my name so that the father may be glorified in the son you may ask me for anything in my name and I will do it again Jesus calls his disciples to believe this time to believe that they will do the works that Jesus has been doing what do you think the disciples reaction to this was what's your reaction to that this morning the first things that came to my head was what me who me

I'm going to do I'm going to do the same things that you've done when thinking about what Jesus did we tend to think of healings feeding of crowds with a few loaves of bread even raising the dead works of help and compassion maybe that's what the disciples focused on the miracles are really essential and important they were signs that show Christ's authority they revealed his glory and therefore they prompted faith in him they encouraged people to believe in him they were vital they were important but Jesus' main focus was on teaching and preaching let me give you where I take that from after Jesus had healed many people in

Mark chapter 1 and the crowds were looking for him he said there in verse 38 let us go somewhere else to the nearby villages so that I can preach there also that is why I have come this was Jesus' focus preaching the gospel and friends that should be our focus too this morning and going into this week meeting people's temporal needs feeding them helping them well these are great these are important but they benefit those people we are helping just for this life pointing someone to Jesus telling them how they can have their sins forgiven and how they can have a relationship with God is actually something for eternity something that will bless them and do them good for eternity that's why perhaps these are even greater things than the wonderful and necessary things such as healings things but how can we do these works that

Jesus is doing in the next section that Nathan's going to be taking us through in a couple of weeks time the last part of chapter 14 from verse 15 onwards we read that Jesus will send the Holy Spirit to empower them but in these verses we have in front of us now we read that Jesus will grant our requests so that God will be glorified in the Son can you see that there in those verses Jesus grants our requests so that God will be glorified in the Son just as Jesus work on earth was to glorify his father now he continues that work through us God is glorified as Jesus does his work through us and we have whatever we ask in his name prayer to see our friends our family our neighbours come to trust him prayer to see him honoured and his kingdom grow in our neighbourhood and throughout the world these are things which will glorify

[30 : 34] God and Jesus wants to do through us but why does Jesus ask this have you ever thought that why does Jesus ask us to tell people about him why does Jesus actually ask us to pray that he will do his work through us to glorify the father he could still work through us to do his father's will without us praying in fact if we humans were taken out of the equation then surely it would be much better wouldn't it we just get in the way and mess things up but still Jesus says he will do his work through us and we we must pray and he will answer our prayers and do his work

through us he asks us to pray firstly so that we would depend on him totally if we're just going out there as loose canons speaking to people and we're not dependent on

God well we're actually doing a worse job than we would have done just by keeping our mouths closed he asks us to pray so that we would depend on him totally that we realise the work is not ours but his we acknowledge that we have no ability or power of our own but secondly he wants us to pray for this reason he wants to develop a relationship with us as Jesus takes us to heaven for eternal relationship with him and his!

so that this relationship begins now so that day by day we get to know him better our relationship with the father and with Jesus deepens God does that through our prayer did the disciples believe this that Jesus would continue to do his work through them as they prayed that they certainly did after the resurrection of Jesus when he sent his spirit!

Pentecost they got it then they truly got it do we believe it now if so ask that the father may be glorified in the son through us so we come to the end now and I just want to recap just with a few words in their sadness and confusion Jesus told his disciples to believe him he told them three things believe that he has gone to prepare a place for them believe that Jesus is one with the father believe that Jesus carries on his father's work through us as we have looked at John 14 this morning I wonder what areas you find it hardest to believe we talked a lot about prayer why don't you just ask Jesus to help you believe or maybe strengthen your belief you remember that man who come to

Jesus Jesus told him to believe and his response was Lord I believe help my unbelief so I believe but I am shaky I don't believe you fully or strongly enough ask Jesus to do that for you if you're not a Christian this morning I urge you to consider Christ's claim no one comes to the father except through me for you will you accept this offer of forgiveness he's the only one who because of his death for us can clean you up can clean me up ready to face a holy God let's pray and then the band will lead us in our song father thank you you loved us enough to send your son to point us to you and to make a way that sinners like us people who have shook our hand in your face we could be forgiven we could be cleaned up we could be made fit for your eternal kingdom father help us believe in

[35:17] Jesus name amen recordings recordings