

Exegesis of John 14:1-14

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Worry. For some of us, this becomes a real problem for our lives. We worry about many things. Many of those things turn out to be trivial. Will I be able to get all my work done? Will my congregation like me? Will my congregation grow? Will I do justice in my Exegesis? And the examples are endless. One thing we might worry about is whether our message does any good. That is one worry we need never have, because the message is the Lord's. Also, God is always with us.

A few weeks ago I had the opportunity to attend a Cancer Residency program in Green Bay. One section of the program was entitled "Facing Your Own Death." We were to consider how we would feel if we were dying. One minister there (not WELS) expressed his worry. He said his concern was "What if this Christianity stuff isn't real?" This is the danger of worry. It can cause us to doubt. John chapter fourteen helps us to dispel worry.

A major emphasis of the gospel of John is the deity of Christ. John encourages his readers throughout to believe. Their belief must be centered and rooted in the truth that Jesus Christ is true God.

In the 14th chapter of his gospel, John reviews the pertinent facts regarding Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit and his promise to return. Jesus' return and the promise of heaven are the focal point of the future for all believers. The presence of the Holy Spirit comforts us as we wait. In the text before us today, Jesus answers a few of the many questions of the disciples.

Verses 1-3: Jesus Gives Comfort

1 Μὴ ταρασσέσθω ὑμῶν ἡ καρδία· πιστεύετε εἰς τὸν θεόν, καὶ εἰς ἐμὲ πιστεύετε. 2 ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ τοῦ πατρὸς μου μοναὶ πολλαὶ εἰσιν· εἰ δὲ μή, εἶπον ἂν ὑμῖν ὅτι πορευόμεαι ἐτοιμάσαι τόπον ὑμῖν; 3 καὶ ἐὰν πορευθῶ καὶ ἐτοιμάσω τόπον ὑμῖν, πάλιν ἔρχομαι καὶ παραλήμψομαι ὑμᾶς πρὸς ἐμαυτόν, ἵνα ὅπου εἰμι ἐγὼ καὶ ὑμεῖς ᾔτε.

"Do not feel troubled. Believe in God and believe in me. In my Father's house there are many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you, because I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you home with me so that you will be where I am."

Verse 1:

ταρασσέσθω - "to trouble" The present subjunctive with the negative indicates the stopping of an action in progress.

καρδία - center of feeling and faith.

πιστεύετε - "continue to believe or trust" present imperative.

Verse 2:

εἶπον ἂν - Past Contrary to Fact Condition (or perhaps mixed time).

μοναὶ - "dwelling place"

ἐτοιμάσαι - "to prepare" Aorist infinitive used to express purpose.

τόπον ὑμῖν - UBS uses a question mark, making the phrase declarative. Nestle uses a semicolon, making the phrase causal.

Variants: UBS = "If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going...?"

Beck = "If it were not so, I would have told you, because I am going,..."

NIV & KJV = "If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going...."

Lenski = “If it were not so (i.e. if you don’t believe me), I would have told you that I am going.”

Verse 3:

Future more vivid condition (with futuristic present + future indicative).

πορευθῶ - Aorist passive subjunctive

έτοιμάσω - Aorist subjunctive.

έρχομαι - Present tense with future meaning.

παραλήμψομαι - “to take with someone” Future middle.

ἦτε - Present subjunctive.

Note: the use of futuristic presents. Moulton says they differ from the future in the tone of greater assurance—vivid and realistic; imminent fulfillment is in mind. “I am to,” or “I am about to.” Robertson: “I’m a-going to.”

The apostles were troubled because they had just received disturbing news. Trust is the antidote for a troubled heart. Jesus is encouraging his followers to continue to believe and in this way not to let their hearts be troubled. He offers his personal comfort—indeed a peace “*which transcends all understanding*” (Philippians 4:7). We can often experience Jesus’ calming presence in our most troubling times.

The “Father’s house” is heaven. The “rooms” are places where believers go to dwell in peace by remaining with the Father. There is a sense of these being permanent homes.

These verses are a response to the question brought up in the previous chapter: “*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... Simon Peter asked him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus replied, “Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.*” (John 13:33,36) Jesus had not answered immediately. Here Jesus explains that he was about to go back to the Father. Yet, he would not leave his followers alone. He would send the Holy Spirit to bring them peace. Also, he would return on the last day. Jesus comes in many ways, but the primary reference here is to his second coming.

Verses 4-7: The Way

4 και ὅπου [ἐγὼ] ὑπάγω οἴδατε τὴν ὁδόν. 5 Λέγει αὐτῷ Θωμᾶς, Κύριε, οὐκ οἶδαμεν ποῦ ὑπάγεις· πῶς δυνάμεθα τὴν ὁδὸν εἰδέναι; 6 λέγει αὐτῷ [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς, Ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωὴ. οὐδεὶς ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸν πατέρα εἰ μὴ δι’ ἐμοῦ. 7 εἰ ἐγνώκατέ με, καὶ τὸν πατέρα μου γνώσεσθε· καὶ ἀπ’ ἄρτι γινώσκετε αὐτὸν καὶ ἑώρακατε αὐτόν.

“*You know the way to the place where I am going.*” Thomas said to him, “*Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?*” Jesus answered him, “*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except by me. If you have learned to know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you know him and have seen him.*”

Verse 4:

οἴδατε - “to know” Defective Perfect with a present meaning.

Variant: NIV = “You know the way to the place where I am going.”

KJV = “You know where I am going and you know the way.”

Verse 6:

καὶ - “that is to say” Epexegetical use of the particle.

The repetition of the definite article refers to Christ as the real way, truth, and life.

Verse 7:

εἰ ἐγνώκειτε...ἂν ᾗδειτε - Nestle = Present Contrary to Fact.

εἰ ἐγνώκατε...γνώσεσθε - UBS = Simple Condition.

NIV footnote = “If you really have known me, you will know ...”

ἐγνώκατέ - Pluperfect.

ᾗδειτε- Pluperfect.

ἀπ’ ἄρτι - “from now on”

ἐώρακατε - “to see” The perfect indicates the lasting results.

“*The way*” is the way to God. If someone denies this, he is denying the truth of salvation by Grace Alone. Our Confessions tell us: “Whoever, therefore, trusts that by works he merits grace, despises the merit and grace of Christ, and seeks a way to God without Christ, by human strength, although Christ has said of himself: *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.*” (Augsburg Confession, Article XX, Section 10)

Thomas was honest, and plainly told the Lord that he did not understand. However, we hear in John 11 verse 16 that he is capable of devotion and courage.

In verse 6 we have recorded the sixth of seven self-descriptions of Jesus introduced by “*I am.*” In the Greek the words are solemnly emphatic and echo Exodus 3:14: *God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”*

Jesus is not one way among many, but *the way*. Our Confessions say: “Thus the entire Holy Trinity, God Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, directs all men to Christ, as the Book of Life, in whom they should seek the eternal election of the Father. For this has been decided by the Father from eternity, that whom He would save He would save through Christ, as He [Christ] Himself says, John 14:6: *No one comes to the Father except by me.*” (The Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration, Article XI, Section 66) Jesus is the “*way*” by which the disciples are brought to the Father. Jesus not only claims to be the way to the Father, but also promises to lead his followers to the Father. In the early Church, Christianity was sometimes call “*The Way.*”

Truth is a key emphasis in John’s Gospel. This word is used by John 25 times and is s linked closely with Jesus, who is the truth. As “*truth,*” Jesus is the only reliable source of redemptive revelation.

Life is also one of the great concepts of John’s Gospel. This term is found 36 time in John, while no other New Testament book uses it more than 17 times. As “*life,*” Jesus is the sole source of spiritual and physical life. Life is Christ’s gift, and he, in fact, is the life. Thus, this verse could be interpreted: “*I am the way (to the Father) in that I am the truth and the life.*”

Once more Jesus stresses the intimate connection between the Father and himself. Jesus brought a full revelation of the Father, so the apostles had real knowledge of him.

Verses 8-10: Like Father, Like Son

8 λέγει αὐτῷ Φίλιππος, Κύριε, δεῖξον ἡμῖν τὸν πατέρα, καὶ ἀρκεῖ ἡμῖν. 9 λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Τοσοῦτω χρόνω μεθ’ ὑμῶν εἰμι καὶ οὐκ ἔγνωκάς με, Φίλιππε; ὁ ἐώρακώς ἐμέ ἐώρακεν τὸν πατέρα· πῶς σὺ λέγεις, Δεῖξον ἡμῖν τὸν πατέρα; 10 οὐ πιστεύεις ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐστιν; τὰ ῥήματα ἃ ἐγὼ λέγω ὑμῖν ἀπ’ ἐμαυτοῦ οὐ λαλῶ· ὁ δὲ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοὶ μένων ποιεῖ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ.

Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” “Have I been with you for so long,” Jesus answered him, “and you still do not know me, Philip? The person who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? These words which I am telling you do not come from me; but the Father, who remains in me, is doing his works.”

Verse 8:

δείξον - “to show” Aorist imperative.

ἀρκεῖ - “to be strong, to be enough, or to be sufficient”

Verse 9:

Τοσούτῳ - “so great, or so long a time”

χρόνῳ - Temporal Dative in answer to the question “how long?”

ἔγνωκās - Perfect.

ἔωρακās - Perfect.

Apparently Philip is requesting a theophany.

It is comforting to know that the disciples felt they could approach Jesus with such questions. His patience and love are also available to us as we struggle with deep truths.

Verse 9 is s another commentary on “*the Word,*” from John 1:14, “*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*”

Jesus’ teaching was not of human origin, and there was an inseparable connection between his words and his work.

Verses 11-14: Proof

πιστεύετε μοι ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοί· εἰ δὲ μή, διὰ ἔργα αὐτὰ πιστεύετε. ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ τὰ ἔργα ἃ ἐγὼ ποιῶ κάκεινος ποιήσει, καὶ μείζονα τούτων ποιήσει, ὅτι ἐγὼ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα πορεύομαι· καὶ ὅ τι ἂν αἰτήσητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου τοῦτο ποιήσω, ἵνα δοξασθῇ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν υἱῷ. ἐάν τι αἰτήσητέ με ἐν τῷ ὀνωματί μου ἐγὼ ποιήσω.

“Believe me, I am in the Father, and the Father is in me. Or else believe me on account of my works. I tell you the absolute truth, the person who believes in me will do the works that I am doing; and he will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father, and I will do anything you ask in my name in order that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me for anything in my name, I will do it.”

Verse 11:

ὅτι - Declarative.

Verse 12:

πιστεύων - Present Participle.

ποιήσει - Future.

μείζονα - Comparative used with the genitive of comparison.

ὅτι - Causal.

Verse 13:

ἂν - Generalizes and includes anything at all.

αἰτήσητε - “to ask” Aorist Subjunctive, Indefinite Relative.

δοξασθῇ - “to glorify” Aorist Passive Subjunctive.

αἰτέω- Man → God

ἔρωτάω- Jesus → God the Father

Saving faith is trust, but it must also have factual content. Faith includes believing that Jesus is one with the Father.

“*Works*” are miracles done in the physical realm. “*Greater works*” are miracles done in the spiritual realm, such as the conversion of the Gentiles. The “*greater works*” depended on Jesus’ going to the Father, because they are works done in the strength of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus would send from the Father.

The world has a fuller exposure to Christ through the Spirit. Today millions are reached by the Word by the miracle of radio and television, as well as by the personal witness of Christians.

Miracles are linked with prayer. “*In my name*” does not simply mean prayer that mentions Jesus’ name, but prayer in accordance with all that the person who bears the name is. In ancient times an individual’s name summed up his whole person. Thus, these prayers are aimed at carrying forward the work Jesus did. Prayers that he himself will answers are prayers offered in faith according to God’s will.

All genuine prayer is in the name of Jesus and within the will of God. All true prayer is answered. As our Confessions state: “He who thus prays for grace, and does not rely upon God’s mercy, treats Christ with dishonor, who, since He is our High Priest, intercedes for us. Thus, therefore, prayer relies upon God’ mercy, when we believe that we are heard for the sake of Christ the High Priest, as He Himself says, John 14:13: *I will do anything you ask in my name in order that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*” (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article III, Sections 211 & 212)

We spend much of our time worrying. Most of us worry twice as much as we pray. In fact, we do most anything twice as much as we pray. Jesus is giving his disciples new confidence in John 14:1-14. He encourages them, and us, to take everything to the Lord. He is the only thing that will not let us down. With him, we will never have a worry.

To God alone be the Glory!