



GRACE

REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

SOLI ◇ DEO ◇ GLORIA

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Sermon Notes

Jesus' Oneness with the Father

John 14:7-14

March 19, 2006

□ Background

In Chapter 13:

- 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.
 - Consider how difficult it must be for the disciples, who left everything to follow Jesus, to hear that He is now leaving them.

Now, in Chapter 14:

- Jesus has comforted His disciples, commanding them, "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me."
- He goes on to tell them that He is going to prepare a place [in heaven] for them.
- He has told them that He will return to them to take them to that place.
- He responds to Thomas' question ["How do we know the Way?"] by stating, "I am the way and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

Verse 7

- Jesus tells His disciples, "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also..."

- Certainly the disciples knew Jesus well enough to leave their homes and their lives behind in order to follow Him; however, they did not know Him in the truest sense – as the perfect revelation of the Father.
- Despite spending so much time with their Master, the disciples have yet to fully understand the true identity of Jesus Christ: fully God and fully man.
- Jesus then says, “From now on you know Him, and have seen Him.”
 - It is quite possible, even likely, that when Jesus says “from now on...” He is referring to the cumulative time the disciples have spent with Him during His ministry, but especially the events surrounding the coming “hour” of His crucifixion, burial and resurrection. Once again, in the Gospel of John, the point of ultimate glorification of the Son [and revelation of Himself] is the cross of Calvary.
 - This is why Jesus says, in John 8:28, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He,”
 - Finally, as the “exegesis” of the Father, Jesus reveals Him to man. Therefore, if we see the Son [through the eyes of faith] we see the Father.

Verse 8

- In response to Jesus words [“from now on you know Him, and have seen Him”], Philip asks, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.”
- Moses made a similar request in the Old Testament, demanding, “Now show me your glory...”
 - Moses was only allowed to glimpse the back of God’s glory.
- Yet, unlike Moses, Philip sits face-to-face with the perfect revelation of the Father: the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- It appears that Philip is asking Jesus for a theophany such as what we read of in the Old Testament (Exodus 24:10; 33:17; Isaiah 6:1)
- Notice how similar we are to Philip today.
 - We pray for miracles, but we are surrounded by them; we ask God to reveal Himself to us, but He already has; we ask for signs; and they are before our very eyes.
 - As John Calvin once wrote, “We profess to be earnest in seeking God; and when he presents himself before our eyes, we are blind.”
 - **We so often forget that, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have EVERYTHING we NEED [for growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ]: the Scriptures and the indwelling Holy Spirit.**

- Furthermore, as born-again believers, we have received the greatest miracle, the greatest sign, from the hand of Almighty God: LIFE.
- Yet, one of the most tragic consequences of our sin is that it blinds us to these truths.

Verse 9

- There is a “tinge” of sadness in Jesus’ words, for He asks, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Phillip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’”
- The disciples acknowledge Jesus as the Holy One of God who has the words of eternal life (John 6:66-69), and as their teacher and Lord (John 13:13-14); yet, what they fail to truly understand is the unique relationship between the Father and the Son.

Verse 10

- Jesus now explains this unique relationship between He and the Father. He has done this before, but not to this extent.
- Jesus says, “I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me...”
 - This Verse powerfully reveals the unity and intimacy that exists between the persons of the Trinity [one God, three distinct persons].
 - Elsewhere, Jesus has already said, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30)
 - Remember, John 10:30 does NOT mean that the Father and the Son are the SAME person...they are ETERNALLY DISTINCT.
 - James White remarked, concerning John 10:30 that, given the context of the Verse, the Father and the Son “are one in giving eternal life, they are one in protecting the sheep, they are one in the covenant of redemption”...they are one in **purpose**.
 - Notice also that Scripture refers to a husband and wife as “one flesh” (Genesis 2:24); however, they still remain two distinct persons. To describe them as “one flesh” connotes a special degree of closeness or intimacy. So, also, it is with the Father and the Son.
- Yet, what Jesus is revealing, here in **Verses 10-11**, is what theologians call “perichoresis” or “mutual indwelling”, “reciprocal indwelling” or “mutual interpenetration.”
- Hilary of Poitiers (300-367 B.C.) wrote that the persons of the Trinity “contain one another, so that one permanently envelopes and is permanently enveloped by, the other whom he yet envelopes.”

- What our Lord means is that there is such unity between the Father and the Son [and the Holy Spirit], that **every act of God is an act of all three persons of the Trinity** [otherwise, there would be more than one God] – because they mutually indwell one another [Jesus will begin to describe the role of the Holy Spirit later in this Chapter as well].
 - For example, we may say that Creation is an act of God the Father...but, most accurately, Creation was an act of God the Father through the Son [“through Him all things were made”] by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - Furthermore, we say that we are saved by Jesus Christ, but Salvation is an act of God the Father [“who chose us before the foundation of the world”] through the work [life, death, and resurrection] of the Son by the [regenerative, sanctifying] power of the Holy Spirit.
 - This powerful truth concerning the nature of Almighty God is hugely significant to us today for several reasons:
 1. It reveals something about who God is, therefore, we can know Him better, which is our life-pursuit.
 2. It lays the foundation for unity within the Body of Christ. For Jesus prayed (in John 17:11) “that they [His people] may be one even as We are.”

Leon Morris writes, “Faith that there is a mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son is part of the faith whereby one commits oneself to Christ. If there is no such indwelling there can scarcely be full commitment.”

- This is why Jesus can say, “The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative...”
 - Jesus has said this before. He does everything He sees the Father doing. He is functionally subordinate to the will of the Father, and does exactly as He sees the Father. In other words, the words and works of Jesus, because of the perfect unity between the Father and the Son, are the words and the works of the Father.
 - Therefore, **if we have seen the Son, we have seen the Father. If we know the Son, we know the Father.**

Verse 11

- Now, Jesus repeats the truth concerning the mutual indwelling of He and the Father, commanding the disciples to believe this.
- He concludes this Verse by saying, “otherwise believe because of the works themselves.”
 - The “works” Jesus is referring to here are the signs and miracles that He performed before His disciples throughout His ministry.

- Now, Jesus is NOT saying that if His disciples do not believe what He has just said, then the miracles will fully convince them.
- Rather, “for those who have eyes to see,” the miracles attest to the truthfulness of what Jesus is claiming concerning Himself and the Father. In a sense, the miracles help to strengthen ones’ [weak] faith as opposed to create it.
- There is little doubt that the eleven disciples present will be used mightily by God after Jesus’ crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. However, their understanding of who Jesus is not yet complete. Therefore, these words of Jesus concerning His “works” will likely later serve to strengthen the faith of the disciples.

Verse 12

- These next three Verses (12-14) are possibly some of the most misunderstood today in all of the New Testament.
- Here, in Verse 12, Jesus now explains that whoever believes in Him will do the works that He does, and will also do **greater works than He...**
 - Throughout the centuries since Jesus spoke these words, professing Christians have used this truth to attempt to justify claims of miraculous works. Yet, nearly always, these “works” involve “spectacular displays of power” such as healing, casting out demons, prophesying, and even claims of raising people from the dead.
 - However, we must first examine the **context** of this passage before we can understand what Jesus means by “greater works.”
 - To begin with, Jesus says, “he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also...”
 - We see this truth revealed in the Book of Acts. The Apostles were able to perform miraculous acts **as a means of authenticating and attesting to the truthfulness of their authority and the Gospel they proclaimed.**
 - Yet, today, unlike Apostolic [First Century] Period, we have the **full counsel of God** – the 66 books of the Bible – the Old and the New Testament.
 - Therefore, there is no longer the need to authenticate the testimony of those completing the Scriptures.
 - In other words, miracles are no longer normative as they were in the New Testament.
- Yet, Jesus clearly says that we will do **greater works.**
 - To begin with, the “greater works” cannot mean “more spectacular” or “more awe-inspiring” or “more supernatural”, for it would be impossible to think of a greater

work than raising a man to life who had been dead for four days, as was the case with Lazarus.

- Yet, we gain great insight into these words of Jesus when we look at the last phrase of this Verse, “**because I go to the Father.**”
- We will do greater works because Jesus Christ is going to the Father.
- May we never forget that the primary “work” that Jesus came to accomplish [“It is finished”] was the atonement, that is the salvation of His people through His **perfect life, sinless death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.**
- In other words, the reason Jesus will go back to the Father is so that His saving, atoning work will be completed. Then, **and only then**, will He [and the Father] send the Holy Spirit.
- The descending of the Holy Spirit will mark the dawning of a new era in which the Gospel will be spread throughout the world. Both Jew and Gentile will be saved, and the Holy Spirit will personally indwell each believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **This therefore is the greatest work of all – the mighty act of conversion.**
- As miraculous as it was when Jesus turned water into wine, calmed storms, healed the man born blind, fed the five thousand, or even when He raised Lazarus from the dead...nothing will compare to the works of conversion that believers will accomplish [obviously it will be God using believers to accomplish these works] when Jesus goes to the Father.
- As theologian J.C. Ryle once said, “ ‘greater works’ means more conversions. There is no greater work than the conversion of a soul.”
- What is more, is that God will **use His people to accomplish His purposes**, thus explaining the words of Jesus that “greater works than these he will do...”
- As Acts 1:8 states, “but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”
- One theologian wrote, “We might say that the disciples’ works were greater than his because they had the privilege of testifying by word and deed to the finished work of Christ, and the fuller coming of the kingdom that it ushered it, whereas Jesus’ ministry prior to his death and resurrection only foreshadowed these things.”
- Once again, God reveals that He ordains the ends and the means.

Verses 13 – 14

- Jesus concludes this section by stating, “Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”

- Certainly the operative phrase, here, is “in My name...”
 - Therefore, what does it mean to ask something in Jesus’ name?

 - 1 John 5:14 states, “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”

 - Remember, in the Ancient Near East, a name represented the character, the nature, the purposes of the individual bearing the name.

 - NOTE: the name of Jesus means “YHWH is my Salvation.”

 - **Therefore, to pray in the name of Jesus means to pray in accordance with all that His name stands for: His character, His will, and His purposes.**

 - To pray in Jesus’ name, however, does NOT mean that you can do anything [with enough faith] and simply say “in Jesus’ name” and expect that the Lord will answer it. This is to ignore the true meaning of this passage.

 - Notice, also that the purpose of Christ answering our prayers is “so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”
 - So, one must ask, “What glorifies the Father?”

 - The answer is simple: “Obedience to His will.”

 - Therefore, one may be confident that if he asks anything, in accordance with the will of the Father, in the name of Jesus, it will be answered.

In conclusion, our prayers in Jesus' name enable us, through the power of the Holy Spirit, on the basis of the atoning work of Christ, to do “greater works” in order that the Father might be glorified.

This is the truth proclaimed in the Word of God.