

IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE

John 14:1-6

Message 5

Text: Acts 15:6-17

Word Count: 3506

INTRO: We have looked at the content of what I have called the proposition Jesus made to His disciples. He said, "In My Father's house are many mansions." That is an indicative statement of fact. We saw that His Father's house here on earth was first the tabernacle, and later the temple. This is where He dwelt among His people, at least for some time. But it was called the house of the Lord or the Father's house.

Then we gave careful attention to the words, "...there are many mansions." I suppose I may have disappointed you by telling you that the meaning is not permanent separate, glorious mansions in the way we expect. I suppose that when we get there it will far exceed what we think of even here as a mansion, but that is not the intended meaning. I said last message I only have one more message on heaven but I had overlooked that in this message I still need to look at these words of Jesus when He said, "I go to prepare a place for you."

So, this morning we want to look first at the veracity of Jesus proposition. He had said, "In My Father's house are many mansions." And now He says, "...if it were not so I would have told you." Then we want to look at the promise. It is this. First, "I go to prepare a place for you." And second, "And 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."

Are those not beautiful words? Usually when we are going to go to some new place, we check out what that place is like. Will we need winter jackets? Summer jackets? Umbrellas? Etc... We want to know ahead of time what it will be like. I ask you, have you checked out the place the Christian is going? We will do a little of that in the last message.

b. The veracity of this proposition

So, let us go to the veracity of Jesus proposition that in His Father's house are many mansions. It begins with this little

word, 'if'. If it were not so, I would have told you. The 'if' is related to the words, "In My Father's House are many places to stay."

Now verse 2 can be read two ways. As we have it in the KJV or NKJV or like the English Standard version puts it, "In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?" The majority of translations prefer the way our Bibles read. I am not so sure about that.

But, however that may be, the majority of translations put this in the past tense like this, "I would have told you". Not, "I am telling you", but "I would have told you." So, no matter which is the correct reading, it is evident that He has spoken to them about this before. He is now reminding them of something He has spoken to them about in the past. And it seems they had not comprehended this when He told them earlier. Just like He had told them about a dozen times that He must die, when it happened, they still had not comprehended it, so He is now reminding them once more of this same fact.

And so, we might wonder when He had told them. Well, not all things He told them are recorded in Scripture. But I want to show you something in Matthew 24. Matthew 24 takes place just a day earlier. Here is what happened. In 24:1-2, they are on the temple mount. But while they are walking to the Mount of Olives, Jesus tells them many future events. The questions they asked in verse 3 are not related to what had been talked about in verses 1-2, but to what He told them when they were going there. Verse 3 takes place on the mount of Olives. So, when they got to the Mount of Olives and looked back over the Kidron Valley to the temple, the disciples ask Jesus the three questions we have in verse 3 (read).

Now go to verse 25 (read). Now the verb 'to tell' or 'told' is in the perfect tense here. It is my conclusion that this verse means that He had told them earlier, that is as they were walking and talking when they went from the temple to the Mount of Olives. In my estimation, it does not mean that He has foretold them all things that were going to happen, though He did that. His point is that He had told them this earlier, as they were walking.

I would like to give evidence from this from 2 Corinthians 13:2 but cannot take the time here. There the word 'to see' is used both in the perfect and in the present tense. And the one in the perfect tense means Paul had told them this earlier, just like in Matthew 24:25. In the next instance it is in the present tense, and here Paul means he is foretelling, or telling them something that would yet happen if he came to them in the future.

Now I know that is hard to grasp in such a short time and I just gave that for any one who questions my conclusion. But I gave you that to tell you this. When Jesus and His disciples walked from the temple to the Mount of Olives He told them many things that were going to happen. And here, they specifically ask Him about three of those things. I expect that in this talk He also told them that He was going to prepare a place for them at His Father's house.

So, the very next day, which is in our text, He says, "Don't let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you so (i.e. yesterday, as we walked to the Mount of Olives)."

And so, to conclude this point, in saying, "...if it were not so, I would have told you" He is emphasizing the truth that there are many dwelling places in His Father's house. And if

it were not so, He would have told them so the day before when He talked to them about these things.

2. The promise (2b)

We come now to the last part of verse 2 which is a promise. The promise is twofold. First, Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you." Jesus has told them that He is leaving and that where He is going they cannot now follow Him. We have already seen that He is going to His Father's house in heaven. And to this place they cannot follow Him until they die or He comes to get them.

Now we need to notice that He is not going to heaven to build a place for them. These places were already there. He had said, "In My Father's house are many places to stay." The places were there, but, they were not prepared for this particular company, that is, the Church.

Now let us say someone is coming to stay at your house for a while. That is no problem. You have a guest room for just such an occasion. And if your brother or sister were coming, it is all ready. But now the company is different from what you have expected. It happens to be some very special guest. Well, the room was there ready, until you realized who your guest would be. Now you prepare it especially for this guest of honor.

My wife and I have just seen a video on Windsor Castle, where Queen Elizabeth stays when she has free time. It is there that she has her horses and her dogs and enjoys her free time. On this video she entertained the leader of France. Since there would be 160 people, the table was made long enough for that. The dining hall in which they ate was especially prepared with a French taste, as was the meal.

Let me show you a few other things about the idea of preparation. Let us go to Matthew 25. You will remember that the last part of this chapter deals with the judgment which happens at the end of the tribulation. And the righteous are judged and

then the judge says this in verse 34, "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'" This judgment, in the premillennial scheme of things, comes just before the millennium. And the kingdom it speaks of is the 1000 year reign of Christ. And the guests that inherit this time period come as no surprise. This kingdom had been prepared by the time God created the universe.

In this beautiful subject we are in I don't want to remind us about hell, but look now at verse 41, "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels...'" God had prepared this place especially for the devil and his angels. It was ready for them all the while. But when Adam and Eve sinned, and through their sin all mankind inherited a sin nature, and many sinned without fleeing to God for salvation; when they died, God did not have to prepare a special place for them. This place that was prepared for the devil and his angels was already exactly appropriate for them.

Now, the original word, 'to prepare' means exactly what we mean by it. According to the Online Bible it is to make the necessary preparations and get things ready. But it goes on to say that metaphorically it is, and I quote, "drawn from the oriental custom of sending on before kings on their journeys persons to level the roads and make them passable." In Israel, about a month before the special festive seasons, they began to prepare the roads for all the travelers. The roads were prepared for travel.

So, let us go back to our text again, "In My Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." Now here is our question: If the millennium is a kingdom prepared for the inhabitants from the foundation of the world, if hell was a place prepared for the devil and his angels; why does this place only now begin

preparation? Was God somehow caught by surprise, and now Jesus had to quickly go to prepare a place?

Now I want to recommend the reason I believe this is so. It is because Israel rejected her Messiah. Many times I have been asked what would have happened if Israel had accepted her Messiah? I do not know. I do know they did. And I do know that God then began a new work, a work that would go to the ends of the earth. And this work would offer salvation even to the uttermost, and as someone has said, to the guttermost. Salvation would now be offered to all people. And what happened is that mostly Gentile people responded.

So, in the book of Acts, chapter two, the Church was born. I cannot tell you how unthinkable it is to the Jew that Gentiles can partake of the riches originally intended for them. Nor can I tell you how unthinkable it was to the disciples that they would be taken to heaven, rather than running an earthly kingdom as they had been taught.

And when the Church was born, differences developed between the views of Jews and those of the Gentiles. And Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem to talk to the Apostles about this. And the Apostle James rose up to answer the questions they had and I want you to see it in Acts 15.

Acts 15:6-17 was read for us before the message. Let me briefly reduce it in a few words. Certain Jewish people had troubled the Gentiles who were being saved saying they could not be saved unless they were circumcised. Paul and Barnabas went to the Apostles at Jerusalem to bring this matter to the Apostles. And now let us read verses 13-17 (read). In the Church, God is taking out from among the Gentiles a people for His name.

Now I propose that a place had never been prepared for these people. Here is what happened. God sent the Messiah especially for Israel. But Israel, for whom and to whom He was sent rejected Him and killed Him. And in my studies, as early

as Matthew 13, I find Jesus recognizing that He will be killed. In Matthew 16, for the very first time in the Bible we have a clear prophecy of the Church. And what Jesus has recognized is that He will be rejected and killed and the Church will be born. When that Church has run its course, He will take it out of this world, and God's program for Israel will be completed here on earth. That is the 70th week of Daniel. And that time is followed by the the millennium, which is the long promised kingdom.

But between the rejection of Christ by Israel, and the restoration of Israel, God will do a new work. That new work is the Church. And in the NT, the Church is pictured as the bride of Christ. And some day the Lord Jesus will marry His bride, the Church. And when He does, He will have a place ready for her.

Let me quote from a message I did on the series on Bible prophecy to present that picture to you again. I said, "In Jewish weddings, the betrothal, somewhat like our engagement, usually was arranged by the parents. The betrothal took place, usually about a year or so before the wedding, although it could be longer as well. After the agreement, the son would begin to prepare a place at his father's house for his bride. Then, when all was ready, he and his attendants would make their way to the bride's place of residence. She was expecting him, but she did not know when he was coming. However, when he came she was ready because she knew he would come. After his arrival, he would take her back to his father's house where the marriage celebration would take place.

Jesus has been betrothed to the Church, which is the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:22-27). He has gone back to His Father's house to prepare a place for His bride, and wife to be (John 14:1-3). Although the Church knows He is coming soon, as He promised, no one knows the precise time (Matt. 24:36-44). Then one day a shout will be heard, "Behold the bridegroom is coming" and then the Church will be taken to the place He has prepared

for her. The Jewish wedding perfectly presents the pretribulational return of Christ", end quote.

So, Jesus, on the very same day that John 14 is given, will pay the dowry price for the Church with His own blood. Then He will go back to His Father's house and begin to prepare a place for His bride, the Church. Now let me add something beyond that. What is more special than the time when you prepare for your bride? Once a man is married, rarely is he as zealous about having everything right as he is when he is preparing a place for his bride. This is a very special preparation time.

And it is interesting to me that when a young man takes a bride, at the time of the wedding the bride is the center of attention, not the groom. There is nothing quite so special as the bride in a wedding. The groom comes out. People don't oooh and aah when he comes. And then, the bride, usually a bit late, and with flushed cheeks enters the auditorium and everyone stands up and she is gorgeously dressed in white, and she holds the center of attention. It is for this, Jesus went to prepare a place. And like in Jewish weddings, the place is at the Father's house.

Now let me tell you something even more incredible. In the Jewish temple, Jesus' Father's house, there were limits as to who could go to His house. A distance from the temple was a wall. Outside of that wall, farthest from the temple was the court of the Gentiles. It had a sign saying that Gentiles proceeding beyond that point did so at the risk of death. Even Jewish women could get closer to Jesus' Father's house. So, next in line was the court of the Jewish women. Then was the court of Jewish men. They were getting quite near to the temple. Next was the court of the priests. Only one tribe, the tribe of the Levites could come this far. And then came the holy place. Only certain priests of the Levites could go in here and only on certain occasions. And then came the Holy of Holies. You cannot go farther. This is the inner of the

innermost. And here, God dwelt between the cherubim. And this room, only one man could enter, and that only once a year.

Now, from that you see that we, the Gentiles, are way off in the outer court. Never could we get closer. That was our limit. And now? Jesus is preparing a place for His bride at His Father's house! You see, the bride takes a very special place. So, consider Ephesians 2 with me (read 11-16).

Now go to Hebrews 4 (read 14-16). Now our dull Gentile minds have a hard time fathoming how incredible this news is! The Lord Jesus has brought us so near to God! The bride is brought into close relationship to the Father by the Son!

And so, this place was not prepared for the Church in heaven before Jesus' own people rejected Him. And when they rejected Him, He began a new work that would go to the Gentiles. And that is why I believe this place is being prepared and was not prepared before!

So, that brings us to the second part of this promise. Jesus now says, "And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you to Myself..." This is one incredible promise! And as I see it, it is related to the Church, not Israel. And this promise begins with the little word 'if'. In the original text this is a first class condition and could read, "And since I go..." It is not 'if' in the sense that it is questionable. He is going to prepare a place. We know that it is so because He went. He ascended up to heaven. That is what the Bible plainly says.

But notice what Jesus says further, "And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you to Myself!" Now, right here is the teaching of the catching up! It should be visible to any searching student of the Word of God. You see, He is coming to earth at the second coming of Christ, but here He is coming but not to earth, nor to set up the millennial kingdom!

Now, what Jesus has said here, that He will return and receive them to Himself that where He is there they may be also, He is telling them something so far removed from their teaching and thinking, that I think they simply did not fathom it.

The Ecclectic Notes in the Online Bible say, "A greater break with Jewish feeling could not be than such a hope, a shock assuredly as wholly changing all they had expected..." That Jesus would go to heaven and prepare a place there for them rather than set up His kingdom now, is a thought as far removed from OT prophecy and their thinking as anything could possibly be. A greater break with Jewish feeling could not be named. Yet that is what we have here.

When Jesus returns for His bride, at the catching up, He will be taking as a bride one who is mostly Gentile! How unthinkable is that to the Jew! And then He will take this mostly Gentile bride to His Father's house. Now that is most unthinkable! To this day the Jew, for the most part, finds that absolutely preposterous. But that is what is happening, and that is what the Lord promised here!

What we have here is a picture of the Jewish wedding. After the marriage agreement was made, the bridegroom would go back to His father's house and prepare a place for His bride. And Jesus says He is coming back for them in order that they may be with Him where He is. We know where He went, and so we know where He is. And that is where He is taking His bride.

Now we know what happens to any young man who has found a young lady he wants to marry. He wants her to be with him. Some young men who are removed some distance from their fiancé have very large telephone bills. That is how he keeps close to her. But whenever he can, he throws away the phone to go see her in person. The telephone simply is not the ultimate. It is when she is

where he is, that is the ultimate. That is what we have here.

C. The Comforting Invitation (4)

That brings us to the last part of this first point which I have called the comfort. First was the comforting instruction. It was this: Let not your heart be troubled. Then came the comforting information, "In My Father's house are many mansions". And now, I want to just briefly mention the comforting invitation. Jesus said, "And where I go you know, and the way you know." I see that as an invitation to come to this wonderful place He is preparing for them. We will talk more about where He went and the way to that place in verse 6.

CONCL: So, we conclude with this. Jesus has given a very profound proposition, "In My Father's House are many mansions." Then He gives the veracity of this proposition like this: "If it were not so, I would have told you." I believe that the day earlier, as they walked from the temple mount to the Mount of Olives, He told them many things regarding the future. Three of those they asked Him about again when they got to the Mount of Olives. But one of the things He had told them as they walked, and of which they did not here ask Him was that He was going to heaven to prepare a place for them. And now He says, "If it were not so I would have told you."

And then He gave them this promise: "I go to prepare a place for you. And 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." This is a very incredible promise. I am fully assured that this is a promise to the Church, of which these apostles were the foundation. Jesus is coming for His bride, and I believe He is coming soon. If those words do not come to us this morning as encouragement and hope, then this sinful world is our home, and we are not pilgrims and strangers here.

And with that, He gave these words that I read as an invitation: "And where I go you know, and the way you know."