

The Way Prepared

Jesus Christ The Way

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Bible Text: John 14:2-11

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I would like to invite you to look with me in John chapter 14. I want to read, again, from verse one down to verse six. We read this portion last time we met around the Lord's Table and considered Christ the God man, his person, who he is.

So you may wonder, "Well, why are we coming back to it?"

Well, it is because in it also we see not only his person, but his work that he came to accomplish. And both are important as we look at Scripture, the person of Christ and his work.

Paul determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and him crucified. Christ, his person, crucified, his work.

So I want to speak with you here about the way that Christ prepared. He speaks here of going to prepare a place for you. So what is that way that Christ prepared?

Beginning in verse one of John 14.

Let not your heart be troubled: ye 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. 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 unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.¹

Now in this chapter our Lord is speaking words of comfort to his disciples, for whom he is about to lay down his life and to pay their sin debt all, that is, except for Judas.

Christ is very distinctive in how he speaks of his death. It wasn't some general atonement. For everybody. It was for that people which God the Father had given to him.

¹ John 14:1-6.

There are many who are sitting under the sound of the gospel who ought to be troubled, but aren't. It is because they are deaf. They are blind. They are lost. They can't hear. There are many who sit under the sound of the gospel who tend to rejoice in presumption.

“Well, if Christ died for sinners, I am a sinner, so he must have died for me.”

There is no greater example than that than Judas. When you consider that for three and a half some years he walked with Christ, he heard his teachings and from all appearances seemed to be one of the Lord's. I say from all appearances as far as men are concerned, as they perceived him. We know the Lord knew. He knows those who are his. He knows those that the Father has given him. He knows those who aren't. That is why early on in this book of John, the gospel according to John when men ran after him, he said he did not commit himself unto them because he knew their heart.

And even with regard to Judas here in John 13, just the previous chapter, when he says in verse 15:

I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.²

But then he immediately said in verse 18, “I speak not of you all.”³

So he made a distinction in how he was speaking know those who were his and knowing those who weren't.

He said:

I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.⁴

There are those who by his grace he causes to hear, causes to believe and they follow.

“My sheep hear my voice... and they follow me.”⁵

But there are those who are mingled in among the sheep. Where there is wheat there are tares. Where there are sheep there are goats. But the Lord makes a difference.

² John 15:15-17.

³ John 15:18.

⁴ John 14:18-19.

⁵ John 10:27.

So when he says here in chapter 14, “ Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God...”⁶ he is talking about not just mere profession. He is talking to those that he himself by his grace has given them faith to believe and to look to him. That is the only difference there was between Judas and the rest of the disciples. It wasn’t that they were smarter. It wasn’t that they perceived these things a little better than Judas. The Lord left him to his blindness. But he caused such a one like Peter to see and to hear and to believe.

But he says, “Ye believe in God, believe also in me.”⁷

Not in addition to believing in God believe in me, but as you have believe in God, you believe in me. Christ is none other than God in the flesh.

So we have him here on the verge of laying down his life for his own, for his sheep and giving them the particular discourse that we find here and doing it with such tenderness, doing it with such depth.

I can remember back years ago they always used to say, “Leave the gospel of John everywhere you go because that is the simplest of all the Scripture to understand.”

The more I study it, the more I realize how little I know. There is such depth to it that apart from the Spirit of God teaching us, we would miss the very message that is set forth here.

To me, as I read this, I find a very heart melting word of Christ that he has given to these 11 for whom he is about to lay down his life. You talk about a man facing not only death—and a lot of people like to play up the fact that he died the most violent death you could die, crucifixion which may be so—but what he faced was being the just one, being the eternal God, being life itself and now being prepared to lay down that life, to bear the sin of these very disciples to whom he is speaking, bear their sin.

To me that shows something of the sinlessness of Christ’s nature because it is not in our nature to bear somebody else’s fault. And if you don’t believe me, the next time you get blamed for something you didn’t do, try to be quiet about it. Just accept it. Just go on and say, “Well, truth will have its day.”

You can’t. The more people speak to you and say to you, “Is that right what I hear?” the more likely you are to speak up and try to defend yourself.

It is not in our nature to take the blame. It is not in our nature to take our own blame, much less the blame that someone else would put upon us. But here our Lord has willingly accepted to come to this earth and to bear the blame, bear the sin curse. He did not become a sinner, but to bear the sin curse of a people and typified in this little band of disciples around him arguing even on the eve of his death who is going to be the greatest.

⁶ John 14:1.

⁷ Ibid.

You know, in your nature you would be tempted just to throw them all away. And yet he is not thinking of himself, but he is addressing them in tenderness and love, grace, care.

It says, “ Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.”⁸

This is the one that I want us to consider here and the way that he came to prepare. So that is the first thing that we look at: Who it is who prepared the way and opened it.

We know from our last study that this is none other than the God man himself. That is why I went down and looked at it. This is God in the flesh speaking.

We know that because when Thomas said, “Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?”⁹

And he said in verse seven, “If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.”¹⁰

So we know that this one speaking is none other than God himself in the flesh. And yet his thoughts are not about himself. But they are about these that he came to save. And they are about the very Father that he came to satisfy.

You know, Job had cried for an umpire. He said, “I need somebody that can put his hand upon me and at the same time put his hand upon God.”

Well, here he is. This one who came that identified with sinners without becoming a sinner. As a man, a body was prepared for him and he represented these sinners before a holy God and yet at the same time he addressed his Father.

Only God can satisfy God. And so he addressed his Father on behalf of these sinners. There is the umpire. There is the mediator.

Now the Lord had already spoken to them the story of the corn of wheat back a few chapters that needed to fall in the ground and die. He was preparing them for his death and in light of all of this, even back in John 13 and verse 33 when he said, “ Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you.”¹¹

You can imagine the trouble in their souls as the Lord began to open up the revelation that he came to this earth not just to live among men, but to die, that he came not just to be an example unto men of how to live, but he came to be the substitute for a people that God the Father gave him.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ John 14:5

¹⁰ John 14:7.

¹¹ John 13:33.

And as he gives more and more light to his disciples concerning what it was going to take for him to lay down his life on their behalf, I can imagine they were troubled. They were troubled knowing themselves, but also knowing who he is. The Lord had put a love in them for him. And we talk about Christ loving his own unto the end. He did, but the love begets love. Those that he loved, their hearts were tender towards him and now he is speaking of departing. And where he goes they cannot come.

And so he speaks a word of comfort to them.

You know, that is what the gospel is. To those that are just blind philosophers it is nothing but a subject of debate, an argument. For those that seek wisdom, they like to read these things and discuss it among themselves while they pull on their beards. But to those that the Lord has taught, this gospel, this person of Christ, the work that he came to accomplish humbles him, tenders him and comforts him.

Back in Isaiah chapter 40—and that is what our Lord is doing, Isaiah chapter 40—and verses one and two we read:

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.¹²

See that little word “for”? In the stead of, in the place of. It is the word substitution. It is the smallest three letter word that you could find perhaps in Scripture, but it has such deep meaning, in behalf of.

To whom is this message a comfort? It is to his people. I can remember years ago when I was having some trouble in a congregation up north as the Lord had taught me concerning Christ and I was endeavoring to preach him to that congregation, there was an uproar. And it startled me because what the Lord had made a comfort to me, to know that my sin had been put away by Christ and that I had received double of the Lord's hand in blessing instead of my sin, to find people upset with that message thinking there is something more.

And I can remember calling a preacher friend of mine at the time, him calling me. And I was expressing my concern about the trouble and he gave me a good piece of advice that has stood me in good stead all these years. He said, “Ken, do you feel there are any sheep in that congregation?”

And I said, “Yeah, I do. I believe there are some here the Lord is causing to hear.”

He said, “Well, preach to them. Don't let the goats pull you off target. Don't let the goats pull you off focus.”

¹² Isaiah 40:1-2.

And yet we don't know who is sheep and who is goats. You know, it is not for us to discern. But I do know this. Where the Lord has taught a sinner, they bleat like a sheep after Christ. He is their food and they do rejoice. And he is their comfort. And that is why he said to them, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."¹³

Any other way of speaking peace to a sinner's heart other than Christ speaking that peace would be giving a false peace. We can't speak peace to sinner's hearts. We don't know.

But I know this. If you are the Lord's and he says to you, "Let not your heart be troubled,"¹⁴ that is a word of peace. And he has reason to speak peace to your heart because he has bought you. He doesn't speak peace to a heart of one that is not bought. He didn't speak peace to Judas' heart. But he did to Peter. He did to those other disciples.

Were they any different or better in their comportment than Judas? No. Probably worse in many ways. And yet the Lord loved them and he set his affection upon them.

So when he said, "Let not your heart be troubled,"¹⁵ it was the sorrows of their hearts which now would have left to themselves completely overwhelmed them as he taught them and showed them what his way would be.

They were troubled for many reasons. To me when the heart is troubled concerning the things of God and concerning the things of Christ, it can be a sign of mercy. It can be a sign of grace. It can be a sign of life.

If the heart isn't troubled, it is deadness. It doesn't feel. It doesn't know. And so when he said to them they were troubled, or, "Let not your heart be troubled,"¹⁶ coming back to John 14, they were troubled at even hearing that one of their number should betray him.

In fact, here in John 13 and verse 21:

When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.¹⁷

So the Lord himself threw the fire in the mix. They were troubled at seeing their master troubled in spirit. That is what it says there in verse 21. He was troubled in spirit. That testifies of him as being a man. They were troubled because he would remain with them only a little while as we saw in verse 33, troubled over the warning he had just given to Peter that he would deny his Lord Christ.

¹³ John 14:1.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ John 13:21-22.

You see that up here in verse 37 of John 13. Peter had a good intention. He said, “ Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.”¹⁸

He had it all mixed up. Why couldn't Peter follow him now? Because this work that the Lord Jesus Christ was about to enter into as far as being the substitute, no man could add to it. No man could contribute. He had to walk that winepress alone because redemption is by his work alone.

And so the Lord pointed out his true nature.

“Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake?”¹⁹

You know, if righteousness come by any work of the law, any obligation that we fulfill or any deed we do, then Christ is dead in vain. That is what Paul said in Galatians two and verse 21.

He said, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.”²⁰

And then the very next verse says, “Let not your heart be troubled.”²¹

Only the Lord can speak words of comfort because we know ourselves to be just as guilty and lost as sinners, as these two whom he spoke. This little company of believers, disquieted and cast down, all the props pulled out from under him and yet the Lord speaks comfort to their soul, peace to their soul.

“Ye believe in God, believe also in me.”²²

This is the one who came to prepare the way.

Now verses two and three, as a second point, how the way was prepared. What do we read here? He says, “In my Father's house...”²³

All of this is important. There is one house of God. It is not a church building. And we tend to carry that over today from the Old Testament that we are going to God's house. This building is just that, a building. When the Church meets here then the Lord is present, but there is nothing to it, but brick and mortar.

But there is a permanent, everlasting house of God, a spiritual house made up of those

¹⁸ John 13:37.

¹⁹ John 13:38.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ John 14:1.

²² Ibid.

²³ John 14:2.

sinner that God in his grace and mercy purposed to save. These are the living stones of which Peter later wrote and spoke. And he says there are many... it says "mansions" it is the word "dwellings." Think of a big old house with just all kinds of rooms in it.

As one preacher said, "There is plenty of room, but no vacancies." I like that. Every one that God the Father purposed to save and sent his Son to pay their debt, they will be there. They will be there.

He says, "If it were not so, I would have told you."²⁴

Now here is the key phrase that we need clarity on.

He says, "I go to prepare a place for you."²⁵

Is he preparing heaven for them? What is that place that he was going to prepare?

Notice the word "for" again, on your behalf, in your place. They had to be but spectators. They had to be but bystanders. They were the sinners. Anything they would endeavor to contribute to this work could only tarnish it, could only be to their condemnation.

This is one of the most difficult points today for people who have not been taught of the Spirit to get a hold of, that their works are nothing but filthy rags. And that before a holy God they are nothing but worthy of condemnation.

Here is set forth of necessity of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, to prepare the place, none could hope, none could expect to see God, none could expect to stand before a holy God except for the Lord Jesus Christ and do the work that God might be just to see receive them.

And so that is what he is talking about here. He is talking about that reconciliation. If you want, look over in the book of Colossians chapter one and verse 20.

Well, in verse 19, first of all, it says, "For it pleased the Father that in him [in Christ] should all fulness dwell."²⁶

"Ye believe in God, believe also in me."²⁷

This wasn't an honor that Christ took to himself, but it is one that the Father bestowed upon him.

But now in verse 20 it says, "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Colossians 1:19.

²⁷ John 14:1.

him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”²⁸

That is an astounding statement, things in heaven. Heaven itself apart from the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ could not receive a sinner. The place had to be prepared. God had to be satisfied. Now that answers those who argue, “Well, all God has to do is decree. Once he decreed, it was done.”

No. Christ talks here about preparing a place. Yes, it was purposed. Even as I talked to an architect friend of mine one time. You know, he makes out the plans of some multi million dollar projects. But he cannot go to the investors and tell them it is done until it is done. He can make up those plans and go hand it to them and say it is done. They look at him and say, “What?” That is the plan. Where is the accomplishment?

That is what we are seeing here. The Father purposed it. And someone might say, “Well, then it was as good as done.”

No, it still had to be done. That is how our Lord understood it, that those that the Father had given him he would actually be obedient in their stead unto death even the death of the cross that he might bring them to God, that that satisfaction might be made.

That is what the Lord is talking about here.

It is not like some say. I heard a preacher say this one time in a message on tithing of all things, that if you want a nice place up in heaven you had better give more. You get what you invest in. That is the way he was preaching. The more you give, it is like every time you give 10 dollars there is a plank, there is a marble, there is places of preparing. You don’t want to get up there and live in a shack, do you?

That is the way that often this is preached, that somehow there are still names being added, places being built, as if it was a city. That is not what the Lord is talking about.

When he said, “I go to prepare a place for you,”²⁹ on your behalf, he is talking about substitution. That is why it was necessary that once the shepherd was smitten with this sword of justice the sheep had to scatter. Even with their best intentions the Lord removed that [?] off of him and scattered them. He had to tread this wine press alone. He had to walk this path alone.

So when he said, “I go to prepare a place for you,”³⁰ what he is saying is that he was procuring the right for them by his death on the cross to enter into the very presence of God. And that had to be prepared.

²⁸ Colossians 1:20.

²⁹ John 14:2

³⁰ Ibid.

Look at Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 20. That is the only basis any of us has any hope of standing before a holy God.

In Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 20, that is the testimony of any person that the Lord has taught. It is not me, it is him. We are not taking credit for something we didn't do. All the glory belongs unto Christ. That is why the Lord said even after a man has served all his day long serving, what is lot to say at the end of the day? "Unprofitable servant."

It is the Lord.

Hebrews chapter 10 verse 19.

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness..."³¹

It doesn't mean presumption, but it means assurance to enter into the holiest.

But don't stop there. There is only one way.

"...by the blood of Jesus."³² By that shed blood.

"By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated..."³³

And there is that little three letter word again.

...for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.³⁴

So that is what Christ was speaking of, to go and prepare a place for you.

And in verse three of John 14 he said, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."³⁵

Was he speaking of his Second Coming? No. He was talking about his resurrection, that assurance that not only would he lay down his life, but God being satisfied, he would raise again from the dead and come and receive them.

And that is what he did. He met with them. He met them. If you look over in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. Notice how it is written here.

³¹ Hebrews 10:19.

³² Ibid.

³³ Hebrews 10:20.

³⁴ Hebrews 10:20-22.

³⁵ John 14:3.

Paul says:

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.³⁶

Unless it is just a profession.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas [of Peter], then of the twelve.³⁷

This is that Peter that denied the Lord three times before the cock crew. And yet the Lord at his resurrection sought him out and drew him, again, to himself just like he does every one of his sheep. He will have every one for whom he died.

After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am.³⁸

Isn't that a good answer to those that would ask of you or me a reason of the hope within us? It is not me. It is him.

“But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”³⁹

So we see how the Lord prepared the way and then manifested himself even as he does now to those that he redeemed who were justified upon completion of his death there at the cross.

Coming back to John 14, one other point I bring out here is the importance. How important is this? The importance of Christ as the way.

We see that in verses four through six.

He says, “And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.”⁴⁰

³⁶ 1 Corinthians 15:1-2.

³⁷ 1 Corinthians 15:3-5.

³⁸ 1 Corinthians 15:6-10.

³⁹ 1 Corinthians 15:10.

And Thomas questioned.

But then Jesus says here, “I am the way.”⁴¹

He didn’t come just to show the way. He is the way.

“I am the life.”⁴²

He didn’t come just to manifest life and give us a lesson on what life is. He is the giver of life. “I am the life and the truth.” He didn’t come just to teach the truth. He is the truth. His Spirit reveals Christ in the heart of those sinners for whom he died, those for whom he has prepared the way.

And that is that Spirit that causes us to look to him, not to ourselves, to him.

You know the Scriptures say like Cain, you know, Cain left to himself, do you know what he did? He wandered. We are all prone to wander as sheep. It could be said of us just like it says in Romans three and verse 12, “They are all gone out of the way.”⁴³

You know, I plead guilty. That is what my nature is to do, to go out of the way.

I cannot boast that I stumbled on the way or finally found the way.

Do you know what it is to be lost? There is no way back. That is what it is to be lost. If you can find your way back, you weren’t really lost. If you can say, “Well, I have figured these things out,” then you have never really been lost.

To be lost is to be completely shut up out of the way to where only the shepherd coming and finding you and taking you upon his shoulders and bringing you into the fold is your salvation. That is what Christ meant here when he said, “I am the way and the truth.”⁴⁴ He is the revelation. The life.

Notice, “No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”⁴⁵

It is utterly impossible for any one of us to win God’s favor by any effort of our own, impossible. There is one foundation that has been laid.

Paul said, “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid,”⁴⁶ and then he said, “which is Jesus Christ.”⁴⁷

⁴⁰ John 14:4.

⁴¹ John 14:6.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Romans 3:12.

⁴⁴ John 14:6.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ 1 Corinthians 3:11.

Peter preached in Acts. He said, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”⁴⁸ Acts chapter four and verse 12.

1 Timothy 2:5 says, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”⁴⁹

“I am the way, the truth, and the life.”⁵⁰

And then as we read in Hebrews 10 a little while ago.

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest [how?] by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith [in him].⁵¹

That is where faith looks, to him.

All right. Brother Mike.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Acts 4:12.

⁴⁹ 1 Timothy 2:5.

⁵⁰ John 14:6.

⁵¹ Hebrews 10:21-22.