

I Will Come Again

Jesus is building a people that will honor God for eternity.

JOHN 13:31–14:6



...you,
...aved
...at ye are
...another.
...him, Lord,
...answered him,
...follow me now;
...afterwards.
...Lord, why cannot
...all "lay down my life
...him, Wilt thou lay down
...ake? Verily, verily, I say unto
...shall not crow, till thou hast
...rice.
...OF MANY MANSIONS
...et 'not your heart be troubled: ye
...believe in God, believe also in me.
...in my Father's house are many man-
...sions: if *it were* not so, I would have told
...you. "I go to prepare a place for you.
...³And if I go and prepare a place for you, "I
...will come again, and receive you unto my-
...self; that ⁴where I am, *there* ye may be also.
...⁴And whither I go ye know, and the way
...ye know.
...JESUS IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND
...THE LIFE
...⁵Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know
...not whither thou goest; and how can we
...know the way?
...⁶Jesus saith unto him, I am ⁶the way,
...the truth, and "the life: ⁷no man cometh
...unto the Father, but by me.
...⁷If ye had known me, ye should have
...known my Father also: and from henceforth
...ye know him, and have seen him.
...⁸Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the

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How does knowing the time of a person's return from a trip, deployment, or errand ease anxiety?

Whether it is a military deployment, business trip, or trip to the store, goodbyes can cause anxiety. We want to know when the person will be coming back. Somehow, knowing the exact projected time eases the anxiety and we can look forward to being reunited. Assurance of a return produces confidence to endure. We also should have confidence as we anticipate Jesus's return.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

The day before Jesus's crucifixion had arrived. He had told His disciples He would be put to death in Jerusalem. Yet as they gathered for their last Passover together, they argued over who would be greatest in Christ's kingdom (Luke 22:24-27). Jesus used a powerful object lesson to teach them humility and service.

Because travel took place on dusty roads, hosts typically offered water so guests could wash their feet. Sometimes servants performed this menial task, but in the upper room no one volunteered to assume that role. Jesus set aside His robe, took a towel, and washed the disciples' feet. At first, Peter resisted but yielded when Jesus said it was necessary. Jesus urged the Twelve to follow His example and serve others.

During the meal, Jesus referred to the presence of one who would betray Him. Quoting Psalm 41:9, He said someone who shared His food would lift his heel against Him. He identified the traitor by dipping bread in the sauce and giving it to Judas.

As Jesus prepared the remaining disciples for His death, He commanded them to love one another as He loved them. This section begins what some scholars call the Farewell Discourse. Responding to their confusion over His remarks, Jesus told them they could not go with Him yet. Peter declared his willingness to go with Jesus anywhere and even to die for Him. Jesus knew Peter's heart but predicted he would deny his Master before daybreak. Naturally, the disciples were troubled at His sayings. Jesus encouraged them to believe in Him. He promised to return and gather them to Himself. Thomas questioned where Jesus was going and how they could get there. Jesus pointed to Himself as the only way to the Father.

JOHN 13:31–14:6

13:31 When he had left, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him.

32 If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. **33**

Little children, ^A I am with you a little while longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so now I tell you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’ **34** I give you a **new command:** ^B Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. **35** By this everyone will know that you are my **disciples,** ^C if you love one another.” **36** “Lord,” Simon Peter said to him, “where are you going?” Jesus answered, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow later.” **37** “Lord,” Peter asked, “why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” **38** Jesus replied, “Will you lay down your life for me? Truly I tell you, a rooster will not crow until you have denied me three times. **14:1** Don’t let your heart be **troubled.** ^D Believe in God; believe also in me. **2** In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? **3** If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also. **4** You know the way to where I am going.” **5** “Lord,” Thomas said, “we don’t know where you’re going. How can we know the way?” **6** Jesus told him, “I am the **way,** ^E the **truth,** ^F and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Key Words

- A. A term of affection, used by teachers to their followers in the New Testament.
- B. While loving others was not a new concept (Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 6:5), loving as Jesus loved raised the bar.
- C. The Greek word *mathetes* means “to learn.” Therefore, to be a disciple requires that there be a mentor as well as a student.
- D. Literally, stirred up or agitated. The idea is being violently shaken instead of resting at peace.
- E. A road or path that is traveled. The implication is that the road leads to a destination.
- F. The Greek *aletheia* occurs 109 times in the New Testament, with John’s writings accounting for more than half of the uses. Jesus does not simply know truth, He is truth itself.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. Honor Through Love

(John 13:31-35)

Believers honor God by loving each other.

How does the mutual honoring of the Son and the Father through Jesus's death demonstrate love between the two?

How does love for others define a follower of Jesus?

2. Honor Through Loyalty

(John 13:36-38)

Believers honor Christ by remaining loyal to Him.

How might a person's good intentions get derailed? How can believers honor Jesus through their loyalty?

3. Honor Through Believing

(John 14:1-4)

Believers honor Christ by believing in Him as they await His return.

How does the promise of a place in heaven motivate a person to remain loyal to Christ?

How does Jesus being the way, the truth, and the life define why a person must believe in Jesus alone for salvation?

APPLY THE TEXT

List things the group does that honor God.

How are the items listed connected to actions noted in today's passage?

What actions does the group need to take to bring honor more fully to God?

KEY DOCTRINE: Last Things

According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. (See 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; Hebrews 9:27-28.)

BIBLE SKILL: Notice repeated words or phrases in a Bible passage.

Consider how many times the terms *glorify* or *glorified* occur in John 13:31-32. Use a Bible dictionary or similar resource to determine the difference between *glory* and *glorify*. How does glory reflect God's essential character? List some ways Christ's death, resurrection, and second coming glorify Jesus and God the Father.

TALK IT OUT

Focus on John 14:1. What tends to make you anxious?

Jesus's disciples had a lot to be anxious about. Earlier that night, Jesus had washed their feet. He said that one of them would betray Him. To cap it off, Jesus predicted that Peter, the outspoken leader of the disciples, would deny even knowing Jesus before the night was over. After all this, Jesus gave them the simple reassurance of verse 14:1.

In what way does believing in God involve more than just intellectual belief?

The Greek word for “believe” implies more than just intellectual assent to an idea. It carries with it the idea of something or someone in which you place your full trust and confidence. It's a belief that changes behavior. It's more than believing someone can catch you; it's letting go of the ledge.

How has believing in Jesus helped you with anxiety or uncertainty?

Who do you know who needs to hear your story?

Have each person in your group write their name and number on a piece of paper, then have group members draw a name (make sure no one draws their own name). Commit to texting John 14:1 to your person at some point this week.

Prayer Requests



DAILY EXPLORATION

Day 1: John 13:31-32

Identify the key word in these verses.

At the time of Judas's departure, John—speaking both literally and figuratively—declared, “And it was night” (13:30). Once Judas left, Jesus addressed the Eleven—those who would remain faithful to Him. He returned to a theme He introduced earlier, His being glorified (12:23). The time had arrived; it was now. Shockingly, glorification would come through crucifixion.

Crucifixion in the first century was the most demeaning and shameful form of capital punishment. Yet Jesus saw the cross as the means for revealing God's glory. The crucifixion would be the ultimate display of God's merciful love for sinners. It would destroy the power of Satan and his hold on sinners (Romans 6:6; 1 John 3:8). Rather than it be a moment of shame, the crucifixion would glorify the Father and reveal the Son of Man in His glory.

How do you see the glory of God displayed in the cross?

How is your life reflecting His glory?

Day 2: John 13:33-35

Underline each occurrence of the words “love” and “loved.”

When Jesus had been at the Feast of Tabernacles some six months earlier, religious leaders tried to have Him arrested. What He said to them then He repeated almost word-for-word to the disciples in the upper room. Both groups would look for Him but not find Him (John 7:34; 13:33). The difference was the religious leaders would look for Jesus because they wanted to kill Him—the disciples would look for Him because they would miss Him and long for the intimate friendship they had shared.

The farewell address of Jesus included a new command: His followers are to love one another as He had loved them. This begs the question: How had Jesus loved them? John 13:1 says Jesus “loved them to the end.” The word *end* means that Jesus loved His disciples to the fullest measure or to the uttermost. He had demonstrated that kind of love in the most unexpected manner by washing the disciples' feet—something only a servant would do. Jesus was demonstrating selfless love, the kind His followers were (and are) to put into action. What a contrast this selfless love would be in a world filled with self-focused people who operate out of self-serving motives. To practice selfless love would give evidence that a person was indeed one of His disciples.

How does the way you demonstrate love for others define you as a follower of Jesus?

Day 3: John 13:36-38

Pay attention to Peter's claim.

Peter asked Jesus two questions. His first—"where are you going?"—showed either that the disciples still did not understand what Jesus was facing or that Peter was unwilling to accept that Jesus was going away. Either way, Peter could not reconcile the thought of Jesus leaving with His recently being declared by the crowds to be "the King of Israel" (John 12:13). Jesus explained that Peter would not be going there now but would follow Him there later. Peter's second question—"why can't I follow you now?"—indicated he truly wanted to be with Jesus, regardless of the personal cost. How intensely Peter desired to be with Jesus is revealed in his rash yet sincere declaration: "I will lay down my life for you."

Unswayed by Peter's declaration, Jesus asked, "Will you lay down your life for me?" This question indicated Peter did not yet grasp who was laying down whose life for whom. It would be Jesus who would willingly lay down His life for others (10:11,17-18). Jesus declared Peter would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed. Peter must have been shocked by what Jesus said. Simon Peter, the rash disciple who was normally full of zeal and passion, evidently did not utter another word the entire time the disciples were in the upper room. Reading John's Gospel, we do not see anything else concerning Peter until Gethsemane when he cut off the ear of the high priest's servant (18:10).

What might cause your good intentions get derailed?

How can you remain loyal to Jesus?

Day 4: John 14:1-3

Reflect on the phrase "and take you to myself."

The disciples all had been confused and uncertain about what Jesus had been telling them. The remedy for troubled hearts was trust. Even though their world had seemingly turned upside down, Jesus instructed them to trust in the Creator and His Son. Jesus began to explain that their separation from Him would be temporary. The "Father's house" referred to heaven. The practice of first-century Jewish families called for a son to add onto his father's house a place where he and his bride would live after the wedding (see John 8:35). Over time, the house might contain many separate housing units around a courtyard that the extended family shared. Herod built these type houses for himself in Jerusalem, Caesarea, Tiberias, and Jericho. Knowing His disciples had seen these royal villas, Jesus was saying the place He would prepare for them would exceed anything that even the wealthiest of their day enjoyed.

How does the promise of a place in heaven motivate you to remain loyal to Christ?

Day 5: John 14:4-6

Circle the words “way,” “truth,” and “life.”

Jesus declared He alone is “the way, the truth, and the life.” Jesus is not merely one way among many ways to God. He stated plainly, “No one comes to the Father except through me.” If it were possible to have peace with God in any other way, Jesus would not have to die. He had to go away—die—to prepare a path and a place. Jesus is also the truth. We should not be tricked by humanistic pluralism that contends we must accept all religions and philosophies as equally valid. The path to the Father exclusively goes through Jesus. Finally, Jesus is the life. He is not merely the way to life; Jesus is the life. Paul reminded believers that Christ is our life (Colossians 3:3-4). To have Christ is to have life. He possesses the power to grant eternal life to everyone who believes in Him (John 5:26; 17:2). Jesus’s purpose in going away by way of the cross made it possible for believers to receive eternal life through Him.

Through the centuries, followers of Christ have found assurance in His declaration. In fact, this claim of exclusivity was so embraced by early believers that people referred to Christianity as “the Way” (Acts 9:2; 24:14).

In light of verse 6, how can you respond to someone who says there are many paths to God?

APPLY THE TEXT

Review your life. Is there a time when you placed your faith in Christ and His work? How have you done in fulfilling that decision? What changes might you need to make in order to live up to that decision?

