

## **John - Part 46 - Sermon Manuscript - This is the Way**

The last time we were in John was back on November 20th. So to bring us back up to speed, at this point in John, we're in the last week of Jesus' life. In fact, it's Thursday evening...

Thursday is when the Last Supper took place... it's when Jesus washed His disciples feet... it's when Judas decides to betray Jesus... It's when Peter is told that He would disown Jesus three times before the rooster crows.

And at this point in the night, Jesus just finished explaining to His disciples that He's only going to be with them a little longer. They might look for Him, but Jesus said: Where I am going, you cannot come.

Imagine being one of those disciples... You've been following Jesus around now for about three years. Maybe you left your friends and your job to follow Him because you believe He is going to be King.

And it hasn't been an easy three years! You've been mocked and even persecuted for following Jesus. And at this point there's now a warrant out for Jesus' arrest!

But despite all the opposition, you believe Jesus can win.

You've seen what He can do. You've seen Him heal the sick... you've seen Him turn water into wine... You've seen Him feed thousands with a little bread and fish... you've seen Him walk on water... You've even seen Him bring the dead back to life multiple times!

So as far as you're concerned, if anyone can overthrow the Roman government and usher in a new Kingdom, it's Jesus. And, if you play your cards right, maybe He'll have a distinguished position for you in His Kingdom?

But on this Thursday evening in the upper room, you've been blindsided. You and the other disciples never expected that Jesus would actually leave without taking anyone with Him!

The other disciples seem just as upset and confused as you are. They're whispering things like: *Why can't we follow Him? Where is He going? Will He at least let us know how to get there?*

You're probably wondering what it was all for... the three years you spent with Jesus. You might be thinking: *What was the point of those three years if He's just going to leave? Is He really going to abandon us?*

So, I imagine that this was the kind of unrest that came over the upper room. And that's why Jesus says in John 14:1...

**John 14:1a - Do not let your hearts be troubled.**

Their hearts were clearly troubled!

By the way, the Greek word for troubled has shown up already in previous chapters...

In chapter 13 Jesus was troubled in spirit when He knew Judas was going to betray Him. In chapter 12 He was also troubled when He was thinking about the death He was going to die. And in chapter 11 He was troubled when people were mourning the death of Lazarus.

It's a kind of deep emotion that you feel in your gut. And so for the disciples, their hearts were troubled when Jesus told them He was leaving. It's as if the rug was pulled out from underneath them.

So Jesus, probably seeing the reaction on their faces, He says...

**John 14:1 - Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.**

In other words, Jesus is asking them to trust Him. He's like: *You trust God... you can put that same trust in Me.* Then He says...

**John 14:2-4 - My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3**

**And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going.”**

**[Blank]** Jesus has a habit of throwing in heavy theological topics within a few sentences... and He says it in such a way that kind of implies you should already know what He’s talking about!

But for us, being 2000 years removed from when these words were spoken, it’s easy for us to throw in all kinds of interesting ideas that were never intended...

So like, maybe you’ve heard the idea that when believers die, we’ll not only get to go to heaven, but we’ll also get mansions? That comes from the KJV which says, “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.”

Last October my wife and I went up to New Hampshire and we ended up driving down this road along the shore that had one mansion after another!

**[Mansion]** I mean, these houses were BIG... [like I’ll have to call you on the phone because you’re so far away big]

So, one of these days when we get to heaven, will we get mansions?

**[Blank]** Not exactly...

The idea that we’ll get mansions in heaven comes from the 16th century Old English that the King James Version used. The word was *man-si-on-es*, which in the 16th century simply meant an average living space or room - not a huge, luxurious house.

And, it’s interesting that Jesus chose to use this illustration, because they’re all in an upper *room*. The room only had so much space for them. But Jesus is saying that His Father’s house has more than enough rooms - it’s got more than enough space for everyone who chooses to trust in Jesus.

So what is God the Father’s house? Is it Heaven?

Yes... but it's more than that.

Anytime scripture refers to God's house, it's referring to the Temple. The Temple was understood to be the place where Heaven and Earth sort of overlapped. It's the thin space between heaven and earth where God resided - it's His home.

But Jesus also called His body God's temple - or house. He said to the religious leaders...

**John 2:19-21 - Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." 20 They replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" 21 But the temple he had spoken of was his body.**

Think about that... Jesus equated His body with the Temple... the thin space between heaven and earth... the space where God resides.

And now he's saying in John 14, that place where God lives, there are many rooms. In fact, there's more than enough room for anyone who puts their trust in Jesus.

This is why Jesus says to Philip a little farther down in our passage...

**John 14:11a - Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me.**

Then a little farther down in verse 20 Jesus says...

**John 14:20 - On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.**

In other words, when we believe in Jesus, we are in Jesus and He is in us - He's made room for us in Him. It's not about getting a physical mansion. It's about living a life of faith today, despite our circumstances.

**The disciples were troubled.** They thought this was it... they were finished. Their mission, finished. But Jesus reminds them of the hope they have in Him. So look at verse 2 again...

**John 14:2-3 - My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.**

Jesus isn't talking about going into heaven and building mansions. He's talking about preparing His body for His upcoming death and resurrection. So when He says He's coming back, He's talking about His resurrection - 3 days after He dies. I also think He might be alluding to His second coming - but it seems that scholars debate that.

Either way, Jesus is saying: *Don't be troubled that I'm leaving you. I'm leaving for your sake* - He's going to the cross so that they would be saved when they put their trust in Him. He's also saying: *I won't completely abandon you, because I'll be back! And when I come back, you can then go where I am going!*

### **Why the change?**

Why can they only go where Jesus is *after* He comes back? Why can't they go now? Peter asked this same question just before chapter 14...

They can't continue to be with Jesus until after He comes back because at that point He will have already given His life as a sacrifice for their sins and again, as long as they believe, their sins will be forgiven and they can be with God.

Now, on this side of the cross it's easier for us to understand what Jesus was talking about than it was for His disciples in that upper room. But they eventually got it...

Remember John 2 where Jesus said, "Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days?" John told us Jesus was talking about His body... the fact that He had to die on the cross and be raised back to life three days later. Then in verse 22 John tells us...

**John 2:22 - After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.**

So, after the resurrection of Jesus, suddenly the fact that Jesus had to leave made sense to the disciples. But while they were in the upper room, they were still confused...

**John 14:5-7 - Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so *how can we know the way?*” 6 Jesus answered, “*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.*”**

Thomas was still wondering where on the map Jesus was physically going. He and the other disciples weren’t really tracking with all the theological stuff.

But for us, what Jesus says in John 14:6 has been absolutely foundational to our faith!

Thomas asked, “how can we know the way?” Jesus answered, “I am the way!”

It makes me think of the word “Waymaker.” I can’t help but think of the song...

Jesus is our waymaker. He paved the way for us so that we could go from death to life; from darkness to light; He made a way for us so that we could be in a right relationship with God.

But our world today would have us believe that Jesus is just one waymaker out of many.

Some believe figures like Buddha, Krishna, Brahma and even the flying spaghetti monster is their waymaker (that’s actually a thing).

It's as if all the world's religions are a way to God. Like God is on top of a mountain, and there are multiple paths up the mountain. One path might be Buddhism, another Islam, and another, Christianity.

But Jesus makes an exclusive claim in John 14:6. He's not simply a waymaker among many.

**Jesus is THE way.**

He's is the way the truth and the life. NO ONE comes to God except through Him.

By the way, **that statement is just as offensive today as it was 2000 years ago.**

2000 years ago in ancient Rome most people believed in many gods. It was normal to walk into someone's home and see all kinds of little pagan god statues - and they weren't just for decoration - they were for worship.

So for someone to say that Jesus is God and that you should stop worshipping other gods... that wasn't normal, and in some cases it was dangerous in the 1st century.

But even the Jews took offense to Jesus. Unlike the rest of the culture, they only put their trust in one God... but for Jesus to claim to be that God was blasphemous to them! It was something that they felt deserved the death penalty.

And even today, to say that Jesus is the only way to God can be offensive in our culture. Our culture would like us to believe that all roads lead to heaven. And we're considered intolerant if we think otherwise.

But the thing is, the religions in this world are VERY different. It really doesn't make any sense to lump them all together because at the end of the day, for the most part each one thinks they're right and everyone else is wrong.

But Jesus goes further than that. He draws a line in the sand and says apart from Him, no one comes to God. He is the only way, truth and life!

I love this quote I read from Thomas a Kempis. He explains John 14:6 as if Jesus were elaborating...

**“Follow Me: I am the way, and the truth, and the life. Without the way [you can] not go; without the truth [you can] not know; without the life [you can] not live...**

**[SLIDE] I am the Way which [you ought] to follow; the Truth which [you ought] to believe; the Life which [you ought] to hope for. I am the Way unchangeable; the Truth infallible [without error]; the Life everlasting.”<sup>1</sup>**

Again, Jesus said No one comes to the Father except through Him. And if we really know Jesus, then we know the Father... because He and the Father are one.

**[Blank]** And so when I think about the exclusive nature of the claims Jesus makes... I can't help but notice that:

**The existence of God doesn't depend on whether we believe in Him or not. God is not like Santa Claus. (clausometer?)**

God exists whether we believe in Him or not. His truths exist whether we believe or not. His compassion, grace, patience, loyal love, faithfulness and forgiveness all exist in the real world whether we believe it or not.

**His truths are the reality in which we live.**

So, do we live like we believe that? Do we live like we believe Jesus is the way, the truth and the life?

Here's what I mean... and I apologize ahead of time for the rant...

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<sup>1</sup> Jobes, Karen H. John through Old Testament Eyes: A Background and Application Commentary. Ed. Andrew T. Le Peau. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2021. Print. Through Old Testament Eyes: New Testament Commentaries.

Every time something unfortunate happens to someone, it's inevitable... people always say things like *you're in my thoughts*, or *sending positive thoughts your way*.

That's a nice sentiment, but does it really *do* anything? If we want to really impact someone's life, let's pray for them... for real. Let's not think of prayer as like the least we could do for someone...

**James 5:16 says - The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.**

I'd rather lean on that truth than say to someone that I'm sending them my positive thoughts.

**Thinking positive thoughts on behalf of someone else is basically worthless. Offering prayer to Jesus on behalf of someone else is priceless.**

After all, as Jesus says at the end of today's passage...

**John 14:12-14 - Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. 13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.**

May that be an encouragement to your own faith journey this morning.

**Let's pray**