

† The Heart of Christ ~ the message of the Upper Room Discourse (John 13-17)

“...having loved His own who were in the world, He love them to the end”(John 13:1.)

The Comforting Savior In the person of Christ John 14:7-11

7 “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.” 8 Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” 9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. 11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.”

I believe that a number of you might recognize the words of this 1970 Carpenter’s hit:

*Why do birds suddenly appear
Every time you are near?
Just like me, they long to be
Close to you.*

Now...if I can somehow keep you from humming the tune in your head for the rest of this message, I will be doing well. But for those of you familiar with the song...do you know what this song is about? Ultimately, the song is about someone who longs for intimacy with another person. It is a love song that has been sung not only between couples, but also sung by parents to their children. This and other songs like it remind us of a basic human desire...the desire for intimacy – the longing for a close, familiar, and affectionate or loving personal relationship with another person or group.

I know we just had our Vacation Bible School and one of the themes was creation and so I hope that the following is not illustrative of anything taught this past week to our children, but it seems that a small child came home from Sunday School and told his mother what was taught that day. He said, “The teacher told us how God made the first man and the first woman. He made man first, but the man was very lonely with no one to talk to, so God put the man to sleep, and while he was asleep, God took out his brains and made a woman out of them.” I can’t believe I heard some of the women say, “Amen.” But the point is, God created humanity with a need for intimacy...for closeness as we see this in the very first book of the Bible.

Now, while it is true that God Himself provided Adam with Eve to be his helpmate, friend and companion...one aspect of this provision was to reveal to both of them their need to be intimate not simply with one another, but with God as well. It was out of God’s intimacy; His closeness with Adam, that He provided Adam with one like himself and yet different. Humanity needs intimacy. But ever since the fall of Adam into sin, that intimacy is generally sought in anyone or anything other than the One who can ultimately fulfill the need for intimacy – our Creator God. Humanity tends to seek intimacy in simply physical or material things – sometimes in another person...sometimes in things...but often without thought to God. And here is the great paradox...that humanity’s greatest fulfillment for intimacy is found in a personal relationship with

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One who cannot be seen with physical eyes and is known now only by faith. Even as the book we are memorizing reminds us...in 1 Peter 1:8-9, we read:

8 and though you have not seen Him [Jesus], you love Him [implied intimacy], and though you do not see Him now [implies a time in which we will], but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

Beloved...there is nothing more joyful; nothing more glorious than being intimate with God through His Son Jesus Christ. There is nothing more satisfying; there is nothing more pleasant; nothing more favorable than knowing and experiencing God though knowing and obeying Jesus Christ. We may say, “amen”, but often we lose sight of this and seek for pleasures, favors and satisfaction in lesser things.

In our text this morning we find Jesus continuing in His discourse; providing comfort to His disciples as they come to grips with the reality of His pending betrayal, arrest, trial, crucifixion all followed by that which they did not fully grasp, His resurrection and then ascension or return to God the Father in Heaven. We have already seen how Jesus comforted His disciples by telling them what is being prepared or accomplished for them by His departure...a place with Him in His Father’s house...in heaven. He has already reminded them of the process or means by which they can be assured of this heavenly home as Jesus says to them in verse 6 that He is, ***“the way and the truth and the life”*** and that only by being in right relationship to Him; that is knowing Him intimately, can anyone be in right relationship with the Father.

This brings us specifically to our text, John 14:7-11 where we find in this exchange between Jesus and yet another disciple, Philip, Jesus gives comforting words as He describes that intimacy, closeness to God the Father is found in intimacy with Himself; that is in the person of Jesus Christ. In other words, anyone who wants to know God and have the assurance of eternal life in His blissful presence, being forever close to God, can only do so as they draw close to Jesus. This is truly the teaching of the New Testament, even as we learned from our study of Hebrews; for in Hebrews 7:25 we are reminded:

Therefore He [Jesus] is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him [because He is the way, and the truth and the life], since He always lives to make intercession for them.

In the five verses of our text this morning, let me point out to you five facts about intimacy, closeness to God as found only in and through a right relationship to Jesus. And may we then be comforted as we learn afresh how to be intimate with God.

I. Intimacy with Jesus is intimacy with the Father (John 14:7)

If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.

I submit to you that from this verse we learn that intimacy with Jesus is intimacy with the Father. It is a formula of sorts. Just on the heels of the great and comforting words of Jesus

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being the only and sure way to a right relationship to God the Father, Jesus follows up with these truly profound words of comfort, explaining to His disciples the fact that their experience of Him over the past 3 years has revealed something most remarkable. For these who have walked together, ate together, talked together, slept together, and labored together have not been simply intimate and close to yet another rabbi or prophet. As glorious as it must have been for Elisha to have been so close to Elijah, Elijah was simply a man. But Jesus, as He Himself has already explained on a number of occasions even prior to this, was not simply a man, but was also God in the flesh; God incarnate; the fullness of deity wrapped up in humanity. We who are so accustomed to this terminology must we wary of losing the wonder of it all. For these eleven men, having been in the presence of such a glorious one as this Jesus, had not fully understood who He was and so He says, **“If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.”**

Jesus uses some significant words that are hard to translate fully into the English without some explanation. Jesus says, **“If you had known Me...”** The idea of “if” here implies that these disciples, as much as loved Jesus, should have known even more intimately, more fully who He was as God in the flesh. Jesus uses the Greek verb “ginosko” – meaning to know by experience; or to know intimately here. A full translation/explanation of this statement would be... “by now, because of all that you have experienced or have come to know by our time together up through now and continuing on to my pending death and beyond, you ought to understand who I am – and, if you understood who I am, you would have understood and been intimate with My Father as well.”

All this serves as a reminder, even a warning to us...that it is possible to profess a kind of love for Christ without fully understanding, fully appreciating, fully complying and without fully being rightly intimate with Him and the Father. It is not enough to “know” basic facts about Jesus....[it doesn’t matter that you “know” Jesus died on a cross...what matters is have you experienced the transformation of your heart, of your life as you have come to realize He died for you?] Jesus says here that His disciples are to know by experience, to know by obedience, to know by complying with His commands that Jesus is both Lord and Savior, both God and the Deliverer from sin.

Coming to church, hearing sermons, singing songs of praise – that’s not the “proof” of being right with God...faith without works is dead...so says the book of James. True faith, or as Jesus said in John 14:1, truly believing in God and in Him, always produces intimacy...a longing to know Him more, to love Him more, to serve Him more; to see less and less of sin; self and a passion for the things of the world to give way to an increased devotion and delight in the things of God. Is this true for you! This is what it means to know Jesus and to know the Father – *an ever-increasing delight and devotion to ways of God*. As Oswald Chambers noted: “It is a joy to Jesus when a person takes time to walk more intimately with Him. The bearing of fruit is always shown in Scripture to be a visible result of an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.” If you know Jesus this way, then you know the Father as well.

But Jesus goes on to describe this intimacy in even more detail saying at the end of verse 7... **“from now on [or beginning at this time – if you have not understood it yet, understand it now] you know [have an intimate relationship with] Him and have seen Him.”** I understand that Jesus is standing in front of His disciples and the apparent implication is that they

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have somehow seen with their eyes the Father – because Jesus is standing there in the flesh. To be sure, we know the Jesus is “the word may flesh” – God incarnate – but I think it would be wrong to suggest that Jesus is saying that the disciples have seen physically God the Father, since according to John 4, God the Father is Spirit, by definition then immaterial and invisible. Jesus, by saying that they had “seen” Him, uses a word that means to behold, or to perceive; to grasp with the mind the reality of something. When Jesus says that you have seen the Father...He is claiming is own Deity. If you want to be intimate with God, you must be intimate with Jesus. No one who does not pursue Jesus by knowing Him, by increasing in his or her love and service to Him can ever know God the Father. It is impossible. If you want to see, to experience, to perceive, to understand God...then invest your time in knowing Jesus. For intimacy with Jesus is intimacy with the Father.

II. Intimacy with the Father is the most satisfying experience (John 14:8)

Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.”

So then, we come to verse 8 and hear from Philip. [Read text]. Philip’s statement here has a bit of question implied in it. Having heard the questions of Peter and Thomas, Philip says, or asks in effect, “Ok Jesus, I think I get it...if we know you...you will show us the Father, so, would you just show us the Father? Bring down a theophany – let us see with our eyes the presence of the Father and that will be enough...that will be sufficient for us.

With this statement Philip got one thing right and one thing wrong. What he got right is that man’s greatest need for intimacy; what will be most satisfying to the heart of any person; what will prove to be more than enough, more than sufficient for any one is rightly perceiving the person of God. And this is our second point, that intimacy with the Father is the most satisfying experience. From a human perceptive, John Piper has it right when he says, “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him. [when He is enough]” Philip wanted to “see” the Father, knowing that this is the greatest thing any person could desire.

But what he got wrong was failing to understand that Jesus was not speaking so much of seeing the Father with human eyes, but with eyes of faith, perceiving that in seeing or experiencing Jesus, these had experienced the Father. His request to be shown the Father revealed his deficient understanding of who Jesus was. As one preacher so aptly put it, “*The world swings round, and men catch single gleams of God...and know not what it is...only something great and noble*” (T.M. Eddy). Philip pictures so much of the attitude of the world around us, looking for God anywhere and in anything but through the means of Jesus and Jesus is known through the Word of God...for faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ, so says Romans 10:17.

So then, Philip rightly understood that being intimate with the Father was the greatest thing for humanity, but failed to see that the image, the very essence, the very picture of God was standing right before him in the person of Jesus Christ. May no one here fail to see Jesus.

III. Intimacy with Jesus is knowing His deity; that He is God (John 14:9)

Jesus said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

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This brings us to our third point, which simply reinforces what we have already been considering; namely that intimacy with Jesus is knowing that Jesus is God...that Jesus is not simply representing God; that Jesus is not just some good man whom God chose to work through; but rather that the very fullness and essence of God was bound up in the person of Jesus [Emmanuel]. Even as Colossians 2:9 informs us... **“for in Him [Jesus] all the fullness of the Deity dwells in bodily form.”**

[Read text]. And so Jesus says in effect to Philip... “You have been with Me all this time, Philip, you have seen things, heard things, experienced things that both the Scriptures as well as experience attributes only to the hand of God and you have not by these then come to know Me intimately, closely for who I am. For Philip...those who have “seen” or experienced Me, have “seen” or experienced the Father. For it is as if you are saying, ‘You don’t know God, which would mean that you don’t know Me.’”

What Jesus is saying is this, that there is no other revelation of the Father to come. John 1:18 tells us that no one has seen God at any time; the only begotten of God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained; made known, revealed; exegeted Him. So, if you cannot understand the Father in Me, you will never understand Him. No other knowledge in the universe or gleaned by the speculations of philosophy or religion will be enough. Apart from Jesus, whatever else you might have, you are truly destitute. Without an intimate knowledge of Jesus, there is no amount of money, no social influence, no intellectual culture that will be of real and lasting service. Without the experiencing of the Father made known to us by Jesus, revealed in the Scriptures, pursued by obedience, understood in the heart and embraced in all of life – there is no salvation, there is hope. If you want to know God...you must know Jesus; not the health of your IRA; not the latest scoop of your favorite celebrity; not the stats of your sports team; we must grow in our understanding of Jesus.

IV. Intimacy with Jesus is knowing the word of God (John 14:10)

Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.

And just how do we grow in our understanding of Jesus, so that we might know and grow more intimate with God? This is the subject of our fourth point, namely that intimacy with Jesus is knowing the word of God. Let us read verse 10 again.

Here we see Jesus added yet another dimension to what it means to be intimate with Him. He uses the word “believe” – the same word used back in verse 1 to describe an explicit trust and dependence upon God as well as upon Jesus Christ. Jesus challenges His disciples here, those who were closest to Him, asking them about the nature and extent of their trust in what He has told them. I can well imagine that we might be tempted to wonder how anyone who has confessed Jesus for any length of time could not believe in the unity of God the Father and God the Son. And yet here is Jesus asking those closest to Him this very question.

It reminds me to carefully consider if I truly am believing and trusting in who Jesus says that He is – He is not separate or less than God...He is in union and equal to God. What does this mean? It means that when Jesus speaks...God is speaking. It means when Jesus commands, it is God commanding. It was John the Baptist who testified in John 3:34, **“For He [that is Jesus] whom God has sent speaks the words of God...”** The words of Jesus are not

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to be considered optional or as some opinion spoken by a well-meaning teacher from an archaic age, but rather for what they are, the words of God. This is what Jesus is emphasizing at the end of verse 10, **“The words that I say to you, I do not speak on my own initiative...”** These are not the mere words of man. This is not good advice...this is the word of God and it must be heard and revered and obeyed as such. The words that Jesus spoke are from the Father who abides in Jesus and works through Jesus.

And I believe one of the lessons here for us is that one of the means by which we can measure our intimacy with Jesus and with God is by how much we are actually hearing and heeding the word of God; we can measure how much we comprehend of God and His word by how much we are acting and living like Jesus Christ? How’s that for a standard? How does your life measure up to this standard? Jesus said in Matthew 5:48 the most devastating words ever to be heard by human ears saying, “Therefore, you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Oh, wretched man that I am...for I am nowhere near perfect and guess what...neither are you. Unless God does something for us, our lack of perfection is a sure guarantee of our eternal damnation. But God did do something for us...He sent His perfect Son to supply perfect restoration to those who believe, who by their lives, who become radically aware of their imperfection apart from Christ...this perfection of Jesus becomes ours...we are to become increasing intimate with the righteousness, the rightness, the perfection of Christ through His word, through knowing and obeying His word. Intimacy with Jesus is wanting to know Him more by knowing Him through His word. Does this describe you? Do you believe

V. Intimacy with Jesus is knowing the works of God

Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.”

But not only must we and can we take Jesus as His word, but He has also provided us with the evidence, the proof that He spoke the words of God by confirming them with the works of God. Not only do we trust then in what Jesus says, we can trust then in what Jesus has done as being the sure sign of the hand of God. We could certainly look at any of the Gospel writers, but here in John the point of every miracle recorded was to prove that Jesus was indeed God. And the Gospel of John was build around seven such miracles or signs or works that proved Jesus was God;

1. The turning of the water into wine (John 2:1-2)
2. The healing of the nobleman’s son (John 4:43-54)
3. The healing of the paralytic man (John 5:1-15)
4. The feeling of the 5000 (John 6:1-15)
5. The walking on the water (John 6:16-24)
6. The healing of the man born blind (John 9:1-12)
7. The raising of Lazarus from the dead (11:1-44)

We don’t have time to explore how each of these proved that Jesus was God, but suffice it to say that each of these were understood by those around Jesus as being works that only God

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Himself could do. Even Nicodemus, the great teacher and spiritual leader of Israel, understood this truth early on in Jesus’ ministry saying in John 3:2, **“Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs You do unless God is with him.”** What Nicodemus did not yet understand...what he had yet to believe is that it wasn’t simply God with Jesus...it was that Jesus was indeed God – again, Emmanuel – God with us.

And beloved...I warn you...I implore you...not to think that just because you believe the signs, you believe in Christ. The signs by themselves do not generate faith. They do not prove anything. The signs, the works of God in Jesus are meant to point...to point us to the realization that God was in the world in the Person of Jesus Christ. And so, if Jesus is God in the world and proved such by all His miracles, then His words must also be received, accepted.

We must therefore repent...confessing ourselves to be sinners because He called all to repent. We must all recognize our own hard and selfish hearts that if left unchanged, and untransformed by Jesus will doom our souls to hell. We must believe that Jesus alone was perfect and when He promises to make our lives new by transferring His perfection to us so that we might be intimate with both Him and the Father, we do well to believe that...to see that truth cause us to hate ourselves, to hate our sin, to hate our selfishness and to embrace the life, the teaching the ways of Jesus. That is what intimacy with Jesus and the Father is...a life transformed; a life longing to live God’s way rather than one’s own way. Has this happened to you? Is this happening to you? If not, or if you are uncertain...cry out to the Lord, asking Him to change you...asking Him to forgive your disobedience to Him and to His word...asking Him for a heart that knows, loves and desires to serve Him. May this be the cry of every heart, “Lord, let me know You more...let me love You more...let me be close to You. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria

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July 13, 2008