

HE SHALL BE CALLED "OUR EVERLASTING FATHER" JOHN 14:5-14

Hear the often quoted meditation of Thomas a Kempis on Jesus' words in John 14:6: "Follow thou me. I am the way and the truth and the life. Without the way there is no going; without the truth there is no knowing; without the life there is no living. I am the way which thou must follow; the truth which thou must believe; the life for which thou must hope. I am the inviolable way; the infallible truth, the never-ending life. I am the straightest way; the sovereign truth; life true, life blessed, life uncreated" (*The Imitation of Christ*, 56.1).

Jesus' sixth "I am" statement, "I am the way and the truth and the life" (cf., 6:35; 8:12; 10:7, 11; 11:25) is true given Jesus' unique relationship to God; he is God incarnate. John opens his Gospel with these words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father" (1:1, 14).

Only God can lead us to himself, and only in the Son do we see the Father (14:9). One commentator writes: "Jesus is the way to God, precisely because he is the truth of God (cf. notes on 1:14) and the life of God (cf. notes on 1:4; 3:15; 11:25). Jesus is the truth, because he embodies the supreme

***There are three distinct persons,
and the being of each person is equal
to the whole being of God.***

– Wayne Grudem

revelation of God—he himself 'narrates' God, says and does exclusively what the Father gives him to say and do (5:19ff; 8:29), indeed he is properly called 'God' (1:1, 18; 20:28). He is God's gracious self-disclosure, his 'Word', made flesh (1:14). Jesus is the life (1:4), the one who has 'life in himself' (5:26), 'the resurrection and the life' (11:25), 'the true God and eternal life' (1 Jn. 5:20). Only because he is the truth and the life can Jesus be the way for others to come to God, the way for his disciples to attain the many dwelling-places in the Father's house (vv. 2-3), and therefore the answer to Thomas's question (v. 5)" (D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC, 491).

This Week's Core Competency

Trinity – I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of God has led the writers of Scripture to walk a fine line when describing Jesus' relationship to the Father. For example, in John 14, Jesus distinguishes himself from the Father in three places when he says, "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?" (v. 2), "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (v. 6), and "The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work" (v. 10). And yet he identifies himself closely with the Father in three others when he says, "If you have known me, you will know my Father also" (NET) (v. 7), "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (v. 9), and "Don't you believe that I am in

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the Father, and that the Father is in me?" (v. 10; cf., v. 11). Remember, too, his statement, "I and the Father are one" (10:30).

Trinitarianism claims: "God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God" (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 226). Put differently, "there are three distinct persons, and the being of each person is equal to the whole being of God" (255). The relation of the persons in the Godhead to the divine essence and to one another (i.e., the essential nature of the Trinity) is what one theologian calls "the real difficulty" (Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 89). I should know better than to broach such a profound issue, but here goes. You may find the following brief comments helpful as I did. "We now need to explore further the nature of this oneness. We are thinking here of a union in which the three are so closely linked with one another that the life of each flows through the others as well. Each has immediate access to the consciousness and experiences of the others. This means that each is dependent on the others for his own life and for his being deity. It would not be possible for one of the members of the Trinity to cease to be, or to separate from the Godhead, and the other two to continue in existence as God . . . This leads us to one additional aspect of the Triune God. The concept of *perichoresis* [peri-cho-re-sis] means that not only do the three members of the Godhead interpenetrate each other and supply their life to one another, but that all three are involved in all of the works of God. Certain of these works are primarily the doing of one of these rather than the others, but all participate to some degree in what is done" (Millard J. Erickson, *Making Sense of the Trinity*, 62, 64; Google "images for perichoresis" for artistic representations).

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Isaiah 9:6

*For unto us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

John 14:5-14

5 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."
8 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will

be enough for us."

9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. 11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. 12 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.

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Bracket what Thomas said in v. 5 and what Philip said in v. 8.
- * Highlight v. 6.
- * Cross out "really" in v. 7.
- * Circle "know" in v. 7.
- * Underline the rhetorical questions in vv. 9, 10.
- * Box "rather" indicating *contrast* in v. 10.
- * Highlight v. 11.
- * Circle "very truly" in v. 12.
- * Box "because" indicating *reason* in v. 12.
- * Bracket "in my name" in vv. 13, 14.
- * Box "so that" indicating *result* in v. 13.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Explain what triggers Thomas' question (v. 5).
2. Describe the *mood* of the disciples when he asks it.
3. On which of the three terms—*way*, *truth*, and *life*—do you think the *emphasis* falls and why?
4. The translation of verse 7 in the NIV is misleading. How so? (See notes on v. 7.)
5. "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." What in the world is Philip thinking?
6. What in the world is Jesus saying to Philip in his two *rhetorical* questions?
7. Put what "I am *in* the Father and the Father is *in* me" means in your own words.
8. Christians can't do the works Jesus did and even greater, can they? Explain.
9. **Discussion:** Sounds like Jesus is handing you a blank check in prayer. Talk about why you can't make it payable to anyone for anything you please.

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

GPS isn't much help if you don't know where you're going. Thomas would agree. Jesus tells his disciples that he is going to the Father's house to prepare a place for them (Jn 14:6). Didymus (see 11:16)—whom one commentator says is a "loyal, even courageous disciple" but nevertheless is "liberally endowed with misapprehensions and doubts" (Carson, 490)—asks the obvious question: Where are you going? (14:5). After all, if Jesus is going to prepare a place for his disciples, don't his disciples need to know where he's going, so they can go there, too? After Jesus replies to Thomas' question, his affirmations that the disciples "know him," "know my Father," and "have seen him" prompts Philip to ask, "show us the Father and that will be enough for us" (v. 8). The two major parts of the passage (vv. 5-7 and 8-14) develop around Thomas' question and then, around Philip's request.

The mood in the room turns somber, following what must have been a surprise revelation to the disciples; Jesus is going away. And even though he makes it clear that he is going to the Father's house and assures them that they know the way, none of them fully comprehends what he means. Thomas, for one, refuses to stand silently by as if he understands what the Lord means when he really doesn't. Speaking for the others, he confesses their shared ignorance and asks the pointed question: "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

In his sixth "I am" statement Jesus responds to provide the clarification they're all looking for: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (v. 6). "In this context Jesus does not simply blaze a trail, commanding others to take the way that he himself takes; rather, he *is* the way" (491). He is the way because he is also the truth and the life. He doesn't just tell the truth; he *is* the truth. Put differently, poetically (in the first person) rather than propositionally, "The claim to speak the truth good men applaud. I claim much more: I am the truth of God" (493). What's more, he doesn't just give some magic lifegiving elixir; he is life itself. Elsewhere Jesus says, "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so

the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it . . . As the Father has life *in himself*, so he has granted the Son also to have life *in himself*" (5:21, 26). To know the Son is to know God and to have life.

Then, speaking for the others, Philip chimes in with a request that reflects the yearning of every human being through the ages: "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us" (cf. Ex 33:18-20). Humankind longs to see God as he is in his unimaginable splendor and transcendent glory. On the significance of Philip's request, one commentator writes: "At one level Philip (cf. notes on 1:44; 11:21, 22) and the others truly do know Jesus, and therefore in the Son they have seen the Father. But they do not recognize this yet. As highly as they think of Jesus, they do not yet grasp that in Jesus God has made himself known. To the extent that this is still beyond them, they do not know Jesus himself very well" (493-94). Philip's request earns him a mild rebuke in the form of two rhetorical questions: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time?" and "Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?" Jesus' relationship to the Father renders the point of Philip's request moot. Because of their interdependence, Jesus says, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." The words of Jesus are the words of God, and the works of Jesus are the works of God because he is God incarnate (1:1, 14). If one refuses to believe what Jesus says about their interdependence, surely, he must believe on the evidence of what Jesus does (v. 11). And although the "dual in-ness" relationship of the Son and the Father is inscrutable, it is apparent that it represents a kind of interpenetration of natures or *perichoresis*, implying a close unity between the Father and the Son without assuming that the unity implies absolute identity.

In verses 12-14 Jesus looks to the post-Easter mission of the church, promising that "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." The reason behind his promise is his sending of the

Holy Spirit to empower his followers (Ac 1:8; 2:32-33). Moreover, he promises "I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it" (vv. 13-14). Jesus' blank check made payable through prayer has implied limitations. As one writer observes: "The invitation to pray for 'anything' (14:14) in this context is not, in fact, to be understood as 'anything' in the absolute sense because the guiding principle of the believer's prayer must be the same principle that Jesus followed throughout his life. That principle was the glorification of the Father in

and through everything done by the Son (14:13). To read this promise of Jesus concerning asking in any other way would be a complete misunderstanding of the promise" (Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12-21*, NAC, 118-19).

The *upper* story of this narrative is about who Jesus is, namely, "the way, the truth, and the life." To know him is to know God. The *lower* story is about his disciples. He promises those who believe in him will do even greater things than he did through the power of the Holy Spirit, and he will answer their prayers offered in his name in accordance with his will.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

The Message of the Passage

Anyone who knows Jesus will know the Father as well—because Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in him—and will do even greater things than Jesus through the answer to prayers offered in his name.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22.

Relate this passage to Jesus being called Everlasting Father.

How is that the you know God the Father because you know Jesus, his Son?

Explain why you conclude your prayers with "in Jesus' name."

notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 5 **don't know** "Although Jesus tells his disciples, You know the way to the place where I am going (cf. Additional Note), the next verse demonstrates that, at some level, they know nothing of the sort. John's point is not that Jesus has made some terrible error in assessing his disciples, but that precisely because they know him they do know the way to the place he has just prescribed" (Carson, 490).

v. 6 **way** "Of the three terms, emphasis surely falls on the first, 'the way'" (Gary M. Burge, *The NIV Application Commentary: John*, 392). "If Thomas' question and v. 6a demonstrate that way is the principal theme, it follows that truth and life enjoy a supporting role: Jesus is the way to God, precisely because he is the truth of God (cf. notes on 1:14) and the life of God (cf. notes on 1:4; 3:15; 11:25" (Carson, 491).

v. 6 **truth** Cf., v. 10. His words are God's words, and "God does not lie" (Tit 1:2). But Jesus doesn't just tell the truth he is the truth. In him the reality of or "fullness" of the invisible God is made manifest (Col 1:19). "God's promises of grace and revelation are pre-eminently fulfilled in Christ. But what Jn. wishes to stress in these verses [1:14-18; cf., Ex 33:18] is that, in Christ the Logos, men can see God in his *genuine actuality* and *reality*. If men can see God's *reality* anywhere, it is in Christ" (*DNTT*, s.v., "truth" [*aletheia*], 3:890, italics added).

v. 7 **know** Cf., "If you know me, you will know my Father also" (NRSV, HCSB); "Because you have known me, you will also know my Father" (CJB); "'Now that you have known me,' he said to them, 'you will know my Father also'" (GNT). Verse 7 is translated differently in English versions due to a textual variant. "The NIV follows a variant reading that makes the verse punitive. In 14:7 the first verb is perfect ('If you have come to know me . . .') and the second may be perfect ('you would know my Father also') or future (NIV note: '. . . you will know my Father also'). Strong manuscript evidence supports the future tense of verse 7 . . . This is not a rebuke, but a promise pointing to a deeper revelation that will come if they continue with Jesus (14:23). Since they have known him, there is more to come, and they will discover the Father who is present in him. Moreover, they have seen the Father already (14:7b)" (Burge, 393). "The disciples have already begun to know the Father because they have come to know the Son; in fact (although they do not realize it yet) in the Son they have seen the Father" (C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel of John*, 299).

v. 7 **from now on** Or "assuredly." "The contracted pair of words, from now on (*ap'arti*), could be read as one word (there were usually no spaces between word in the early uncial manuscripts) with the meaning 'assuredly'. It is tempting to think that is what Jesus means here: 'and assuredly you do know him and have seen him' (Carson, 493). "Since the Eleven had come to know who Jesus really was, they had *assuredly* come to know the Father as well. Jesus was probably assuring the Eleven with this sentence, rather than rebuking them, as some translations suggest" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on John," 2017 ed., 267, italics added, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/john.pdf).

v. 12 **very truly** "In the face of loneliness and Jesus' departure, the reader is confronted with another of the Johannine strategic double amen sayings ('truly, truly'; NIV, 'I tell you the truth') that must always be taken as important statements of Jesus. In this case the saying provides a significant window into the postresurrection situation. Even though the disciples here may have been overwhelmed by sorrow (cf. 16:20), they are called to focus on the future rather than the present because most of the verbs are in the future tense in this section" (Borchert, 115).

v. 12 **greater things than these** Including "deeds of humility, service, and love as well as miraculous signs" (Burge, 394). "After Jesus ascended into heaven, the Father sent the Holy Spirit to indwell every believer (Acts 2:3; cf. Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:13). This divine enablement empowered believers to do miracles that only Jesus Himself could do previously. The Book of Acts records the apostles doing many of the same miracles that Jesus had done in the Gospels" (Constable, 269). "Through the power of the Spirit whom Jesus sent after his ascension, there were more converts after the initial sermon of Peter at Pentecost than are recorded for Jesus during his entire career. The influence of the infant church covered the Roman world, whereas Jesus during his lifetime never traveled outside the boundaries of Palestine" (Merrill C. Tenney, "The Gospel of John," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 9:145-46).

v. 14 **ask me** Cf., "ask anything" (NKJV, RSV). Some manuscripts omit v. 14; others include it but omit the pronoun "me." The variant raises the issue of whether prayer should be directed to the Father or to his Son. Most English translations include the verse and include the pronoun, given the weight of the manuscript evidence and which reading best accounts for the variants (see Carson, 496; Borchert, 117).

v. 14 **in my name** "The meaning of the expression here of asking me in my name, as H. Bietenhard has suggested, probably means praying both 'according to his will' and 'with the invocation of his name'" (Borchert, 117). "The phrase 'in my name,' however, is not a talisman for the command of supernatural energy. He did not wish it to be used as a magical charm like an Aladdin's lamp" (Tenney, 9:146).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

One thing that changes dramatically when you have children is the insurmountable mountain of laundry. How can one tiny baby create so many dirty clothes? Each child that joins your family brings with it a new explosion of laundry. Without fail, every time my mom calls or this one particular neighbor comes over, I'm doing laundry. It's like they know. Sometimes life seems like a continuous cycle of gathering, sorting, washing, drying, folding and distributing laundry. Just as soon as you think you're done you find a dirty sock buried beneath a mountain of toys. I can get pretty cranky about laundry. Why are the clothes thrown near the hamper but not in it? Why are there clean clothes in the dirty clothes hamper? Why do my kids seem to live out of their put-away basket? This week, however, I've had an epiphany. As I was thinking of Jesus as our Everlasting Father, and pondering things that never end, I realized that Jesus is like laundry. Stay with me here. His love, compassion, grace, mercy - they never end, never run out. Not only that, but He takes us—dirty, stained and wrinkled—and makes us beautifully clean. What a blessing to have a Father that loves us like that. Parents, I know Christmas can be a difficult season for some. I'm praying for you and your children to fully know that the Everlasting Father came to earth for you. He loves you, and that will never end.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Isa 9:6, Jn 14:5-14

1. The name Everlasting Father has two parts. Explain what each part of the name means.
2. What is the name of Jesus in verse John 14:6?
3. From verse 12, what are the kinds of things Jesus was doing?

What Do You Think

Do you think the love of Jesus can ever run out?

What R U Going To Do

Create a mobius strip with Isaiah 9:6 written on it. Use it to explain to your family or friends how Jesus is our Everlasting Father.

Core Comp

Trinity - I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Memory Verse

Isaiah 9:6 - *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

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30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians*

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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