

A Two-Fold Cure for Troubled Hearts

By David Harrell

Preached on: Sunday, March 22, 2015

In the providence of God, we now come to a study of chapter 14 of John's Gospel. So if you would take your Bible and turn there with me. John 14. We'll be looking closely at verses 1 through 14 but before we do, perhaps I can prepare your mind a bit for what the Spirit of God has for us this morning. I think you would all agree that life is filled with trouble and sorrow. If you just think back over the last month in your life, ask yourself the question: has one single relationship worked perfectly? Has there been a single day where you have not experienced some disappointment or frustration? Of course, the answer is no, nor will there ever be this side of glory. Now, some days are worse than others. Some days are downright devastating but every day has its share of hardships and sorrow because we live in a sin-cursed world. And because of the inevitable sorrows of life, we long to be in relationship with stable, godly people who by their very presence bring us comfort. When you're around ungodly people, unstable people, they do just the opposite. They are, you might say, a drain on your battery rather than a charge to it. When you're in some dark valley of difficult and heartache, the last thing you want to do is be around someone who bears little if any resemblance to the Lord Jesus Christ.

But folks, imagine what it would have been like to have walked with Jesus. For 3 years, to be in the presence of the Son Of God, to have experienced his perfect love in your life. To have witnessed the sinless Son of God in private and in public and to have learned from him. To have not only witnessed his miracles but also to have had the privilege of participating in them. No matter how dark the valley, having that kind of intimate, personal, physical light of his glory would somehow make even the worst day seem okay. Imagine the exhilarating joy of ministering alongside the long awaited Messiah. Imagine the excitement of the disciples believing that he was about to destroy Rome, renovate the earth and establish his glorious kingdom. Not only that, you're about to be a part of his cabinet in ruling the world. Imagine that kind of anticipation and joy. Talk about exhilaration. Imagine the breathtaking thrill of the triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Then imagine the devastation and the confusion when you hear the Messiah say that he is going to die and depart. "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone," Jesus said. "But if it dies, it bears much fruit. If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself." The disciples must've said, "Surely, our Lord is speaking in parables. These things can't be understood literally. He's about to restore the kingdom to Israel. Did we not just hear all of Israel hail him as the son of David? Why is our Lord so upset? Why does his voice quiver when he talks and at times his body shakes in anguish? And what is all this talk of betrayal and going somewhere where we cannot follow? We have forsaken everything to follow him and now he's going to forsake us? Surely, this cannot be. What will become of us?"

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Folks, it is impossible for us to even begin to grasp how bewildered and distressed the 11 disciples were that night and how much worse it was going to get as the hours went on as they witness his betrayal, his arrest, his mock trial, the violent torture and murder of the Son of God. Then think of this: although Jesus knew full well the horrors that awaited him, he was able to set it all aside and minister to them. They could not enter into his suffering, he would have to drink that bitter cup all alone. They didn't even understand all that was going to happen so they could not comfort him but he comforted them. He focused his attention not only on their present needs but also their future needs and the needs of all those who love him including us.

With this background, we come to verse 1 of this portion of his farewell address in chapter 14 where the Lord says this,

1 "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And you know the way where I am going." 5 Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. 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. 12 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father. 13 Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

Like the magnificent radiance of the setting sun framed in foreboding clouds, the physical presence of the light of the world is about to disappear on the horizon but Jesus did not want his disciples and by extension all of us, to be left in some dark despair so he comforts all of us by focusing our attention on 2 basic concepts. He offers a two-fold cure for troubled hearts and thus the title of my discourse to you this morning. Folks, if your heart is troubled today, I want you to listen very carefully because your Creator, your

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Savior, has a remedy. He is going to give you a divine cure guaranteed to lift your heart out of the mire of confusion and despair even in the midst of your tears.

What we discover here is we must have 2 things: 1. We must have a soul anchoring faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. 2. We must have a soul thrilling anticipation of the glory of heaven. Now, we read about these concepts all through the word of God. Practically speaking, when you find yourself in some valley of sorrow, you need to focus on these things. Paul said for example in Colossians 3, beginning in verse 1, "If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of the Father. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory." In other words, let these great truths, these supernatural realities, these incredible promises, occupy your mind and I might add, avoid being around people who know nothing of them. Spend your time around people who have a soul anchoring faith in the person and work of Christ and a soul thrilling anticipation of the glory of heaven.

Now, let's examine Jesus' tender words. Verse 1, "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me." This brings us to the first remedy: a soul anchoring faith in the person and work of Christ. You may recall that the Apostle Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 1:3 that God is the Father of mercies and God of all comfort. You'll not find mercy and comfort anyplace else that is truly sustaining. And how does he bring that comfort? Well, through the Holy Spirit to those who belong to him, who is also called the Comforter, as Jesus says. But he also brings that comfort through Christ himself. Paul went on to say in verses 4 and 5, he "who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ." In other words, the more we endure righteous suffering for the sake of Christ, the more we will experience divine comfort and reward. This is really at the heart of Jesus' words. He says, "Do not let your heart be troubled." This is literally a command, a command to stop the mental and spiritual agitation.

Now, although Jesus was deeply troubled himself in spirit as John tells us, he nevertheless sympathizes with their sorrow. He wants to comfort them but he also knows that much of what they were enduring was unnecessary because it was a result of their unwillingness to accept the truth concerning his sacrificial death that must precede the physical kingdom according to the Old Testament Scriptures. You see, for the disciples a suffering and dying Messiah simply did not fit into their theological box. That wasn't what they were looking for. And like so many people today, they believed what they wanted to believe even though it was false.

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Not wanting their ignorance and their weak faith to bring them to catastrophic failure, he exhorts them, "Do not let your heart be troubled." Another way of putting it is, "Get a hold of yourself, guys. Believe in God. Believe also in me." Here we come to the first key to calming a troubled heart: we have to consciously choose not to let our heart be troubled by replacing that unnecessary despair that is often rooted in ignorance and insufficient faith, replace that with a decisive commitment to believe God and believe also in Christ which, by the way, is the second command. Said differently, "Even as you believe in God, believe also in me." I believe, by the way, the first verb is it in the indicative and the second in the imperative. So in essence what Jesus is saying is: "You believe in God though you have never seen him. By faith you believe in him to be the eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, immutable, glorious Sovereign over all that he has created. You believe he is the holy, faithful, merciful, long-suffering, compassionate God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the one deserving of your utmost trust and worship. The one that you trust to someday bring you to glory. The one true God that is full of grace and truth and love who cares for you. You believe all this. You believe that he guides you and protects you." So what Jesus is saying is this, "In like manner, believe also in me even though I'm about to leave you physically."

This was a hard pill for the disciples to swallow. If we would have been there it would have been every bit as hard for us. By the way, the good news is that Peter swallowed it eventually, as they all did. Later, Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1:8, "and though you have not seen Him, you love Him," he says, "and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls."

Beloved, don't miss this: apart from a soul anchoring faith in the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, you will have no lasting means of calming a troubled heart. I've counseled multiple hundreds of people whose hearts were deeply distressed and inevitably I will say, "Let's set the presenting problem aside here and I'd like for you to tell me about the Lord Jesus. You say that you belong to him, tell me about who he is. Describe to me your walk with him." And folks, I can tell you from years of experience: those who have very little to say never recover until they have a lot to say. They just run from one painkiller to the next. But those whose eyes begin to fill with tears and those who begin to bubble up from deep within and say, "Oh, I'll be glad to tell you about my precious Lord." The ones that begin to extol his majesty and his excellency in their life, the one who clearly see him for who he is and love him and serve him, the ones who find their greatest joy and satisfaction in him, are the ones who are able to smile in the midst of their tears and even rejoice in their furnace of affliction because Christ is right there with them. That's the difference.

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My friends, if you do not experience the soul satisfying joy of a felt Christ deep within your soul, you will have no anchor to hold you in the tumult of sorrow, gut wrenching sorrow. And if you haven't experienced gut wrenching sorrow, you will. It's a part of life. You will find no comfort apart from the intimate and accurate soul anchoring confidence in the person and work of Christ. And I might add that you're not going to achieve this by merely learning about him, you've got to get serious about walking with him. Communing with him. Denying yourself and following him. Imitating him. Serving him. Loving him. Worshiping him.

"Just as you believe in God," Jesus says, "believe also in me." Present tense. Have an ongoing trust, an unshakable confidence in me as you do God. Jesus will say later on in John 16:33, "In this world you will have tribulation," and all God's people can say, "Amen to that." We will have tribulations and trials and troubles, not only in this world but as a result of this world. But then he went on to say something so precious, so deeply encouraging, he said, "But take courage, I have overcome the world." Beloved, herein is the Gibraltar of our peace and of our hope and of our comfort. Our blessed Savior has gained the victory over the world and now he is seated at the right hand of the Father waiting to return and one day all this conflict and sorrow is going to be over for all those who are united to Christ in faith and we've got to live in the light of this. John later described this victory in 1 John 5:4 where he says, "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith."

Now, what the disciples did not understand is that Jesus' departure would ultimately be for their advantage in numerous ways. Isn't it interesting that so often when adversity comes into our life all we see is the adversity. We don't realize that maybe God is up to something grand and glorious so we see the adversity, not the potential advantage and that's what was going on here. They didn't realize that they didn't need to have Christ physically present with them to enjoy his presence. Now certainly, that is the ultimate enjoyment of it but it's not like if he goes so too does his presence. They didn't realize that they could experience his comfort and relax in his great care and protection and provision. In fact, the Lord says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Notice his promise later on in verses 16 through 18 here in our text, he says, "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you." What a magnificent promise. This speaks of the divine Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, that dwells within the redeemed, the one who comes into us at the moment of our salvation and teaches us, admonishes us, encourages us, comforts, strengthens, protects and so forth. Folks, I want you to think about this, this is such a stunning truth: the Lord Jesus departed from us and redeemed us so that he could

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inhabit us. What an incredible advantage. Did not Paul say, "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you whom you have from God?"

Moreover, Jesus departed so that he could go away and prepare a place for us. This is just mind-boggling. Verse 2, "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way where I am going." So, the first cure for a troubled heart is to have a soul anchoring faith in the person and work of Christ and now he offers the second remedy and that is: to have a soul thrilling anticipation of the glory of heaven. "In my Father's house are many dwelling places." "Father's house" is a phrase that refers to heaven; our heavenly home where we will dwell with our Father. We often will say, "There is no place like home." We all know that feeling, especially if you've been away for many weeks in some foreign land. Home is always that place, or it should be, where you feel like you are welcome or you feel like you belong. A place of safety and security. A place where you are loved for who you are even with all of your faults. Where you can enjoy sweet fellowship with others that you love. Where you can rest and relax and find solace and comfort and safety in all of the chaos and wickedness of this world.

Dear Christian, we are aliens in this world. It is not our home. As the song says, "We're just passing through." As soon as you get outside the safe little bubble of Calvary Bible Church and get around people that don't know Christ you realize real quick what an alien you are, right? You all know that experience. But dear friends, the moment we enter into the Father's house, we will know for the first time in our lives that we are really home. This is what Jesus wants them to anticipate in their hearts, those hearts that were troubled. This is what he wants us to anticipate. "Some day you're going home and I've gone to prepare this place for you. I'm going to come back again and receive you unto myself."

The many dwelling places speaks of the vast provision that God has prepared to accommodate all he has chosen to reconcile unto himself. Scripture speaks of this in so many places. I'll give you but one example in Colossians 1, beginning in verse 12, Paul says that we should "give thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints." Qualified literally means to make sufficient or to authorize. He has authorized us here. It denotes conferring a privilege or an ability. He has made us fit for something and that is to share in the inheritance of the saints. Inheritance literally means a share in the lot or the allotted portion. Grammatically in the original language, the text literally reads, "He has qualified us for the portion of the lot," indicating that every believer will be granted his own individual portion of this total inheritance. He goes on to say, "For He has delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son."

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Dear friends, what is even more fascinating, not only has every believer been allotted his own individual portion of the whole of this inheritance but when he says he has qualified us for this, it's in the present tense so this indicates that we currently possess the inheritance right now. It's ours right now. We don't experience the fullness of it but we will some day. Now, you say, "What will that include?" I'm not sure. We have some idea of the inheritance. 1 Peter 1, Peter says in verse 4, that it's "an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice," so we know that much about it. We also know and this is the most important truth to know: that the most glorious aspect of our inheritance will be to have an unrestricted personal fellowship with the Triune God. In Romans 5, Paul says that we exalt in the hope of the glory of God. Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

We will live in his presence. Beyond that, there are some other things that Scripture speaks of with respect to this inheritance and this place that Jesus has gone to prepare for us. Just think of, for example, the new Jerusalem in Revelation 21. If we were to take time, we could read in that text about this inconceivably beautiful, translucent cube, the same shape specified by God for the Holy of Holies in Solomon's Temple where God was to dwell between the cherubim. That cube, according to Scripture, will be 1,500 miles in every direction. That's 2 million, 250 thousand square miles. You can liken this distance to the size of the entire western portion of the United States from the Pacific coast in California to the Mississippi River and its length and width and height are all equal. It will have 12 gates where 12 angels will be stationed to attend to the glory of God and serve the people. And each gate will have one of the names of the 12 tribes of Israel on it, celebrating throughout eternity God's covenant relationship with Israel. In fact, the arrangement of the gates is reminiscent of the way the 12 tribes were stationed around the tabernacle when they camped in the Old Testament, and also very suggestive of the allotment of the tribal lands around the millennial temple that Ezekiel describes in Ezekiel 48.

The word of God says that emanating from within this city will be the effulgence of the glory of God. The Shekinah glory of his presence will refract every imaginable color of the rainbow in every direction. The dazzling brilliance of the glory of God will be so powerful that John says in Revelation 21:23, "The city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it for the glory of God has illumined it and its lamp is the Lamb." Isaiah also describe this when he said, "No longer will you have the sun for light by day nor for brightness will the moon give you light but you will have the Lord for an everlasting light and your God for your glory."

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Beloved, this is just one aspect of what Jesus has gone away to prepare for us and the new Jerusalem is only a miniscule portion of heaven. We have no idea all the other things he has in store for us. No wonder Paul says, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." I think of Abraham who suffered greatly for his faith. How did he survive? How did he maintain his joy and his devotion to the Lord? The writer of Hebrews tells us in Hebrews 11:10, we read, "he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God," referring to the new Jerusalem described in Revelation 21.

Back to our text. No wonder Jesus says, "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you." In other words, he's saying, "Guys, get a hold of yourself. Trust me. What awaits you is so unbelievably magnificent that if you could see even a glimpse of it, you would instantly calm your troubled heart."

Verse 3, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself" It's one thing to prepare the place, it's another thing for him to come and receive us to himself. Why? "That where I am, you may be also." Paul speaks of this in 1 Thessalonians 4:16, "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words." I believe this to be a reference to the rapture of the church that is also described in 1 Corinthians 15 and Revelation 3:10. This is not speaking of the Second Coming of Christ to earth where he will come in full wrath to judge the nations, to rescue the remnant of Israel that will finally believe, to renovate the earth and to establish his kingdom. This is a reference to this catching up, the snatching away of the believer. We know that at the end of the pre-kingdom judgments sometimes called Daniel's 70th week or the tribulation, angels, Jesus says, will gather the elect in Matthew 24. But here, Jesus will come personally. Big difference. At the rapture of the church, he comes for his saints. At his Second Coming when he comes in judgment, we read that in Revelation 19 that he comes with his saints to establish his kingdom. In between the rapture of the church and the Second Coming, the church will receive their rewards. This will be a time when we will celebrate the marriage supper of the Lamb and so forth.

So again, dear Christian, let me remind you of this: when your heart is troubled, you simply must have a soul anchoring faith in the person and work of Christ combined with a soul thrilling anticipation of the glory of heaven. What an enormous consolation for a world that groans in sorrow. Our Lord, our Master, is actively and intimately involved in

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our lives right now and likewise, he is actively and intimately involved in preparing a heavenly place for us. This is utterly astounding. Our Savior has gone away to prepare our place in the Father's house and I can't help but say and I grant you this is conjecture, this may be just my imagination but I have to share it with you: if he created the heavens and the earth in 6 days, what must he be up to over the last 7,000 years?

Then after all of this preparation, he is going to come in person and receive me and you unto himself. By the way, what is your heart troubled over? Do you see the point? Get your mind off of that. Yeah, you live in a fallen world. Life stinks a lot. Life just doesn't work very well. But look at the big picture. Look at what God is doing. Set your mind on the things above. Look beyond the temporal into the eternal, therein lies your hope. But please understand, folks, the greatest trouble we should experience in our heart is our absence from Christ. How I long to see him face-to-face, don't you? Frankly, if being physically separated from him is not that big of a deal to you, you'll not find much comfort in his precious promises.

Well, no doubt by now the heads of the disciples are spinning there as they hear Jesus. Now, we don't know what all Jesus told them. He may not have told them a lot of the things I've just said but I'm sure he told them more than what is recorded because the Gospel narratives just give a summary of the basic things that were said. So Jesus goes on to offer more comforting words in verse 4, "And you know the way where I am going." "Whoa, whoa, wait a minute, this is confusing, Jesus. You just told us that we could not follow you where you are going so what are you saying here?" Well, Jesus ultimately is saying that, "Because you know me, you do know where I'm going. You know the way. You know where I'm going."

"Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.'" Let's look at this closely. "I am the way." I am the way to God. I am God's gracious disclosure of himself. I am the Word made flesh. I am the great I AM himself. In fact, this is the sixth time we read of the "I AM" title that he gives of himself. So think of this: as sinners, we could never come to God so what does God do? He comes to us. Jesus says, "I came that they might have life and might have it abundantly."

So he is the way. He also says, "I am the truth." I am the full and final revelation of God. Apart from me you would remain in spiritual darkness. Let me remind you of what that darkness is really like for an unbeliever, for those of us before by God's grace we were born again. Paul describes this in Ephesians 4, beginning in verse 17. He describes the unregenerate as those who, "walk in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart." It is so sad and frankly unbearable to listen to an

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unbeliever comment on spiritual things, to comment on Scripture, to try to explain some moral truth. They are not only ignorant, they are arrogant and many times just irrational, even idiotic. 2+2 is 5 and they are proud of it. You see, folks, only in Jesus will they ever be able to see the truth that saves. Spiritual truth is not something that is determined by our culture. Spiritual truth is not created by man, by his machinations, by his musing. It is not a system of philosophy. Truth can only be found in the revealed word of God and in the person of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the revelation of God himself.

So he is not only the way and the truth, he says, "I am the life." He has said earlier in chapter 5:26, "I am the one who is life. I have life in myself." He said in chapter 11, "I am the resurrection and the life." 1 John 5:20, "He is the true God and eternal life." Think about this: God is utterly unapproachable apart from Christ. In Acts 4:12, Peter affirmed this when he said, "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." "Do you mean to tell me that all the billions of people in the world who have lived and those who live today who do not believe in Jesus but express their faith through some other religious system or who are good people and have determined other ways to be saved, are you telling me that all of those people will die in their sins and go to hell? Surely you're not saying that." That is precisely what I'm saying. And frankly, it's not me the one saying it, it's what Jesus has said. In John 3:36 we read the words of the Son of God and he says this, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Friends, let me be abundantly clear: there is only one true religion in the world and that is the religion of biblical Christianity that preaches the Gospel. The Gospel, that means that salvation is only by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. All other systems of religion are false. Jesus tells us in Matthew 7 that there is a narrow gate that few will even find but most will prefer a wide gate. Both gates say, "This way to heaven," but only the narrow gate will lead to eternal life. The wide gate with all of the other religious systems will lead to destruction. There are not many paths to heaven, there is only one. There is only one truth and that is the truth of the inerrant, inspired word of God. Everything else is a satanic lie. And there is one God and one Mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 1 Timothy 2:5. This is the only way to salvation, through Jesus, through faith in him. It's for this reason that early Christianity became known as "the way."

Jesus then addresses all the disciples, "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him." Here's another claim to deity, an equality with the Father. Now, mind you, the disciples would not fully understand Jesus' deity and his relationship to the Father until after Christ's death, after his resurrection, after his ascension and after the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

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Wanting further explanation, "Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.'" In other words, "Let us see the Father. Right now. We want to see him and then it will all be settled."

Verse 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"? 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.'" This must have been very difficult for Jesus. After all he had done, after all the time he had spent with them, all the things that he had taught them, they still didn't get it. They just could not comprehend the fact that Jesus was the image of the invisible God, Colossians 1:15. That in him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form, Colossians 2:9. That to see Jesus was to see the Father because Jesus was united to him. That he was, as the writer of Hebrews tells us in chapter 1, verse 3, "the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his nature."

Verse 11, "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves." Once again, Jesus appeals to faith, a sincere, unwavering confidence in all that he was, all that he said, all that he did. In John 5:36 Jesus declared, "the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me." So again, what the men needed, what we all need, is that soul anchoring faith in the person and work of Christ. I might add that they also needed the indwelling Spirit of God that came upon them at Pentecost. For this reason since we have that, we can praise God because we know, according to 1 John 5:20, that "the Son of God has come and has given us understanding in order that we might know him who is true and we are in him who is true in his Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life."

Well, then Jesus went on to add, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father." Now, the greater works that Jesus is describing here does not refer to greater miraculous signs and wonders than what he performed as many people would have us believe. None of the apostles came close to doing much less exceeding, the miraculous works of Jesus and, certainly, no one since has ever performed these works. What Jesus is referring to here is not greater works in kind but greater works in extent. You see, he knew that the Holy Spirit was going to come upon them and empower them to unleash the Gospel throughout the entire world which they did. Multiple thousands after Pentecost began to come to Christ. And to be able to proclaim the Gospel, dear friends, and to watch the Spirit of God cause a person to be born again, to suddenly witness a new creature in Christ, to watch them being snatched away from the clutches of Satan and be

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transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his beloved Son is the miracle of all miracles. Such power should bring comfort to each of us and animate us to evangelistic service.

Then, knowing how they depended upon Jesus for everything, he concludes this section by expanding on this indirect pledge of the coming of the Holy Spirit. He says this in verse 13, "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it." In other words, "Guys, although I'm going away, I'm not going to be with you physically, I'm just a prayer away. I'm just a prayer away. I will take care of you so that the Father will be glorified and so that I will be glorified by the Father through you. If you ask anything in my name I will do it." Now, he's not giving us some mystical, magical formula to tack on the end of a prayer so that it can be guaranteed to be answered. He's rather saying that our petitions need to be in keeping with who Christ is, how he would think, how he would act. To pray in Jesus' name is to pray in a way that is consistent with the will of God, the will of the Father which is ultimately to magnify the Son. So practically speaking, when we pray, we need to constantly ask ourselves, "Am I asking this, is my ultimate motivation in this petition to glorify Christ or to somehow bring glory to myself?"

Do not let your hearts be troubled, dear friends, believe in God. Believe also in Christ. Cultivate this soul anchoring faith in the person and the work of Christ. Cultivate a soul thrilling anticipation of the glory of heaven and to do this practically, you simply must commit yourself to the systematic, in-depth study and application of the word of God. Read great works that exalt Christ and, by the way, you're not going to find many of them in your Christian bookstore. Listen to great expositors who will proclaim the preeminence of Christ. And for heaven sakes, spend time around other believers who live in the presence of the glory of Christ and just exude his grace. Those are the type of people that will impact you greatly and then you will have as John Owen put it, a sense of God's presence. In fact, he says, "A sense of God's presence in love is sufficient to rebuke all anxiety and fears and not only so but to give in the midst of them solid consolation and joy." God doesn't take us out of the trials and tribulations, instead he comes and meets us in them.

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Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for these eternal truths. May they bear much fruit in our hearts to the praise of your glory. And for those who know nothing of the Savior, who only have some mental intellectual understanding but they have never been broken over their sin, they have never run to the foot of the cross and pleaded for undeserved mercy, O Spirit of God, bring that conviction today. May today they be so overwhelmed by their guilt and the horror of hell that awaits them that they will run to Jesus in repentant faith and be saved that you might be glorified and that they might be blessed. We ask all of this in the precious name of Jesus, our Savior, and for his sake. Amen.

We pray you have been edified by this presentation. You have been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at otcr.org.