

Father and Son

John 14:7-14

I was asked a question this week. I'll paraphrase it a little. It is a question I have been asked in various forms many times. "How do you know it's true?" Or, how do you know that this God we talk about is true? How do you know which god is the true God?

That's basically the question that Philip was asking Jesus in our text this morning. God was understood to be defined by the Father, so Philip says to Jesus,
v.8

Jesus, of course, had just told his disciples that he was the way to go to the Father.

v.6 "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

Let's put the whole context back together. Jesus begins the chapter with words of encouragement, after telling his disciples that he would be leaving them soon and that they couldn't come with him.

v.1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me."

Notice how similar the encouragement is in,

v.27 "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

And he is trying to help his disciples realize that he himself is the revelation of the truth of God. So how do you know its true? How do you know that God is true? The most direct and simple

answer is this, because Jesus makes him known. How do you know God is true? Because Jesus came to earth to live as a man.

John 1:14 "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

So,

I. DO YOU KNOW GOD?

I wanted to frame my main points as questions this morning, so that the effect of that question might become very personal and practical. And I ask all of you that question this morning, not to confuse you or to challenge you, but to stimulate you to think correctly about the answer. Do you know God?

The related question, "How do you know this particular God I proclaim to you is true?" And the answer is because Jesus became flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus became a man. We have that evidence, that disclosure and revelation of God. That's how we know that God is true. Because of Jesus.

John writes in the same context in,

1 John 1:1 "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— 2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— 3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full."

So do you know God? Go back to,

v.1 "...you believe in God, believe also in Me."

Notice how directly Jesus ties together the father and the son. Philip's question is in verse 8, and it was prompted by what you read in verse 7.

v.7-8

Philip is quite strongly rebuked for his question, at least corrected rather directly.

v.9

This is the rebuke to Philip's question.

A. Jesus reveals God.

Again, emphasis is God the Father. Jesus reveals God the Father. So the question was unnecessary, "Show us the Father." The Father has already shown himself. If you have seen Jesus you have seen the Father.

There is an important theological point to be made here, namely what we call the trinity, that God exists as three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We're dealing with two of them here, and we've focused on this subject before. Remember the great statement Jesus made in,

John 10:30 "I and My Father are one."

Preceded by these words,

John 10:38 "If I do [the works of my father], though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him."

Here in our text,

v.10 "I am in the Father, and the Father in Me."

But think just a little, and ask yourself, "What does that mean? To explain it, consider,

Heb. 1:1 "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Jesus is "the brightness of [God's] glory and the express image of His person." And we read in,

Col.1:19 "For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell."

And going back to,

John 1:14 "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth... [He goes on to say that]18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."

Jesus has revealed the Father. Jesus has explained him.

So do you know God? Jesus reveals him. And, as our text continues,

B. Jesus gives us the words of God.

v.10b "The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works."

The words. Words have meaning. Words have importance. And Jesus' words, by definition, were words of truth. God's

words. When Jesus spoke, God spoke. When God spoke, Jesus spoke.

v.24

Jesus' words were God's words! That's the point. And there is a simple application to that, which is to realize that this word, this written word, these words of Jesus and words of the apostles which testify to Jesus, these are the words of God. The Bible is the word of God.

So, do you want to hear God? Do you want to know what God has to say? Do you want God to speak to you? Then listen. Listen to his word. His written word.

The perfect word has come. The perfect word has come in the flesh. The word of God is in the person of Jesus Christ. With the incarnation of Jesus, God has spoken. And there's more.

C. Jesus shows us the power of God.

Again, v.10b "The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works."

Note the shift from words to works. With Jesus, they are identical. What Jesus says, he does. No contrast between his words and his works, and certainly no contradiction. And what Jesus does, God does!

The emphasis there is the supernatural power of God, the power that belongs to God alone! And that power belongs to Jesus.

Ultimately, that power is the power of the resurrection. That's why Jesus declares,

John 11:25 "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

How do you know God is true? Well, because Jesus rose from the dead!

So do you know God? If you do, it is because you know Jesus. And that raises a second question,

II. DO YOU BELIEVE JESUS?

v.11

Now, what does that mean? Jesus emphasizes two answers to that question, I believe. First,

A. You must believe in the eternal deity of Jesus.

v.11 "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me."

The point here is the trinity, specifically the first and second persons of the trinity, the Father and the Son. Next time we will be studying the third person, the Holy Spirit. In this context, notice that the trinity is a doctrine that Jesus emphasizes to encourage and settle down his disciples at precisely the time when they were troubled the most. It was the time just before his crucifixion and death, the last few days he spent with his disciples before he would leave them.

And that, of course, was the great trouble they feared. As we studied last week, Jesus said to them,

v.1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me."

In that context of giving comfort is some of the clearest theology regarding the doctrine of the trinity that you will find anywhere in the Bible. I hope the point is plain. And I hope my sermon is equally plain. I want to teach this doctrine of the trinity in the same context as Jesus teaches it. Good theology is very practical. The doctrine of the trinity is not some mysterious, esoteric doctrine which ought to be relegated to the merely intellectual oriented pursuits of overly educated philosophers. Understanding the nature of the relationship between the three persons of the trinity is very, very practical. Indeed, it is the source of peace. It is the ground upon which we can learn to handle all the troubles of this world without being troubled ourselves.

So do you believe Jesus? That he is eternally God, the second person of the Trinity.

v.11 “Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me.”

Only with such faith will you have life. Only with such faith will you gain the forgiveness of your sins. Only with such faith can you, and will you, know the one true and living God. Only by believing in Jesus.

John tells us that this whole book is written, John 20:31 b”...that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”

One other thing to believe about Jesus. Not only his identity as the second person of the Trinity, but his power.

B. You must believe in the supernatural power of Jesus.
He wasn't just a good teacher. He wasn't just an inspirational

leader. He wasn't just a good example to follow, or a martyr. His life shows forth the power of God. So if you can't grasp the idea of the Trinity, then at least grasp this, that Jesus shows forth in himself the power of God.

v.11

Never was that power more on display than in his resurrection. So how do we know this is true? How do we know God is real? How do we know Jesus is God? How do you know that your Christian faith is true? The resurrection, that's how. Jesus was raised from the dead on the third day.

We are to believe everything this is revealed about Jesus. As we say in the Apostles' Creed, we “believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.”

Believe this, and you will have eternal life. You will have something else, too, as Jesus describes. Power.

III. THE POWER OF GOD WILL BE AT WORK IN YOUR LIFE.

Jesus says something amazing at this point.

v.12

Amazing, even to the point of being hard to understand. What does he mean by greater works? What are those greater works? How is that even possible? But that is what verse 12 says, isn't it?

A. We will do greater works than Jesus.

The phrase, “the works that I do he will do also”, refers, I believe, to the miraculous works performed by the apostles, works that testified and accredited the ministry of Jesus, attesting to him. Physical miracles were clearly part of the apostolic experience. But actually, the apostles would do things even greater. And those greater works would continue even to this day.

But what could be greater than raising a man from the dead? What could be greater than walking on water, calming a storm, healing a paralytic? How would believers in Jesus Christ be able to do anything greater than that? But Jesus said, “Greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.” How can that be?

Think about why Jesus said that, “Greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.” What would Jesus do when he went to his father? We’ll see that in a several weeks.

John 16:7 “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. 8 “And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

In other words, the greater works of those who believe in Jesus are works which will be accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit. And so just before ascending into heaven, Jesus said to his disciples,

Act 1:8 “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

And he said to them,

Mat. 28:18 “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and

on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Those are the greater works, the ongoing works of evangelism! The ongoing work of making disciples of all nations, the work of teaching people to believe and obey Jesus Christ. It is the spiritual work of building the church, work done because after Jesus went away, he poured out his spirit upon his church. And that power of the Holy Spirit to bring men to salvation is still with his church!

So do greater works than Jesus, greater in terms of ongoing. Greater in terms of continuing. And greater in terms of extent, works that would extend to the very ends of the earth, to the end of the age.

Now, do you see how that would settle the disciples’ discouragement with Jesus leaving them! The Holy Spirit would be with them. Do you see how that should settle our discouragement? How that should give encouragement to us? We have the Holy Spirit, and that is, or course, the focus of the next sermon.

But one more thing for today. One more thing about believing Jesus, one more thing about the power of God at work in your life. On more very practical and important thing.

v.13-14

In other words,

B. We will experience the power of Jesus.

What a glorious promise. What great comfort to those who are troubled! Whatever help, strength, support, or guiding they need, if they ask God for it in Jesus' name, Christ will give it.

Now, it can almost go without saying that by praying in Jesus' name, you are praying for that which Jesus determines and decides is good and best. In other words, this isn't a simplistic name-it-and-claim-it promise that you can apply to all sorts of worldly and materialistic benefits. Don't listen to foolish imposters who preach that by your own powers of conviction, you can persuade God to give you a thousand dollars. Don't fall for the lie that reduces God to a celestial slot machine, where you can pull the mechanical lever and hold out your hands for the payoff.

And don't think that every desire you have will be necessarily satisfied. These requests must come from faith, to be spoken in Jesus' name. In that faith, there is a directly implied reference to submission. To pray in Jesus' name is to pray as Jesus himself prayed, "Not my will, but your will be done."

This can be troubling, when specific requests are not granted. Yet the context here is one of spiritual trouble and weakness, and that the promise is that God's grace will be sufficient for your need. Whatever that need might be, whatever you might find need to ask for. Jesus will do it. So "that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

God the Father will withhold nothing good from his beloved children! He will withhold nothing that you actually need. He will withhold nothing that would be most beneficial for your soul and for your spiritual well-being.

He might well say "no" to selfish requests, and he might test your faith to make it pure and free from all impurities, but the

glorious promise abides,

v.14 "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it."

There is nothing too difficult for God, nothing too hard.

So, dear people, I say to you, believe in Jesus. Believe this great promise of Jesus, that "whatever you ask in my name, that I will do." Believe that promise on behalf of the church. And pray. Pray earnestly, diligently, fervently, desperately. As little children to a loving father.

Mat. 7:7 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"

Ask for the power of God to be at work in your life, and in our life as a church. And with such faith,

v.1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

With such faith, gain the confidence of,

v.12 "Most assuredly, 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 My Father. 13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do it."

That's God's power, power given to those who believe in the Father and the Son.