

Faith For Your Fears



A Devotional Study of John Chapter 14

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INTRODUCTION

The Bible speaks of two kinds of fear. The first is called the *Fear of the Lord* and refers to that sense of accountability that we should have toward God. The Creator of the universe is watching and weighing all of our actions, thoughts, and attitudes (Proverbs 1:7; 2:5; 3:7; 8:13; 9:10). This is the kind of fear that every man, woman, and child should have and this is especially so for the Christian. The Bible warns with good reason:

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb 11:31).

However, there is a second kind of fear that should be avoided. The Apostle Paul warned Timothy about this fear when he said:

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love and of a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7).

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt declared as he came into office at the height of the Great Depression of the 1930's "*We have nothing to fear but fear itself*". But of greater significance, the Lord Jesus Christ exhorted His disciples the night before He was to be crucified not to have this kind of fear. They were about to go through the horrible specter of His crucifixion and they desperately needed to hear words of comfort from His lips. He gave them what they needed:

Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me (John 14:1).

Jesus did more than just give out pious platitudes with no meaning. He meant *more* than "don't worry, be happy". A man or a woman may try to conjure up feelings that will conquer his or her fears, but it will be to no avail. Apart from the Lord Jesus there is no genuine victory over fear.

On this night before He is taken to be crucified, Jesus, humanly speaking, faced the greatest fears a person could ever face. He was to suffer the equivalent of eternal hell as He hung on the Cross for the sins of the world. His crucifixion was no ordinary crucifixion but was filled with eternal realities that can hardly be comprehended except with the Spirit's help through the Word of God, the Bible.

Dear readers, what kind of fears plague your life? I have been in the ministry for thirty-one years. In times of counseling I have found the following fears to be very prominent:

- Fear of Satan
- Fear of Divorce
- Fear of Death
- Fear of Not Being Loved
- Fear of Marriage
- Fear of Rejection
- Fear of Being An Old Maid
- Fear of Never Having Children
- Fear of Failure
- Fear of Embarrassment
- Fear of Financial Problems
- Fear of Going Crazy
- Fear of Loved Ones Dying
- Fear of the Future
- Fear of Confrontation
- Fear of Crime
- Fear of the Unpardonable Sin
- Fear of Specific People
- Fear of Animals or Insects
- Fear of Inanimate Objects

Examine the previous list carefully and see if you find yourself with any of those fears. Now take the following matching quiz and see if you can identify other kinds of fears. Remember that the word “phobia” means fear:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| _____ 1. acrophobia | a. fear of blood |
| _____ 2. agoraphobia | b. fear of enclosed places |
| _____ 3. claustrophobia | c. fear of high places |
| _____ 4. gephydophobia | d. fear of being alone |
| _____ 5. hematophobia | e. fear of disease |
| _____ 6. monophobia | f. fear of being poisoned |
| _____ 7. pathophobia | g. fear of marketplaces |
| _____ 8. toxophobia | h. fear of crossing bridges |
| _____ 9. taxophobia | i. fear of strangers |
| _____ 10. xenophobia | j. fear of animals |
| _____ 11. zoophobia | k. fear of the IRS |

If we allow our fears to dominate us we will be led into sin. This is why the Bible declares:

The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the Lord (Proverbs 19:3).

God desires that we trust in Him and not be controlled by every fiery dart of fear that Satan throws at us:

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee (Isaiah 43:2).

In John Chapter 14, Christ begins what is called the Upper Room Discourse and it is filled with truths to bolster the disciples' faith and calm their fears. But He does more than just sooth their fears. ***He gives reasons why they should have faith in the midst of this greatest of trials.*** The encouragements He gave them did not die in the early part of the First Century, but linger on from the pages of the Gospel of John for Twenty-First Century believers.

If you have not believed on Jesus Christ for salvation you are not a Christian. You have every reason to fear what is happening in our world and what awaits you in the world to come. But those of you who have put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ's death and resurrection on your behalf have the weapons of God at your disposal to overcome all your fears.

This devotional study has been written to expound these precious truths from John Chapter 14 in hopes that many Christians will overcome their fears and be powerful testimonies to a world engulfed in being afraid. Also, the hope is that unbelievers who read these pages might consider the claims of Jesus Christ upon their lives and find the One who brings perfect deliverance from sin, death, and eternal judgment – the ultimate of all fears.

Soli, Deo, glori

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Chapter 1

The Hope of Heaven

“...in my father’s house are many mansions” (John 14:2)

In the second verse of John 14, we find the first of the reasons why our hearts should not be troubled. Christ Himself exhorts us concerning the hope of heaven. He says the following:

*“In my **father’s house** are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to **prepare a place** for you.”*

The first thing Jesus communicates to deal with the disciples’ fears is the truth about heaven. He is going to prepare a real **place**. Heaven is not a figment of the imagination nor is it a fairy tale. Heaven is no myth or a supposed state of mind. It is not a crutch for weak people to stand on, but a reality that all men may depend upon. For the Christian it is the ultimate destination culminating his or her journey through life. I go to **prepare a place for you** Jesus said. That means that there is a place being prepared or already finished for you and for me.

Now, stop and think just a minute. Imagine moving to a new town where you do not know anybody there, you do not know much about the situation, and you have not scouted out the place you are going. You just have an invitation to come. You arrive at the scene and find a new house waiting for you of 20,000 square feet. The word **mansions** refer to **dwelling places** within the father’s house. What is being prepared for you in heaven is far greater than anything you could possibly imagine.

J. C. Ryle, the great English minister describes it this way:

“That heaven is a ‘prepared place for a prepared people’ is a very cheering and animating thought. When we arrive there, we shall not be in a strange land. We shall find we were known and thought of before we appeared.” (Expository Thoughts on John, Vol. 3, p.58).

Have you ever thought about this place and your part in it? Have you ever dreamed about this place or meditated upon its reality? Have you ever imagined going to this place called heaven? Have you thought about what

your part in the father's house will be like? It will be a place peculiarly designed just for you.

The second truth we see about this hope of heaven is that ***heaven's existence depends on the truthfulness of Jesus:***

If it were not so, I would have told you (John 14:2).

This was a necessary statement for Jesus to make to His disciples at this particular moment because He has told them He is about to leave. They are troubled by His declarations and He exhorts them about this hope of heaven so they will not be filled with fear. He is not just leading them along. He cares for them as He does for each of us who know Him. The Bible says that He will be where this place called heaven will be:

If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14:3).

We are being prepared for that wonderful place and that place called heaven is being prepared for us (See 1 Peter 1:3-5). Heaven is where Jesus is. The Apostle Paul declared:

“that to depart and to be with Christ is far better” (Phil 1:23).

The Bible says that, when the Lord comes again, we will all go up to be with Him (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). The Word of God reminds us that God has promised eternal life to the believer, and God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). Jesus says to all of us today, as He speaks to His disciples *“If it were not so, I would told you.”* If heaven was not a real place then Jesus would have told us and would have said something to explain it.

This statement, though it is particularly about this place, can give us a glimmer of the way God operates. God has revealed to us everything we need to know. A lot of cults are started by people who are searching for something beyond what the Bible says. When people get discontent with what the Bible actually says they have to concoct something else. In that act of trying to find something better or beyond, they end up transgressing what the Word says.

We can trust what the Lord has given. He has revealed everything that we need to know concerning the hope of heaven. In this matter, heaven's very existence must be based on the truthfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The third truth we see is that heaven is called the *Father's house*. It is a house, or a dwelling, that belongs to His heavenly Father. It is the abode of God. Whatever it is, it is intended to be just that. Moses cried out:

Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel (Deuteronomy 26:15).

The Psalmist cried out:

From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth (Psalm 33:14).

His abode, His place of habitation, is the Father's house – the thing we call heaven. It refers to the place where God dwells.

One of the attributes of God is omnipresence. That is, He is everywhere present at the same time. That means there is no place where God is not present. You cannot hide from God and to try to run from Him would be a futile effort. He is everywhere. However, His presence is manifested in a special way in Heaven.

When there is a move of the Holy Spirit in revival in the church, there is a sense of the manifest presence of God, and we say God is at that particular church in a special way. In Israel, it was in the Holy of Holies where the fire fell and we see God leading with a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day. When we look in Revelation 21 and see the actual shape of the New Jerusalem, many Bible believing scholars say it is the exact shape as the Holy of Holies in the Temple. Heaven will be a special place, the Father's house, where God will dwell with us.

There is an old quartet song "Jesus Will Outshine Them All". This speaks of the Bible truth that Jesus will be the centerpiece of Heaven. There will undoubtedly be many things in heaven that we will enjoy such as the fellowship of the saints, worship and service of the Lord, and perhaps the exploration of God's created universe. But the greatest thing about Heaven

will be the presence of God and the person of the Lord Jesus Christ being with us.

The last truth we see about this hope of heaven is that there are *many mansions* within the Father's house. This communicates that heaven will be filled with many, many people. Many will be saved and many others, such as infants who have died before the age of accountability, will also be present. One major comfort in our modern world is that every aborted baby will be in heaven for all eternity.

It is true that the broad way leads to destruction and the narrow way leads to life, but that does not mean that there will not be multitudes saved for all eternity. The Bible speaks of multitudes out of all the nations who come to know the Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 7: 9, 10). Will you be part of this multitude?

I have often imagined wrongly about these mansions. The word means "dwelling places" and sometimes I have thought of a gigantic office complex with cubicles for everyone. Exactly how it will be the Bible does not tell us, but our place in heaven will be far larger than anything we could comprehend. Henry Morris, the founder of the Institute for Creation Research, does some calculating that about 100 billion people have lived on earth counting before the Genesis Flood. He estimates that if 20 billion people end up in heaven that each would have about one thirtieth of a cubic mile:

This would correspond to a cubical "block" with about seventy-five acres on each face. Obviously, there is adequate room in the holy city for all who will be there. Another way of measuring the size would be that the average length (or width, or height) of each person's block would be a little over a third of a mile in each direction (The Revelation Record, p. 451.)

I believe when eternity comes, we will know that the city the saints have been looking for (Hebrews 11:9, 10, 16; 13:14) will be big enough for every one who has ever lived. It is more glorious than anything we could possibly imagine. We are literally going to be overwhelmed. Our eternal home ought to encourage us and give us hope. Regardless of the fears that surround us, all will be well when we arrive at our final destination.

Chapter 2

The Certainty of His Second Coming

“...I will come again” (John 14:3)

The world scene fills the minds of the multitudes with fear. By television, radio, the internet, the newspapers, and even from the church come doomsday predictions and dire warnings. In this age of terrorism, we live on the cusp of a major catastrophe in the future far worse than what took place at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

To be afraid is practically our national pastime. But the Bible declares that there is a hope that transcends all political chaos, economic catastrophe, marriage difficulty, or family distress. Jesus warned of a time when *“men’s hearts [would be] failing them, for fear” (Luke 21:26)*. But God will intervene in the affairs of this planet and all fear will ultimately be removed.

In John 14:3 the Lord Jesus is not referring to His coming to the believer at death. Nor is He referring to the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. No symbolic or spiritualized concept should be read into these words of Jesus. He clearly proclaims His physical, bodily return for His people.

In World War II General Douglas MacArthur promised “I will return” when he was forced to leave the Philippines because of the advancing Japanese armies. Three years later he fulfilled that promise with the famous picture of him wading ashore with the declaration “I have returned”. Certainly the Lord Jesus Christ will fulfill His words and return a second time to take His people home to be with Him. One Bible teacher I read said that one out of every twenty-five verses in the New Testament refers to the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here, in John 14:3, and elsewhere (Matthew 16:27; 25:31; John 21:22) we have the testimony of Jesus Himself.

There is also the testimony of the angels found in Acts 1:10-11 as the disciples watched Jesus ascend into the heavens. They declared:

Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

It is this same Jesus – Jesus of Nazareth, that is going to come again. The same Jesus that died on the Cross and rose from the dead will come again at a future date. The apostles further testified of this truth:

For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence we also look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself (Philippians 3:20-21).

The epistles of the New Testament are filled with promises of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (See Hebrews 9:28; James 5:7; Jude 14-15; 1 John 2:28; Revelation 1:7). As believers partake of the Lord’s Supper or Communion in a church service there is the acknowledgment that they are, by eating the bread and drinking the cup, showing “*the Lord’s death till he come*” (1 Corinthians 11:26). And the last chapter of the Bible ends with the prayer “*even so, come, Lord Jesus*” (Revelation 22:20). This is the heart cry of God’s people down through the ages and one day these prayers will be fulfilled by the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ for His own.

What we see happening around us has been predicted by the Bible thousands of years ago. There are four major events that the Word of God prophesied that should cause us to consider carefully the promise of Christ’s Second Coming as close to fulfillment. Study the following table closely.

SIGNS OF THE COMING OF THE LORD

<i>Event Predicted</i>	<i>Scripture Verses</i>
Age of Apostasy	2 Thessalonians 2:1-3
Surge in Spiritism (or Demonism)	1 Timothy 4:1
Time of Trouble	2 Timothy 3:1-13
Instituting of Israel	Ezekiel Chapter 37

While knowing intricate prophetic truths can be inspiring and very interesting, the motivation we receive to walk in faith because of these prophecies is far greater. The Apostle John exhorts us:

Behold, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we

shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is (1 John 3:2).

We are indeed living in an age warned of in times past. But, for the believer, these troubled times should not be cause for alarm or fear. Our faith should be encouraged because we know the blessed hope of the soon return of Jesus for us is on the horizon.

Cannot the Lord who will bring all this to pass also help you through your crisis? Cannot the One who created the sun, moon, and stars and whose providence overrides all things help you through your time of despair? Will He not respond to all who will call upon Him?

And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me (Psalm 50:15).

J. Sidlow Baxter, the great British pastor, often preached this truth:

“The God who bled on Calvary loves you too much to ever mock you.”

The certainty of His return should motivate every believer to stay close to Him. Walking by faith in the light of His coming will help us through any difficult trial that we might face.

Chapter 3

Assurance of Salvation

“...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” (John 14:6)

Christianity has often been criticized for teaching and preaching an exclusive message. That is understandable because, first of all, we must be loyal to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one who preached it (see verse above), so if He is going to be exclusive, so must we. Second, the message is that anybody can get into heaven. If they will repent of their sin and believe on Christ they will become part of that glorious clique of saints.

Being part of this exclusive group of believers should bring comfort to the believer who faces different kinds of fears. Salvation, or going to heaven, or knowing God all are wrapped up in a relationship with Jesus Christ. That relationship is by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8, 9) and the assurance that it brings should go a long way toward dealing with the terrors that make us afraid.

Note the phrase “I am”. That phrase in the Greek New Testament is *eggo I me*. It is a declaration found throughout the Gospel of John in many different contexts:

- *I am* the bread of life (John 6:35).
- *I am* the bread which came down from heaven (John 6:41).
- *I am* that bread of life (John 6:48).
- *I am* the living bread which came down from heaven (John 6:51).
- *...I am* the light of the world (John 8:12).
- *...I am* the light of the world (John 9:5).
- *...I am* the door of the sheep (John 10:7).
- *I am* the door (John 10:9).
- *I am* the good shepherd (John 10:14).
- *...I am* the resurrection and the life (John 11:25).
- *I am* the true vine (John 15:1).
- *I am* the vine (John 15:5).

This takes us back to what we find in the book of Exodus when Moses spoke to God at the burning bush. Moses wanted to know what name he should give to the Egyptians concerning God. God told Moses to tell them that “*I*

am that I am” or “*I am*” has sent him (Exodus 3:14). That Hebrew name actually means *the self-existent one*, the one who is without any dependence upon any other individual or any other being. As we look into the New Testament, it is clear that this Jesus of Nazareth is the “I AM” who has come in human flesh (John 1:1, 14; 1 Timothy 3:16).

The Gospel of John teaches that it is through this particular person that we are able to have the experience of salvation. It is an ***exclusive experience*** that comes only by knowing Christ. There is no other way, relationship, or person through which we can go and find our way to God. This is why John was able to write in his epistle:

He that hath the Son, hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life (1 John 5:12).

Christ not only gives us an exclusive experience, but He also gives us an ***exclusive explanation***. He says in John 14:6 “*I am the way, the truth, and the life*”. He uses these three descriptions to describe what it means to come to God. He first speaks of Himself as “*the way*”. The word “way” describes Christians in the Book of Acts as unbelievers look at them. They are “of the way” meaning they are of “the Christian way”, or more specifically, they are of “the Christ way”. They are following the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is saying, there is only one way to God, and those who are of the way are those who have been reconciled to God. The Way is a way of reconciliation. If we are going to find our way to God, we must find our way to God with His arms opened wide to receive us. This only happens when we have been reconciled.

Get a picture of two people who have been mad at each other standing back to back. The idea of them turning around and making things right with each other is what we call a bringing together or a reconciliation. When we think of those two people who are back to back, we must undo that thinking when we think of God and any individual. For God does not have His back turned toward us. It is we who have turned our back on God. God does not need to be reconciled. It is sinful man who needs reconciliation, and it was God demonstrating by Jesus Christ the way of reconciliation.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and

hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself (2 Cor 5:17-19a).

The second part of John 14:6 says “I am the truth”. If we want to know what God is like or what the truth is like, we look at the person of Jesus. It is interesting how the Bible is called the “written Word”. Jesus can be called the “living Word”. What does this imply? I believe that implies illumination. In other words, man by himself, apart from the truth of the written Word, cannot know the living Word. He cannot be reconciled to God apart from hearing the word of the Gospel and by faith, responding to that word.

The third part of John 14:6 says “I am the life”. This is vital because the last enemy that will be destroyed is death (1 Corinthians 15:26). We may have poverty, discrimination, anti-Semitism, and political turmoil. But there is no greater problem for mankind than death. We have all kinds of diseases, problems, wars, terrorism, tyranny, etc. But have you noticed that Congress has never passed a law to outlaw death? Why? They cannot. They can pass a million laws and allocate billions of dollars to fight illness but it would not change one thing. The great need of mankind is life. It is the Lord Jesus Christ who provides this. He went to the Cross, died in our place, was raised from the dead, and now offers life to those who will receive Him (John 1:12, 13).

The last thing we see is an *exclusive entrance*. Jesus says “*No man cometh unto the Father but by me.*” Jesus is the only way to heaven. Psychology will not get you to heaven. Education will not get you to heaven. Religion cannot get you to heaven. The Christian will not die and have to face Buddha, Mohammed, Allah, Confucius, Joseph Smith, or any other religious leader. You only get eternal life by coming to God through Jesus Christ:

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

How does this bring faith instead of fear? When we know that he who has the Son has life, and this is true of us, we have a powerful assurance of our salvation. A man with an assurance of his relationship with the Lord is a man who is in a position to conquer his fears.

Chapter 4

The Privilege of Prayer

“If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.” (John 14:14)

We need to keep uppermost in our minds the context of John Chapter 14. It is the night before Christ is to be crucified. He has told the disciples He will be leaving them. As far as His physical presence, He will not be performing any miracles for them to see. They are heartbroken and terrified at what He is saying. And they have not yet experienced Christ being betrayed, captured, placed on trial, and crucified outside of Jerusalem. But, now He comforts them by encouraging them to enter into the privilege of prayer. This privilege of prayer would be for them to pray to the Father in the name of the Son and the clear promise is *“that I will do it” (v. 13)* and *“I will do it” (v. 14)*.

Have you ever received an answer to your prayer and you knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that God did it? Sometimes we can pray for it to rain, and tomorrow it rains. We know God could have answered it, but that is not conclusive proof that God did that. We know God does it, but if you are talking to an unsaved person, that will not convince them. However, clear answers to prayer that have no explanation except God did it are a powerful witness to the world of the reality of God. It is also a powerful witness to the troubled heart of a believer facing trials, tribulations, distresses, and adversity.

Have you ever prayed a prayer and God did not give you what you prayed for? After praying like that we look at verses like John 14:13,14 and wonder what the problem is. Here we come to the crux of the matter because this privilege of prayer implies several things.

First, it is prayer in His name. Prayer in the name of Jesus means more than tacking His name on at the end of your prayer. Praying “in His name” means that we are acting as an agent for Him, that we are standing in for Him, and whatever it is that we are praying for is something that the Lord Jesus Christ would endorse. We often forfeit the answers to our prayers (and with them the ability to overcome our fears) because we pray from a wrong motive and desire to have things for ourselves outside the purview of God.

The Epistle of James tells us emphatically:

Ye lust [desire], and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts [desires] (James 4:2, 3).

We must be clear about this. When we cry out to God, wanting Him to answer our prayers, basically turning Him into our agent instead of our being His agent, we violate the very premise of this wonderful privilege of prayer. Make no mistake about it. God does delight to answer the prayers of His children. But He is no Santa Claus on a cloud in the sky dishing out goodies for rebellious children. Prayer is not twisting His arm to do our bidding, but our getting in tune with His will to cooperate with Him in His program.

I believe this is a major problem in the church today. We have taken something that can be very simple, but have treated it “glibly” and we just tack on “in Jesus’ name” at the end of our prayers and expect that God is supposed to answer. If the answer does not come, there can be great delusion and intensification of the very fears we have been praying about. Deep down, there could be a lot of Christians who secretly think that there must be something wrong with God – He did not answer my prayer – He did not give me what I wanted – He did not give me what I thought I needed. But we need to ask the question, how in tune is our life with the Lord? I do not think a rebellious Christian can expect to receive anything from the Lord (James 1:8). A double-minded man will be tossed to and fro and he will not get his prayers answered.

Keeping in mind that John Chapters 14-16 form a unit of the Upper Room Discourse, we might note Christ’s continued instruction on prayer. In John 15:7 Jesus says:

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you (John 15:7).

Is this not a great privilege of prayer? Should not this be a powerful comfort to Christians? Yes, it should, but notice that there are conditions here. We must first of all, **abide in Jesus**. This means to stay or remain in fellowship with the Lord, walking daily with Him. The word implies to be at home or to be at rest or to settle down. He further explains it by adding “**and my**

words abide in you.” This is how we actually abide in Jesus. By allowing His words, His truth to abide, to remain, to settle down, and to live in us we find ourselves abiding in Christ. When this is happening in our life, then we are in a position to know what God wants us to pray for, to know what His will is, and know the direction He wants our prayers to take. In fact, the more we pray according to the Word, the more we will understand His ways, the more we will be abiding, and the more His promise can be claimed. He says *“You shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.”* This is all based on us abiding in Him and His words abiding in us.

Let nothing we are considering here lead us to a false conclusion. It is a great privilege to be able to cry out to God and get a prayer answered. But a Christian does not have to be perfect to get a prayer answered. We can have a lot of things in our life that we are struggling with, but if we are holding nothing back from the Lord and are crying out to Him, I believe He can have mercy upon us and answer our prayer. At the same time, we cannot hold on to sin and keep it in the forefront of our life and then expect God will bless us with answers to prayer.

The privilege of prayer must be coupled with God’s purpose and plan if it is to bring the proper answers and the greatest comfort to the believer. Two other statements on prayer are mentioned by Christ in the rest of His discourse. In John 15:16 the Savior declares:

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

God has ordained His children to bring forth fruit. Whether this fruit involves souls being saved through our influence or character such as the fruit of the Spirit, it is God’s desire for us to be faithful. When we are faithful, we are in a position to truly pray *“that [in order that] whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”*

God’s goal through the life of His child is that we be filled with joy. A man who stands in the midst of trouble and is able to lay hold of God and receive answers to His prayers is not at the mercy of circumstance. He will not be a defeated believer who is overwhelmed by his fears. He stands with a powerful testimony of what God can do in the midst of adversity.

One of the goals that God has for us in prayer is found in John 16:23, 24:

*And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto [up to this time] have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, **that your joy may be full.***

While every Christian parent wants to see his or her child follow the Lord, that parent also desires for their child to be happy and full of joy. God has a lot invested through His Son, His Spirit, and His Word. He has also used the circumstances of our experience. Part of the privilege of prayer is the joy that comes when God answers. It is knowing that God is looking in on our lives, caring for us, and playing a major part in fitting things together that brings joy to the heart of the child of God.

When fear increases, so should prayer. And as answers come, so comes great joy. And when darkness surrenders to the light, so fear will diminish in the presence of joyful praise.

Chapter 5

The Presence of the Spirit

“...the Comforter...the Spirit of Truth...” (John 14:16, 17, 26)

The whole reason Jesus taught His disciples the truths found in John Chapter 14 was that He knew He was going away. He would be crucified, resurrected, and then forty days later He would ascend into heaven bodily. But He did not want His followers to languish in grief or fear because of His departure. God’s plan all along had included the coming of the Holy Spirit to begin a new dispensation and to be with the people of God in the church.

God is not mean-spirited but compassionate. He is not up in heaven waiting to clobber you because of every misstep. In fact, a believer has been saved from all his past, present, and future sins. He has promised emphatically in His Word that *“...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5)*. In John 14:16 Christ declares:

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you for ever.

In John 14:17 Jesus calls the Holy Spirit *“the Spirit of Truth”*. And again in John 14:26 He calls Him *“the Comforter”*. The word “Comforter” refers to one who is called alongside with exhortation and encouragement. It is the same word translated “advocate” in 1 John 2:2 with reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. According to Dr. Elmer Towns in his commentary on the Gospel of John (*Believe and Live, p. 265*) this word was used in ancient times to refer to:

- A lawyer who pleaded his client’s case.
- A tutor who instructed his pupils.
- A doctor who comes to the bedside of a sick patient to treat a disease.
- A friend pleading the cause of another.
- One who comes to the aid of another to encourage and comfort.

Every Christian has the Holy Spirit residing in them (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20). The Spirit does not act independently of God the Father or God the Son, but always acts in concert with their will as laid down in the Word of God. But, it is clear that one of the important functions of the Holy Spirit in our lives is to bring aid and comfort to the believer as

he lives in the midst of fears. Note the following truths about this Comforter:

- He is a direct answer prayed by Jesus to the Father (v. 16).
- Every genuine Christian knows him (v. 17).
- He reveals the Father and Christ to the believer (v. 20).
- He teaches us through the Word of God (v. 26).
- He helps us to remember things we need to remember (v. 26).

It is obvious from just a surface glance at these verses that the Spirit of God will help the believer deal with his or her fears. To know that God has invested so much through the Cross, the Empty Tomb and the Coming of the Holy Spirit, should cheer the Christian through every trial that is faced. He gives direct comfort and direction while the believer faces the tests and trials of life.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit encompasses the world and the believer. Later in this same discourse, Jesus declares that the Spirit of God brings **conviction** upon the unbeliever about his need of getting saved. This is the Spirit's ministry to the world (John 16:7-14). Also, when a person receives, in repentance and faith, the Lord Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Savior, the Spirit of God does several things at the moment of salvation:

- Regenerates or gives new life (John 3:1-7; Titus 3:5).
- Seals for ownership and security (Ephesians 1:13, 14; 4:30).
- Baptizes or places into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13).
- Indwells the believer's body (John 14:20; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).

In addition to these ministries to the believer at the moment of salvation, the Spirit of God will fill the believer continually as he yields to His work in his life:

*And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be **filled** with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).*

We are commanded to **walk in the Spirit** (Galatians 5:16). As we do this our lives will become sensitive to the Spirit's leading and teaching. In the midst of this we will find great comfort and help in times of stress and difficulty.

Chapter 6

The Opportunity of Obedience

“If ye love me, keep my commandments.” (John 14:15)

“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” (John 14:21)

In the above verses we find the teaching of Jesus on the subject of obedience or keeping the commandments of the Lord. We will find in these commands great comfort in the midst of adversity as we discover the opportunity the Lord gives us. But first, we must understand what is meant by the verses. The Lord is telling us to keep the commandments. To keep means to guard them, to keep them around you. Nobody is going to obey them in a perfect way, but we are to keep them before our eyes, and we are to hide them in our heart.

The test of our love for the Lord Jesus is whether or not we keep His commandments. In John 14:23, He says *“If a man love me, he will keep my words”*. In John 14:24, He says *“He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings”*. Clearly, obedience reveals a love for God.

Many people have a misconception. They have this notion that love is a warm, fuzzy feeling. That is not love. It is right for us to have a sense of devotional attachment to Jesus and to have our emotions focused on Him. We should feel our Christian faith. Who would want just cold, academic facts and legal transactions? There needs to be emotion in our walk with the Lord; there needs to be devotional attachment to the Lord. However, Jesus leaves us no option here. Many think that by focusing upon the commands of Jesus produces a legalistic spirit we are to avoid. But God in His Word brings obedience and love together.

One of my favorite verses in the entire New Testament is the one found in John 14:21. Here we find a major secret to overcoming fear in the midst of temptations to be afraid. Read carefully the words of Jesus:

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Note the special promise of Jesus to the person that “has the commands” and “keeps them”. The promise has three results for that person:

- He will be loved of God the Father.
- He will be loved by Christ Himself.
- Jesus will “manifest” Himself to that individual.

To know that you are loved brings security. Children need to know that their parents love them even when they go astray. Parents, do your children have fears because they sense you do not love them as you should? Wives need security from the knowledge that their husbands love them unconditionally. Otherwise the fears of a wife could become the ruling factor in a marriage or family. Church member, do you love those around you in the family of God? Your lack of love can produce fearful results.

Jesus promises with certainty that as we obey the Lord we will sense His love toward us. Does this mean that God does not love us when we do not obey? No it does not! But it does mean there is a “special” love that the Lord gives to His obedient children. While a parent in one sense will love all of his or her children the same, there can often be a special kind of love that is set upon one of the obedient children who fulfills the wishes of the parent.

While God loves all of the redeemed there is a special focus upon the one who has and keeps His commands. There will be a sense of closeness in the relationship between that person and God. ***In this lies the secret of overcoming the greatest of fears.*** The Lord promises without hesitation that He will “manifest” Himself to that believer. This word means to “reveal” or to “make visible”. Here Jesus does not mean He will come in person to that individual, but that He will reveal Himself and His truth to that person who has and keeps His commandments.

In my own life, as I have faced trials, it was important that I stayed closed to God. During those times I needed to be faithful to God and maintain my fellowship with Him. This meant I should continue to read the Word, pray, go to church, counsel with others about my fears, witness to the unsaved. Satan wants the believer to be so overwhelmed by his fears he cannot do the will of God in the smallest of matters.

As a pastor through the years, I would often go to the hospital room of a church member to discover they did not have their Bible, nor did they attempt to read their Bible while in the hospital. To be sure, some people are so hurting physically they cannot focus mentally upon the Word of God or enter into fervent prayer during times like these. But many people do not have such handicaps and I witnessed many of them ignoring something they needed while they were going through the trial of being in the hospital.

The promise of Jesus is vital and critical to the believer. He will “manifest” Himself to the obedient child and it is that manifestation of His presence and closeness in our lives that will help us not to be troubled. A man who has a clear conscience before God and man will not be afraid of anyone or anything if he knows the Lord is with him. And we know He is with us when we see Him manifest His presence in our lives and then we can face any fear that haunts us.

Chapter 7

The Peace of Jesus

“...my peace I give unto you” (John 14:27)

The seventh reason why a Christian should not be afraid is the promise of peace. Jesus says *“my peace I give unto you.”* The implication of Christ’s declaration is powerful.

First, there is a *false peace* that comes from the world that does not come from Christ. It can be a peace based on thrills, pleasure, or philosophies. But this peace will always be temporary, transitory, and ultimately unfulfilling. There is delusion that comes from a false peace.

When I was in seminary studying for the ministry in the late 1970’s my wife and I rented an apartment. The landlord was a secular psychologist who we really liked and one day we had the opportunity to share the gospel of Jesus with he and his wife. As we shared of the change Christ had made in our lives and the peace that was now in our hearts, he surprised us with his reaction. He said *“I’m glad that your faith has worked for you and that you have peace. But other things work for other people and they have peace from other sources.”* In other words, if I argued the case for the Christian faith from the experience of peace, there would be other sources of peace that would be competing with what I was saying.

Jesus did not deny that there were no other sources of peace. People often gain a sense of peace from religions such as Islam or Buddhism as they are made to feel part of some faithful inner core of truth. Modern philosophies like socialism, communism, and secular humanism have fit nicely into the world view of those who think they have a proper peace. Even some have received a peace from a particular Christian doctrine or Christian denomination. This makes them think they are part of the “true” church and this gives them, they think, some sort of comfort or peace.

However, Jesus did not promise a worldly peace. He promised “my peace” which speaks of a particular and peculiar kind of peace that only comes from the Living God. It would be a genuine peace that could help His disciples face any fear. In fact, after His resurrection, He exhorted His followers to bring His kind of peace into the world:

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you, as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you (John 20:20).

The Bible speaks of two kinds of peace. There is, first of all, **peace with God**. The Apostle Paul proclaimed:

*Therefore being justified by faith, we have **peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1).*

This is the starting point for dealing with our fears. When a person believes in Jesus Christ for salvation, his war with the one true God is over. The peace treaty is signed and there is no condemnation or enmity involved (Romans 8:1, 7). But the second kind of peace is called the **peace of God**. Philippians 4:6, 7 describes this peace and how to receive it:

*Be careful (anxious) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the **peace of God** which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

This describes, not the legal peace that comes with salvation, but a personal peace that affects the mind and the emotions. I believe this is the peace Jesus spoke of in John Chapter 14 as “my peace”. When trials, tribulations and tragedies come, a genuine Christian can avail himself of the peace that is offered to him by Jesus. Whether it is financial distress, marriage relationships, personal conflicts of misunderstanding, struggles with temptations, verbal or physical abuse, or any other trial, this peace from Jesus can overcome the fears that prevail. The ingredients Paul gives in the text are: prayer, earnest prayer (supplication), gratefulness (thanksgiving) and petition concerning your trial.

God knows what you are going through. He knows the hurt and the pain. He sees what people have done to you and said about you. He knows the struggles you have with temptation and sin. **He knows you better than you know yourself. And He knows the end.** When we have the hope of heaven, the certainty of His Second Coming, the assurance of salvation, the privilege of prayer, the presence of the Spirit and the opportunity of obedience, why can we not avail ourselves of the peace of Jesus?

It is clear from John Chapter 14 that Jesus does not want us to have a troubled heart. In the same verse where He mentions “my peace” He also repeats His opening exhortation:

Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid (John 14:27).

The Lord would not have given us this exhortation if it were not possible for it to be applied in our lives. If you, as a believer, struggle with overwhelming fears, then let this peace captivate your heart and take hold of your mind. Pray it through; meditate upon it. Face your fears squarely and honestly. The Lord understands the beginning from the ending. He will see you through.

This peace spoken from the lips of the Savior is the kind of peace that is necessary as we look down at a loved one in a casket. When the worst of trials and heartaches come, it is the peace of Jesus that will sustain us. He does not promise there will be no hurts and pains. He only promises that He will see us through. In a world filled with terror there is no better companion than the peace of Jesus.

CONCLUSION

As we have studied these truths from John Chapter 14 one thing should have become obvious. The Lord does not intend His followers to be filled with fear. While He understands our faults and limitations and is a sympathetic High Priest (see Hebrews 4:15), He expects us to exercise faith in Him (see John 14:1) and rely upon the promises He has given (John Chapter 14). Fear can rob the believer of great blessing, but his or her focus must ever be on the greatness of our God who delivers us from all fear:

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us (Rom 8:18).

Fear can also keep an unsaved man or woman from coming to God. The last book in the Bible warns:

*But the **fearful**, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death (Revelation 21:8).*

Notice that the first kind of person mentioned is the person who is “fearful”. Yes, fear can cause a person to refuse to believe in Christ and miss out for all eternity. If you are that kind of person, I plead with you to cast aside your fear and run to the Cross and find Jesus as your Lord and Savior. The Word of God promises that “*whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*” (Romans 10:13). Cry out to God and find deliverance. A genuine prayer of repentance and faith that goes something like this can bring you into a relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear God, I know that you are my Creator and I acknowledge that I am a sinner. I confess that I deserve to go to hell and be judged because of my sin. But I believe that Jesus died on the Cross for my sin and was raised from the dead. Come into my life and save my soul. I take Jesus right now to be my only Lord and Savior. Thank you for saving me. In Jesus name, Amen.

We pray that this devotional study on John Chapter 14 has been a blessing to you and if you have received Christ as your Savior through this study, that you will follow up with your local Church and follow Jesus.

Treasures of Truth Ministries