

Believe Always

Introduction

Welcome to this edition of My Thoughts and the fourth of our eight-week series on **“The Cost of Discipleship.”** In this week’s segment, “Believe Always,” we see Jesus teaching His disciples and us to believe in God the Father and Him and to live in His peace. We will be using two passages from the Gospel of John. Open your Bible and turn to the Gospel of John 14:1-14 and 27-29.

During the Christmas season, most will say either **“Merry Christmas”** or **“Happy Holidays,”** hoping we do not offend someone with any of those statements. One of the primary reasons for the opposition is the fear of actually offending someone. Unselfish living and humility deal primarily with our horizontal relationships with others, and we need to improve our vertical relationship with God. Jesus identified four ways to develop and maintain a right relationship with God, which are the way to be with God, to know God, to pray to God, and to enjoy God’s peace.

Passage Text - John 14:1-14, 27-29

¹ “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me.”

² “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.”

³ “And 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 where I go you know, and the way you know.”

⁵ Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?”

⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

⁷ “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.”

⁸ Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.”

⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father, so 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 speak to you I do not speak on My own authority, but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.”

¹¹ “Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.”

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.”

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.”

²⁸ “You have heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away and coming back to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, I am going to the Father, for My Father is greater than I.”

²⁹ “And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe.”

Don't be Troubled

Jesus' talk of leaving His disciples and prediction of their inability to follow immediately left them anxious about the future. The warning to “not be troubled” (v. 1) was not a criticism, but an encouragement. Sensitive to the demands of discipleship and compassion toward followers, He urged His disciples to believe in both the Father and Him. Faith settles the heart and gives peace in the face of adversity. In John 14:1-14, 27-29, Jesus teaches us to believe always.

Don't Trouble Yourselves

Jesus calmed the troubled hearts by describing the provision He makes for everyone who puts their faith in Him as Lord and Savior. He declared if life in heaven for His followers were not possible, He would have said so. Jesus not only promised to go and prepare a place for His followers but also vowed to return and to receive them into that prepared place. Jesus reminded His disciples they knew the way to where He was going.

The disciple named Thomas is often most remembered for his doubts following the resurrection of Jesus (John 20:24-25). He probably expressed the thoughts of all the disciples when he asked Jesus, “How can we know the way?” If they did not know the place He was going, how could they find the road?

Way, Truth, Life

Jesus incorporated three grand statements and revealed He is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6). Faith in Jesus alone results in salvation, not in oneself or in a religious system, no matter how moral or benevolent that system might appear to be.

Jesus also identified Himself as the Truth. Only those who follow Jesus and trust in Him will find the right path to salvation. He also declared Himself to be Life. Examples include:

- He came so we might have eternal life by believing in Him (John 3:16)
- The Son has the power to give life to whom He pleases (John 5:21)
- He declared Himself to be the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25)

Consequently, no sinner can come to God, can be right with Him, or can expect to live with God in heaven except by believing in Jesus.

Since Jesus is the only way to the Father, those who truly know Him also know the Father. To honestly know Jesus is living by an understanding of who He is and having a personal relationship with Him. He came not just to give us information about the Father but to provide the way for us to live in a personal relationship with God. The opportunity to know the Father is another unique aspect of Christianity and demonstrates why it is exclusively genuine.

You Still Do Not Know?

Philip’s response to Jesus’ statement that the disciples had seen the Father, Philip requested a visible demonstration. Jesus responded first with a rebuke to Philip and the other disciples. He had been with them for a long time, yet they still lacked a critical understanding of who He was and why He came.

Since Jesus came from the Father, He said and did what the Father gave Him to say and do, worked only the works of the Father, the conclusion should have been clear to them by now.

Unity with the Trinity

The disciples had somehow missed the essential unity of the Persons of the Trinity. The reason was due to their unbelief Jesus was in the Father, and the Father was in Him. Jesus carefully taught His disciples everything He did was the result of the Father abiding in Him.

Jesus came as the obedient and humble Servant of the Father, who then correctly accomplished the Father’s will. Never once did Jesus deviate from that divine mission.

Jesus pointed to the works He did as sufficient evidence of His unity with the Father. Turning water into wine, walking on the Sea of Galilee, stilling the storm, healing the sick, and raising the dead were just some of the miraculous works that characterized the ministry of Jesus. Miracle

signs were necessary verifications that Jesus was the Son of God. Anyone who saw these miracles and failed to believe would be guilty of a hardened heart.

Ask Big!

Jesus further instructed His disciples to ask in His name for anything they needed after His departure. There are two critical considerations in verses 13-14. The first consideration is what it means to pray **“in Jesus’ name.”** The other is to what end Jesus promised to do whatever His disciples asked. The emphasis is on Jesus’ answering His disciples’ prayers to the conclusion that the Father may be glorified in the Son. Jesus revealed and exalted the Father throughout His ministry on earth.

The name of Jesus, like the name of the Father and the Holy Spirit, represents the Trinity. To pray in Jesus’ name means to ask per His nature and purposes. The underlying assumption of believers’ every prayer and plan should be for the advancement of God’s will, not our own (James 4:13-17; 1 John 5:14-15).

Peace I Give to You

Jesus continued to speak of the advantages of His departure by promising them His peace. The prophet Isaiah vividly foresaw the connection between the Messiah and true peace (Isaiah 9:6). The peace Jesus gives is not a mere absence of conflict.

Jesus faced temptations from Satan, attacks by enemies, and the difficulties of many challenges but maintained personal peace. His peace was grounded in His trust in the Father’s plan.

Jesus promised that His followers could face challenges and still keep an untroubled heart. His death on the cross would provide believers peace with God. It also provided personal peace of mind, which is one of Jesus’ most precious blessings for believers.

The disciples’ inability, and to some extent unwillingness, to grasp Jesus’ identity and mission hindered them from rejoicing with Him about His imminent return to the Father. They did not yet love Him as He loved them. In telling the disciples about these upcoming events, He aimed to bolster their faith and testimony when the events happened.

Conclusion

Four hundred years before Jesus was born, the Greek philosopher Plato wrote, **“To find out the Father and Maker of all this universe is a hard task, and when we have found Him, to speak of Him to all men is impossible.”** This is an incorrect statement.

We can know the Father of the universe, for Jesus revealed Him to us. Why should our hearts be troubled when the Creator of the universe is our own Father?

The very God of heaven and earth is our Father (Luke 10:21). There is no need for us to have troubled hearts, for He is in control. His own perfect peace assures us He alone can give true peace. He enables us to deal with events in our lives as we surrender to Him and receive His legacy of peace, Amen!

I am Dale Van De Bogart and I fully agree on God's Word!

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