

# That You May Continue to Believe...



## AN Exposition of the gospel of John

### Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled John 14:1-31

I am not sure how the conversation with our kids started but I remember exactly how it ended. My wife was talking to our two kids and our niece. Beverly had asked something like, **“What are you going to do when you get older. Are you going to get married and move off from your mom and dad?”** My son, the adventurer was probably ten or eleven years old and said something like, **“When I get married, I’m going to move to the coast and go out fishing every day. If not that, I’m going to move to the mountains and go fishing every day or I may be a fighter pilot and have to move overseas but don’t worry I’m still going to go fishing every day. Oh yeah, I’ll probably come home every year at Christmas.”** Then my niece shared here particular dreams and ambitions. Finally, Beverly turned to our daughter Aaris, who was only five or six years old, and before she could even ask her what she was going to do Aaris screamed out, **“I’m not ever get married. Momma, please don’t make me get married.”**

I can still bring to my mind today, the terrified look on that little round face and those great big beautiful blue eyes. Beverly had asked the question to engage our kids in our conversation about hopes and dreams but Aaris could not think that

far ahead. The only thing she could think about was what it would be like to live in a world where her parents were not the focus of her life. Her little mind went to racing for something to say but all she could think of was **“leaving her mom and dad alone.”** So, instead of answering the question about what she was going to do when she grew up, she began to wail and what came out was, **“I don’t want to get married. I don’t ever want to get married. Momma please don’t make me get married.”** What she meant, of course, was **“Momma, please don’t make me ever leave you.”** Later, that night when Beverly put her to bed Beverly had to swear to her that she would never make her get married. Beverly had to promise her that could always live with us and that she never, ever had to move off anywhere. **“Aaris, you can always live with you mom and dad. You don’t ever, ever have to move off. You don’t ever, ever have to get married. You can stay with us as long as you want. That’s a promise.”**

That made everything aright. Now, eventually Aaris forgot about all that and eventually it was her mother and I who wind up doing all the crying and we are still bitter to this day but that is beside the point. The reason I wanted to relate that is because if you keep that story of a little broken-hearted five year old girl in mind it may help you to understand something of the heart of the Jesus’ disciples when He told them I am going away and where I am going you cannot come. If you can wrap you mind and heart and emotions around that kind of feeling you will understand what led Peter to ask, **“Lord, why can I not go with you? I will follow you to the death. I will go anywhere you go. I will lay down my life for you.”**

If you can understand how Aaris felt, you can get a sense of how Peter felt. Now we are not talking about immature, overly emotive boys. We are talking about

hardened, grizzled, rough talking, rough-handed, rough-acting fishermen. We are talking about men that weren't apt to weep and still we are talking about men whose hearts were simply swept away by the beauty of the Lord Jesus. Keep that in mind. That is why when Jesus said to Peter, **"Will you really follow me Peter? Will you really and truly do that? I tell you the truth before this night is over, you will have denied me three times."** Now I want you to think about the devastating effect of that.

What if Beverly had said to Aaris, **"Honey, there will be a day when you will find some goofy-acting, hairy-legged boy and all you will think about is being in his presence."** Can you imagine how Aaris would have responded? But Beverly, didn't do that and the truth of the matter is that Jesus didn't do that either. Now before we look at the text, let me just remind you of one of the strange things that happens when we read the Bible. What I'm talking about is that we often dissociate the chapters from one another. Oftentimes, we will read a chapter and interact with what is going on it and then put down the Bible for a day or two and then pick it up and then start up at the next chapter having forgotten everything that was going on up until that point. But to do that here in chapter 14 is particularly bad. You have to keep in mind that verse 1 of chapter 14 is directly connected to the last verse of chapter 13.

Think about what the last verse was.

**"Peter before this night is over you will have denied me three times."**

Think about how those words must have stung and then think about this next wonderful, glorious promise and admonition.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>NIV</sup> **John 14:1...** "Do not let your hearts be troubled.

How wonderfully placed is Jesus concern and encouragement. At the same time, however, let me say how terrible that translation. Let me tell you something that you cannot see in English. The word is not "hearts". It is "heart". Of course, the moment I say that you would think that Jesus' words are addressed entirely to Peter, "**Peter, don't let your heart be troubled.**" And you know what? If that were what it said, I would take great consolation from that. But that is not what it says. It is not a singular "you". It is a plural "you". It is an East Texas "y'all". What Jesus says is, "**Let not y'all's heart be troubled.**"<sup>2</sup>

Now I think it is fascinating that the NIV renders it "**let not your hearts be troubled.**" That makes it sound like He is trying to say, "**Let not each one of your individual hearts be troubled, that is each heart in your group.**" But that is not what He is trying to say. He is not saying, "Mike don't let your heart be troubled" or even "Alan, don't let your heart be troubled." What He is saying is this, "**Don't let ya'll's heart be troubled. That is, don't let the one great, unified heart of you as a group be troubled. You only have one unified heart today**"

That was the whole point of what had happened in chapter 13. Can you see that? He had gotten up in the middle of the supper and laid aside His garments, wrapped a towel around His waist, poured water into a basin and gone around on His knees and washed the feet of each disciple. In doing that He was saying, "**You are my beloved group, my beloved people, my beloved sheep. You are the church of God that I have created.**<sup>3</sup> **You are one people with one heart. Now don't let the heart of you collapse. Don't let the heart of the group fail. You'll**

**desert me. You'll flee off into the dark Judean night but don't let even that event cause your heart to cave in and here's why."**

<sup>NIV</sup> **John 14:1..."Trust in God; trust also in me."**<sup>4</sup>

Actually this little phrase is really hard to translate. In Greek there are seven words just as there are here but the words are ambiguous. In other words, it's hard to tell if the verbs are imperatives or statements of fact. It's hard to know if He's saying, **"In the same way you trust in God, you also trust in Me."** Or perhaps its, **"You have trusted in God so in the same manner trust in Me."** Or perhaps its two imperatives, **"Trust in God and in the same manner trust in Me."** It 's hard to know which is meant because the Greek forms are ambiguous; you can't tell whether they are imperatives or simple statements of fact.<sup>5</sup> But here's the point, **"In whatever comfort, whatever consolation, in whatever peace you have found in you relationship with you can find the same thing in Me. I will never leave you. So, relax."**<sup>6</sup>

That's what He's saying and you know brothers and sisters I take great comfort in that.

Just a year or so ago I met that was a gifted, godly, just enormously talented Reformed young preacher that I thought to myself, **"You know he is so gifted in communicating the gospel. He just gifted, so genuine, so loving and so kind that maybe the kingdom of God will take a gigantic leap forward as he begins to become more and more widely known."** Then a month or so ago, he was arrested in a police sting trying to lure young girls over the Internet. When I found that out, my heart just caved in. But the promise of Jesus is that that is not

going to happen with Him. He's saying, **"I won't fail you. I won't desert you even in the midst of your failures. Don't let your heart be troubled."**

Of course, they were thinking, **"But you said you would leave. How can we not collapse? How can we go on? How will we survive that? How will our heart endure that?"** So in verse two, Jesus responds further by giving the reason why they ought not to lose heart. He gives the reason there why they ought to be able to hang on.

<sup>NIV</sup> **John 14:2... "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.**

I remember when Beverly and I first got married, we were reading through the Bible together and she said, **"I cannot wait till I get to heaven and have my own mansion."** Of course, because I am overly sensitive it just killed me. I mean she wanted to have a mansion apart from me. But now days I take great comfort in the fact that the word used here is not the word for anything like what we mean when we use the word "mansion" today. Actually, the KJV rendering is not at all the idea behind the word  $\mu\omicron\nu\alpha\lambda\acute{\iota}$ . In fact, the word used to indicate a stopping place, a station, a barracks or even a monastery.<sup>7</sup> So the idea that is being presented here is not the nature of the dwelling place itself.

He is not alluding to some four or five story building with gothic turrets or anything like that. He is not alluding to any kind of independent dwelling.<sup>8</sup> The emphasis is not the size of the dwelling place or even what it looks like but rather where the dwelling place is. That is the only emphasis in the passage. You can think of it as a room in a hotel. What He is saying is, **"In my Father's house there**

**are lots of places and there is a place for you. In fact, I am going there to prepare a place for you."**

Now you know, for the life of me, for years I kept thinking, **"He's talking about after the resurrection, after He ascends into heaven. He's going to be up there with a carpenter's belt on building me a room, a place to stay when I die."**

Isn't that the picture you've always had? It is, and I say this reverently, sort of Jesus as the divine carpenter preparing for us a dwelling. Of course, there is an aspect of that which is completely goofy. After all, He spoke the worlds into existence. Why would He need to resort to "stick construction"? What He is saying is that He is going to the cross. He is saying, **"I am going to make a way for you to be in Father's house and I am going to have to go to the cross to do that."**

You see the idea is not centered on "stick construction." It is focused on "cross work." Cross work is what is needed so His people can be in the presence of God. Now look at what He says in the second half of verse two.

**<sup>NIV</sup> John 14:2...if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.**

What He is saying here is this, **"I know this important to you. I know this is part of your expectation. If it weren't true, I would have told you and because I have not told you otherwise you may know with certainty that you will be in the presence of God with Me. But I am going there and I am going to prepare a place for you."** The look at what He says...

**<sup>NIV</sup> John 14:3..." And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back..."**

Now the NIV has done an interesting job translating this here, especially since the verb used is a present tense verb and not a future tense one. You see the emphasis is on the certainty of His action. It is, **"I am coming back."**

It reminds me a little bit of that great scene with Douglass Macarthur when he was run of the Pacific at the beginning of World War 2 and promised his men, **"I will return."** Except Jesus isn't saying that. It is not a future hope; it is rather a present reality. He is saying, **"I am coming back."** And then He goes on...

**<sup>NIV</sup> John 14:3...and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.**

Now the promise of that is twofold. On the one hand He is saying, **"After I am crucified, after I am raised from the tomb on the third day, I will come to you and we will be reunited."** On the other hand, He is saying, **"After this life you will be with Me also."**

You see it's a two-fold promise with a near and future fulfillment. It contains the element of the now and the not yet of the Christian hope. Then in verse four, He says this marvelous thing and the Greek is so different here because many of the words that we have in English aren't actually in the Greek but rather have to be supplied to make sense of what is being said. In Greek it is only six words and should read something like, **"Where I go, you know the way."** So you can see how the NIV came up with its translation.

**<sup>NIV</sup> John 14:4...You know the way to the place where I am going."**

Now imagine how that landed on their already troubled hearts. You can imagine them asking each other, **“Do we know the way?”** Thank goodness, there was someone name Thomas there to ask the obvious question. Look at verse 5...

<sup>NIV</sup> **John 14:5...** "Thomas said to him, **"Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"**

You see Thomas is saying, **“Lord, we have no idea on earth where you are going. If we knew where you were going we might know the way. But since we don't know where you are going how can we possibly know the way.”**

That is why the answer of Jesus is so beautiful.

<sup>NIV</sup> **John 14:6...** Jesus answered, **"I am the way...**

You see His point is this. **“I am the way. That is why you know the way. It is not a place; it is a person and that person is Me.”** Jesus is saying, **“ I am going to prepare a place for you. I am the way to God.”**

In the first century, and this is especially visible in the Book of Acts, Christians often called themselves **“people of the way.”**

<sup>NIV</sup> **Acts 9:2...**and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Acts 22:4...**I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison. Isn't that beautiful. It is so descriptive. Of course, in our day the phrase has been taken over a by a cult so

we are hard-pressed to use the same phrase but in the first century Christian's called themselves "**people of the way.**" It was a wonderfully cryptic manner to describe their Savior, Jesus Christ the Way to God. They were people of the way, which meant they were the people of Jesus.

Then Jesus went on to say...

<sup>NIV</sup> **John 14:6...** Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

Now let me ask you a question, "**How can that be true?**" How could He say to His disciples, "**From now on you know Him and you have seen Him?**" Let me ask again, "**How can that be true? Is it true? Did they see the Father?**"

It is true. Of course, it is true. But get this. They saw the Father in mediated way. That means they did not see Him directly but rather saw Him represented accurately, genuinely, truthfully though not fully through the person of the Lord Jesus. So when He said, "When you look at Me you are seeing the Father"

He meant you are seeing the Father through the lens that I furnish and it is an accurate representation of God. There is a great story my wife loves to tell and it is based upon the premise that Browning boys and even Browning men have always had heads that are shaped slightly like watermelons. Anyway, she tells the story that one time I was driving in my pickup truck and my young son was riding with me, standing by my side. My wife pulled up behind us at an intersection and thought to herself, "**You know their heads look exactly alike. They are both shaped like watermelons. In fact, if you have seen one Browning head you have seen them all. They are exactly the same.**"

I have never forgotten her talking about that especially when I come to a verse like this one. Because I think that is kind of what Jesus is saying here. He is saying, **“When you see Me, when you see my character and hear My words, when you see my heart you are not just seeing Me, you are seeing the Father. It is not just a picture of God, it is a perfect picture of God. I reveal the Father and I reveal Him fully.”**

Still there is measure of confusion. In fact, Philip asks Jesus a question based on the same confusion mentioned by Thomas and when he does Jesus blisters him with a stinging rebuke.

<sup>NIV</sup> **John 14:8...** Philip said, **“Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”** <sup>9</sup> Jesus answered: **“Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?”** <sup>10</sup> **Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.** <sup>11</sup> **Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.”**

Do you see what He is saying? He is saying, **“There is no better picture of the Father. There is no better representation of the Father. You have been seeing the Father for these last three years both night and day. You have seen Him in my words, my miracles and even my character. You have seen Him in Me.”**

I love that and I think it is patently clear. Look ay verse 12.

Now, there is a sense in which verse 12 seems disconnected from the previous verse. One of the reasons for that is that Jesus is transitioning to a new thought.

But I want you to keep in mind that behind all that He had been addressing their emotional distress and conflict. Think about the conflict they faced. He had told them He was going away and He had tried to comfort them by telling them that He was going where He was going to make a place for them and that ultimately they would wind up in that place with Him. That was followed by a discussion about having seen the Father in His life, words and actions. Then He turns to the statement in verse 12 and it seems disconnected.

**<sup>NIV</sup> John 14:12...** "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup> And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. <sup>14</sup> You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. <sup>15</sup> If you love me, you will obey what I command.

Let me show you something that I think is helpful in understanding this section. John 14 is written using a chiasmic structure. The way we know that is because John 14:1-7 is paralleled in the verses starting at verse 27.

**<sup>NIV</sup> John 14:1...** "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me."

**<sup>NIV</sup> John 14:27...** "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

Now here is the idea. The two verses, verse 1 and 27 form bookends to the chapter. They tell where the ideas of the chapter start and finish. Think of it as a starting line and a finish line. Now between those two finish lines, the passage will funnel down to a single idea that is the main focus of the chapter. Remember there are parallel segments and the center which will have no parallel is the

central point of the passage. I want you to see this before we get all the way through the passage. Now having said that, look at this transparency and I think you'll get an idea of what I mean.

Notice, the passage starts off by saying, **"Let not your heart be troubled."**

Then it says, **"I have revealed the Father."** I think you will all admit that is a fair representation of what is going on verse 8-11.

Then he moves to the center of the passage is this verse 12, **"My disciples will do greater works than Me"** and we'll talk about what that means in a minute.

Then, the passage backs out talking about how the Spirit will reveal Jesus and finally it closes with the same line with which it opened, **"Let not your hearts be troubled."**

So you can see, I hope, the chiastic structure. **"Let not your heart be troubled"** in verse 1 is reflected in **"Let not your heart be troubled"** in verse 27. Jesus revealing the Father in verses 8-11 is reflected in the fact that the Holy Spirit will reveal Jesus in verses 16-26. In fact, just as Jesus revealed the Father so the Spirit will reveal Jesus. Now let me focus on that idea. Do you personally take any comfort in that? Does the fact that Jesus has promised that the Holy Spirit will reveal Him just as He did the Father give you any encouragement? It encourages me. Let me tell you, if it weren't true I don't think I could take another step.

Of course that draws us back to the center of the chiasm where Jesus says, **"My disciples will do greater works than Me."** Now in case you have any doubt that

that is the center of the chiasm let me remind you that the, **“Truly, truly”** or as the NIV puts it, **“I tell you the truth”** is highly emphatic. Now let me ask you a question, **“Do you think that promise is true?”** That is, **“Do you think it is true that the disciples of Jesus will do greater works than He did?”** Of course, it has to be true. Otherwise, Jesus would have never made such a statement. The question is, **“What do you mean by greater?”** If you mean greater in kind, it is hard to imagine that it could ever be true. If you mean greater in quantity or in geographical distribution, it is, of course, very true.<sup>9</sup>

I mean think about it. Have you ever raised anyone from the dead? Do you know anyone who has ever raise anyone from the dead? Do you know anyone that has ever healed the sight of a person born blind? I don't. So, it probably doesn't mean bigger in scope or grandeur or power. It probably means greater in number, greater in placement. That makes much better sense. Do you realize in Jesus life, He never traveled more than about sixty miles from the place of His birth? If don't count His travel to Egypt as an infant, you could say with certainty that He never traveled more than about sixty miles from the place He was born. Yet the name of Jesus is known in every nation on earth. How is that possible? It is possible because Jesus' disciples have done greater works than Jesus did Himself in the sense that His name has been magnified, the gospel has been preached, and humanitarian concerns have been addressed in the midst of most every tongue nation and tribe on this planet.

How is that possible? How is it possible that such a thing could ever happen? It is explained in that next section down. It is possible only through the empowering, indwelling work of the Holy Spirit, who will take the name of Jesus

and drive it home to the hearts of His sheep. That's the point He's trying to make. Let's look at it in verse 16.

**NIV John 14:16... "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-- the Spirit of truth. ..."**

Now, I know you have heard this before but the word there for "counselor" is "paraclete". In secular literature of the first and second century, it was always used to talk about a lawyer. Now that discourages me right off but I don't want it to discourage you because what He is saying is that you have a counselor, and expert, an advocate to guide you. Now this counselor is not radically different from Jesus. In fact, the word that is used to describe Him here is the word "ἄλλος". There are two different words for "another" in Greek. One means "another" of a different kind. That's the word "heteros". The word here means another of the same kind.<sup>10</sup>

**What He is saying is, "I will send you another Comforter or Counselor of exactly the same kind as I have been to you and that other Counselor is going to be this Paraclete, this Spirit of Truth."<sup>11</sup>**

Now look what it says in verse 17.

**NIV John 14:17...The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him.**

Now isn't that exactly parallel to what He said about Himself and the Father. He said, **"If you have seen Me you have seen the Father. If you know Me you**

**know the Father. In fact, from now on you do know the Father and you have seen the Father because you have seen Me and you have known Me."**

That's why what He says about the Spirit is so like what He said about Himself.

**<sup>NIV</sup> John 14:17...The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.**

By the way, let me just drive this home one more time. The word for "you" here is plural. Every single time it is used in John 14, it is plural. That tells me that the focus here is corporate. That tells me there is no place for any kind of rugged, modern American individualism among the people of God, which goes back to the opening line of John 14. If only you could get this and appropriate it into your own view of the church. If you could do that, you would be transformed; this church would be transformed. If you could get this, our community would be transformed. You see it is "one heart", "one people". The Spirit of God does fill us individually but the point John is making is that He primarily fills us as a group. When He says "**He is with you and will be in you**" He is talking about the church.

Of course, it is true for individuals but that is not the picture He is trying to paint. The picture He is trying to paint is that the Holy Spirit is in the body, which is, of course, the reason why I have to have you and you and you. You can't go off because if you do, I am fractured. Do you see that? The body, without you, is fractured. That is why you must find your place in the Body of Christ.

Listen to what He says in verse 18. I love this so.

**<sup>NIV</sup> John 14:18...I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."**

Isn't that beautiful. He's saying, **"I am not going to leave you out there all alone. I am not going to leave you out there as street urchins, wandering around trying to care for yourselves. I am going to send my representative, the Holy Spirit, the great Counselor, to take care of you. In fact, the Father is going to send you another Counselor of exactly the same kind. I am not going to leave you alone."**

Then in verse 19, He returns to the topic that had depressed them so much in the first place.

**<sup>NIV</sup> John 14:19..."Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. <sup>21</sup> Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."**

Do you get the argument He is using? It is, of course, somewhat circular. Critics sometimes sharply criticize these kind of circular arguments. They don't like it when the text says, **"Faith produces love and love produces faith"** and so on. My response is, **"So what?"** So it is circular. The real question is, **"Is it true?"**

Is He saying that if we obey His commands, does it demonstrate our love for Him and does that mean that HE will further reveal Himself to us? Yes, that is exactly what He is saying. I have no intention of faulting His argument because it

is circular. The question is and remains, **“Is it true?”** The answer is, **“Yes it’s true.”**

Then look what Judas says and notice that John is quick to point out it is not the traitor.

<sup>NIV</sup> **John 14:22...** Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, **“But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”**

Isn’t that a great question? The question was, **“Why just us? Why are you limiting yourself to us? Shouldn’t the Messiah just bust out and show the whole world everything?”**

Now here is what is interesting. Jesus answers his question by raising the issue of obedience again.

<sup>NIV</sup> **John 14:23...** Jesus replied, **“If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. <sup>24</sup> He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. <sup>25</sup> “All this I have spoken while still with you. <sup>26</sup> But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”**

Now you have to get this. That word for “home” occurs one other place in chapter 14. Guess where it is. It occurs in verse 2.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>NIV</sup> **John 14:2...** **“In my Father's house are many rooms;**

The word for “home” and the word for “rooms” is the same word. Do you get what He is saying? **“I’ll come and make my home with you until the day you come and live with Me. You will, in fact, enjoy the glory of heaven on earth if you believe in Me and you trust Me and you obey Me. The Father and I will come and make our home with you. Then when you die you will pass into glory and live with Me because I want you with Me in the place I have prepared for you.”**<sup>13</sup>

I am reminded of the story Larry Danner used to tell occasionally about the grim-faced Puritan who one night after a horrible day out working in the field. He had been out all day plowing his frozen, stony New England field and when he came home for supper that night he sat down in his little humble cottage with the precious wife of his youth frostbitten and physically exhausted. As he warmed himself by the fire his precious wife served him one small boiled potato and a small piece of bread. It was simple fare but in the glow of the firelight his heart swelled till it was about to burst and he reached up and grabbed his wife’s face between his hands and with tears in his eyes shouted out, **“All this and heaven too.”**

You see here’s the promise. If we follow Jesus, if we believe in Him, if we trust and obey Him He will make His abode with us now and we have His eternal promise that in the end we will pass into heaven and live with Him forever. Brothers and sisters that means we have heaven on earth now and heaven in heaven afterwards.<sup>14</sup> That’s the promise of the Christian life, which of course, brings us back to the purpose of the book.

You see the Gospel of John was written to encourage those first century Jews who were straddling the fence between Jesus and Judaism to recognize that Jesus is better, infinitely better than Judaism. John is trying to raise in the minds of his readers this question, **“Why would I not go with Christ?”** That is the point John is making.

Look finally at what He says in verse 27.

**<sup>NIV</sup> John 14:27... "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts (ya'll's heart) be troubled and do not be afraid. <sup>28</sup> "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me,<sup>15</sup> you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.**

Now that is a remarkable verse, **“If you loved Me you would be glad that I am going to the Father.”** Now what does that mean? Here’s what I think it means and what most commentators say.<sup>16</sup>

Jesus, before the incarnation, dwelt in heaven in all His glory and splendor with the worship of ten million angels. When He came to earth, He laid aside His glory and humbled Himself and took upon Himself the form of a servant. Why would we as obedient, loving disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ would we not want Him to ascend back into heaven and to receive the glory which He is due? That is the point Jesus is making here.

Let me give you a human illustration. When my daughter got married to Charlie and rolled off in that limousine with him (and I am so glad they are not here this morning so I can talk freely about them) all the air went out of my heart. And

yet, I was glad for her. You see there was the sorrow of seeing her go; yet, there was the joy of seeing her go with someone that loves her and that she loves. There was the joy of knowing that she might enjoy with Charlie the same joy and happiness Beverly and I have enjoyed. How could I not want her to experience that? I was glad for her. That is along the same line as the point Jesus is making. Why can we not be glad for Jesus that He has ascended back into heaven and is receiving the fellowship of the Father, the worship of the angels and the glory He is due?

Then finally, look at verse 29.

**NIV John 14:29..." I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. <sup>30</sup> I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, <sup>31</sup> but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me. "Come now; let us leave."**

Of course, that means that they are moving out of the upper room and towards the Garden of Gethsemane where he will meet Judas face to face and procure for us our atonement before God.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> B.F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1954) 200. Westcott's words are wonderful here: "There had been already much to cause alarm on this evening: ch. xiii. 21 f., 33, 36; and, in particular, the last warning (xiii. 38) might well shake the confidence of the disciples. It is easy therefore to imagine the sad silence which followed that utterance, broken at last by these words, which for the first time open heaven to faith."

<sup>2</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John (Rvd.)* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1995), 617. I thought when I first read this footnote by Morris that I had overstated the point, "Turner has an interesting table to illustrate his point that "Contrary to normal Greek and Latin practice the NT sometimes follows the Aramaic and Hebrew preference for a distributive singular. Something belonging to each person in a group of people is placed in the singular" though in other places the plural is used (M, III. pp. 23-24). John uses καρδια in this way in the singular five times (including one quotation from LXX), but never in the plural. His only other appearance in the

table is also a singular (χεῖρ, 10:39).” But now I see that the point is still valid. The Hebrew or Aramaic sense of community makes the point valid.

<sup>3</sup> George R. Beasley-Murray, *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 36: John*, (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, Publisher) 1998. He writes: “The following imperative “keep on believing in God” is entirely in place (rather than an indicative statement); the world may appear to have gone mad, but the disciples must continue to believe in God as the sovereign Lord of creation. “Keep on believing in me” will be much more difficult; how can the disciples continue to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, Son of God and Son of Man, when he is dragged off to the courts, condemned by the rulers, nailed to a cross, and mocked by the onlookers? Only the kind of faith seen in Abraham— “who against all hope, in hope believed” (Rom 4:18)—can prevail in such circumstances, and that is why they are bidden, “keep on believing in me.” The remaining part of the discourse rings the changes on this call to believe.”

<sup>4</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on John* (Calvin CDROM by Ages) 14:1, 479. Calvin writes in his own beloved way: “The Son of God, then, who is Jesus Christ, holds out himself as the object to which our faith ought to be directed, and by means of which it will easily find that on which it can rest; for he is the true Immanuel, who answers us within, as soon as we seek him by faith. It is one of the leading articles of our faith that our faith ought to be directed to Christ alone, that it may not wander through long windings; and that it ought to be fixed on him, that it may not waver in the midst of temptations. And this is the true proof of faith, when we never suffer ourselves to be torn away from Christ, and from the promises which have been made to us in him.”

<sup>5</sup> Both Westcott (p. 200) and Morris (p. 566) do an excellent job of laying out the various possibilities.

<sup>6</sup> Edwyn Clement Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel V.2* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1942), 533. Hoskyns makes the really interesting observation that just as Jesus had told them a large upper room had already been prepared for their use for the Last Supper so He was going to prepare a large room for them to join Him in the Father’s presence. Of course, he is bringing that into John something from the Synoptics but it is a great observation.

<sup>7</sup> C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to John: An Introduction with Notes and Commentary on the Greek Text*, (London: S.P.C.K, 1967), 381. Barrett writes: μοναὶ πολλάι εἰσὶν μοναί. in Pausanias (e.g. x, xxxi, 7) means a “stoppingplace”, or “station” (for other evidence see L.S. *s.v.*, and cf. the Latin *mansio*); and some commentators, ancient and modern, take the word in this sense in this passage: the life of heaven includes progression. But this interpretation is almost certainly wrong; as v. 23 shows, μονῆ. is the noun corresponding to the common and important Johannine verb μένειν, and hence it will mean a permanent, not a temporary, abiding-place (or, perhaps, mode of abiding). This is confirmed by the one use of monh in the LXX (I Macc. 7.38, πεσέτωσαν ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ δῶς αὐτοῖς μονήν., and by indications of a Jewish belief in compartments, or dwelling-places, in heaven (I Enoch 39.4; cf. 2 Enoch 61.2).

<sup>8</sup> Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishers, 1997), 489-9-490.

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<sup>9</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 610. Remarkably, Bultmann is quite clear here. He writes: "This promise does not *mean* that the disciples' activity is to embrace a larger geographical area than that of Jesus, or to have greater success; still less, that they are to do greater miracles than he. For if their work is to be of the same sort as his, then it can be as little measured by human standards as his. And just as the success of what he did was visible only to faith, so the same will be true of the success they have. But the ὅτι ἐγὼ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα πορεύομαι states expressly why their work will be greater than his. It will be greater in so far as his is seen within temporal boundaries, and is brought to an end by his departure. In that sense it is "incomplete" and has not yet fulfilled its intention. As eschatological event, however, it cannot be limited to one time or place within history; it can only be seen to be such after his departure, when it is taken up again in the Easter and Whitsun preaching of the community, and thus protected from the misunderstanding that it is simply a historical phenomenon. Jesus' word is word of revelation in its continual newness on every occasion when it is present. Only when it is effective in this way in the community does Jesus' work come to its fruition. Thus there is no question here of supplementing or surpassing Jesus' work in any quantitative way."

<sup>10</sup> Morris, 576. Morris seems to refute this by writing, "ἄλλον is said to mean "another of the same kind" whereas ἕτερον would mean "another of a different kind." Thus J. B. Lightfoot affirms that ἕτερον implies a difference of kind which is not involved in ἄλλο. The primary distinction between the words appears to be that ἄλλος is another as 'one besides,' ἕτερος another as 'one of two.' ἄλλος adds, while ἕτερος distinguishes. Now when our attention is confined in two objects, we naturally compare and contrast them; hence ἕτερος gets to signify 'unlike, opposite'...while ἄλλος is generally confined to a negation of identity, ἕτερος sometimes implies the negation of resemblance" (*Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* [London, 1902]. p. 76; he adds that on some occasions the two terms are interchangeable). The Spirit is thus said to be a Counselor like Christ, This may well be so, but not all writers observe the difference between the two terms. And since John uses ἕτερος only once (19:37), we cannot be sure whether he employs the words strictly or not." Obviously, I hold to the distinction between the two terms.

<sup>11</sup> Ridderbos, 504. He writes: "In that sense, too, he is the "other Paraclete" besides Jesus. This proves that Jesus does not equate himself with the Spirit. Even with respect to his heavenly existence and his future. Jesus is not the Spirit, and what is said elsewhere of the Spirit is not all true of Jesus. This distinction of persons and work will be maintained every time that we read of the unique activity of the Spirit over against Jesus and of Jesus' activity over against the Spirit (e.g., 15:26; 16:7). Highly characteristic for the Fourth Gospel, on the other hand, is how closely the work of the Spirit as Paraclete of the church in the interim is bound up with that of Jesus himself and must be understood completely in its light — proof, if further proof is needed, that the Fourth G Christology is its all-controlling motif. The paraclete is another (*the other*) Pa besides Jesus, the one whom the Father will send at Jesus' request, in the see true insight into what Jesus has said (cf. vs. 26). He will not speak from himself but will glorify Jesus and take all that he has to say "from me" (Jesus). Thus all hit will go back to that of Jesus (cf. 16:1 3ff.). Hence the striking resemblance of that of the Spirit and Jesus' own work. Sometimes their activities even totally coincide as in 14:23, where it is said that Jesus, with the Father, will 'make our home the person who keeps his word, which is said in virtually identical words of the as well (cf 14:16, 17)."

<sup>12</sup> See Westcott, 208.

<sup>13</sup> Calvin, 480. Ever the pastor, Calvin writes: "Here commentators differ. Some read these words as closely connected with what goes before: "If the dwellings had not been already prepared, I would have said that I go before you to prepare them." But I rather agree with those who render it thus: "If the heavenly glory had awaited me only, I would not have deceived you. I would have told you that there was no room for any one but myself in my Father's house. But the case is widely different; for I go before, to prepare a place for you." The context, in my opinion, demands that we read it in this manner; for it follows immediately afterwards, If I go to prepare a place for you. By these words Christ intimates that the design of his departure is, to prepare a place for his disciples. In a word, Christ did not ascend to heaven in a private capacity, to dwell there alone, but rather that it might be the common inheritance of all the godly, and that in this way the Head might be united to his members."

<sup>14</sup> Aurelius Augustine, *The Gospel of John*, Chapter 14, Tractate LIXXX, 693. (The Nicene And Post-Nicene Fathers First Series, Volume 7 Ages CDRom) For He was sitting at table with those who were similarly occupied. But "let us go," He said, and whither, but to the place where He, who had nothing in Him deserving of death, was to be delivered up to death? But He had the Father's commandment to die, as the very One of whom it had been foretold, "Then I paid for that which I took not away (the fruit that Adam ate)," and so appointed to pay death to the full, while owing it nothing, and to redeem us from the death that was our due.

<sup>15</sup> Barrett, 391. He writes: "εἰ ἠγαπατέ με ἐχάρητε ἄν." An unfulfilled condition. 'If you loved me (as you do not) you would...'. This is weakened (in D f) to εἰ ἀγαπατέ which implies nothing about the fulfillment of the condition. The sterner reading is original. True love for Jesus, which they did not yet possess, would have made the disciples rejoice in his exaltation just as true understanding would have enabled them to see that his departure was for their advantage."

<sup>16</sup> C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 406. There are those like Dodd who seem driven to focus only upon the realized eschatology of John. They do thinking that the denial of a visible return is the surest aspect of that realized eschatology. He writes: "Although there is to be no outward manifestation, after the manner of popular eschatological expectation, by which the world might be compelled to believe, yet there **is** to be an epiphany to the world—the revelation of the divine love in Christ, as it is active in the loving unity of His people. Only by such a revelation, and by no crude miracle of coming on the clouds, can the world be led to faith and knowledge, and so to the eternal life which God designed for it when in love for the world He gave His Son." While I appreciate his focus on realized eschatology (as I do in Bultmann) I see no reason to give His visible return in glory. Not only to I anticipate it, I anticipate it with joy!

<sup>17</sup> F.F. Bruce, *The Gospel & Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1983), 306. Bruce writes: "The 'ruler of the world' is about to meet his downfall, as Jesus said a few days earlier (John 12:31). He does not know this: his plan is to overthrow the sent one of God; but there is nothing **iii**. Jesus that he can lay hold of so as to gain an advantage over him. The outcome of the impending spiritual conflict will be Jesus' vindication, as the one whose love for the Father is exhibited in perfect obedience to his will. The Son's vindication in the sight of the universe is in

accordance with the Father's purpose; the whole course of events is overruled to his end. His vindication involves the discrediting of 'the ruler of the world' (John 16:11). To the Father's good pleasure, then, Jesus confidently commits himself."