

# All Change (John 14:1-14)

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*10:00am Holy Communion – 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2026*

## **John 14:1-14**

‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.’ Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.’

Philip said to him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, “Show us the Father”? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

*'Please someone just get me out of here!'* Sophie and I found ourselves in the back streets of a city called Serekunda, which is the largest population centre in of The Gambia. We were off for a nice sunny time away in what was a cold and miserable February in the UK. The small west-African country has idyllic beaches of the type you might think of as paradise, with plush hotels. Where we were staying showed a great contrast to the poverty which surrounded it. As a westerner from the suburbs of London, I found myself almost ashamed to be there. The travel company encouraged us not to go out of the hotel at all, lest we be set upon. Life in the hotel was so very different from the outside. That didn't sit well with my personal sense of integrity.

As Christians, we should live our public lives just as we live our private lives. **That is, with the goodness of Christ lived as much privately (unseen by others), as to everyone we meet in public.** To *'love our neighbours as ourselves'* might be thought of as a *personal examination* where Jesus teaches us to be consistent, true to ourselves, with integrity. **Our best is not just for Sundays.** You won't find me any different in church as to how you would find me in Tesco's!

In John chapter 14 Jesus drops one of his most difficult and contested sayings: *'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'* **This famous phrase sounds exclusive**, and so we may end up with the thought that there are some who will be left out from God's gifts.

Is God the Father accessible only through the Christian faith so that if you are of another faith, which also claims to know the same one-and-only God, then will you not be able to make it into his kingdom?

**This question, taken in isolation, seems a difficult and dangerous one to answer.**

When trying to interpret the Bible, the first thing one must look at is the context - the situation that is being described and what else is being said around it. **Scripture is the best interpreter of itself.** In John's gospel today, we have Jesus with his disciples together in a moment which seems similar to the Last Supper. They are staying outside of Jerusalem in the village of Bethany, during what we know as Holy Week - the week before the cross. He has just washed the disciples feet and it's a very emotional time. Judas has just departed on his treacherous mission. Then comes the commandment that **'you must continue to love one another as I have loved you.'** **Jesus now says that he is to depart, which leads to a lot of stress.** Peter is very troubled about that and gets told that he will deny Christ three times. It wasn't a great moment.

So Jesus tries to bring some comfort and compassion into the stress: **'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.'** **There is then a picture of that heavenly dwelling place** - the House of God with many rooms. **'I go and prepare a place for you. I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.'** **Except they don't.** A short while before Peter had asked, and now Thomas also: **'we don't know where you're going, how can we know the way.'** Jesus then answers with those famous words about the way the truth and the life. It's a way to say *it doesn't finish here, you haven't seen the last of me, we shall all be together again.*

**Being with and seeing Jesus is what they want to continue. They can't contemplate anything else.** They don't want to be separated from him; they want to see him every day.

Jesus said: 'If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.' Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.' This is where it starts to get confusing. I think Jesus wants to say to them – yes you will continue see me and be with me, but it's a bit more nuanced than that. In the heavenly dwelling place, the House of God is going to look different. **God the Father and God the son will be seen in a different way.**

We know in our Christian belief that the Holy Trinity is not as neatly separated as you and I are, here on the Earth – it's hard to visualise. In the heavenly dwelling place of many rooms, to see Jesus is to see God, and the Holy Spirit as one. 'Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who *dwells in me*. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me.' It seems to get even more complicated from there, and so we find our faith caught up in the holy mysteries of God. Like Philip the disciples question – 'can't you just show us?'

**In the next few weeks we shall have Ascension Day, Pentecost and Trinity Sunday.** Jesus leaves heavenward, the promised Holy Spirit is poured out like a replacement, and beginning from there the church comes to understand how this Jesus was something so *much more* than just than man seen by people.

The disciples wanted to hold on to the friend they knew and followed, but he couldn't stay like that, otherwise he would be to us only a historical figure. **He had to break out of that existence to show his full nature as the way to God, unrestricted by time and place.**

Those three important Christian festivals happen within 18 days of each other. It's a transition from the neat and manifest Jesus *to the God of all time*. **We have not been left without God's presence in this world.**

I think what I can pick out of all this are a number of things, I hope:

1. For those disciples it was Jesus himself with them, for a special time; but that time has passed.
2. Jesus was clear with the disciples that they can reveal God to each other, and to others, by living the example of Christ – to love one another!
3. Through the example and commandments of *that* Jesus, revealed in scripture, we too can live as he taught we should, whilst we live in this world.
4. If we live God to the very tops and bottoms of our lives, with integrity, others will find something of the risen Jesus revealed through us.
5. Christians shall, as Jesus did, move between these stages of heaven and earth.
6. In this way God is seen in the widest and most accessible sense – on Earth as it is in Heaven.

**This incredible proximity to God changes us.** We are capable of revealing the love of God. Elsewhere in the New Testament, Christians are described as *saints* - those whose lives strive to be that picture of Christ, and the love of God. **Your life can be a sacred thing.** That is where the word *saints* came from.

I don't have the time to open up the idea of being saints, but you may find it interesting when you have your own time at home to read the full story of how this amazing transition of Christ changes people. Read the Book of Acts from chapter 1 to chapter 7. The church goes from a few frightened and hidden disciples, to the incredible proclamation of Christ through people – so much so that they will die for him.

The Christian theology of what we believe comes thick and fast in these next 3 weeks. Take it all, into all parts of your life, even if you can't see it clearly.

Amen