

EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #55

John 14:7-11

Four hundred years before Jesus Christ was born, the Greek philosopher Plato said that to find out something about the Father and Maker of the universe was a very hard task. Then he said if you do find him it is impossible to speak to others about him (Cited from Warren Wiersbe, *Be Transformed*, p. 30). Plato was dead wrong. It is not hard to find God; **God is found in Jesus Christ**. If you want to know God, believe in Jesus Christ and the process begins.

It is possible; in fact, it is the expectation and ought to be the burning desire and passion of every believer to know God. However, there is no doubt from the Apostle John that **the only way to know God, is to know Jesus Christ, who is God**. You cannot know God without Christ, for Jesus Christ is God and no one can have access to God the Father but through Him (14:6).

Knowing God and knowing Jesus Christ as God is what these verses are all about. You will notice that the verb “know” occurs three times in **verse 7** and once in **verse 9**. Jesus wanted to be sure that His disciples knew Him as God and as the only way to a relationship with God.

There are two words in **verse 7** that I want to point out which clearly reveal what we are to see and believe: The first word “know” (γινώσκω) means to know something and to recognize something and to realize something by personal experience (G. Abbott-Smith, p. 92). The second word “seen” (οραω) is the idea of seeing something in the sense of perceiving and discerning the truth. Combined in this context, **Jesus is demanding that one personally recognize Him and see Him as God and as One with His Father**.

Jesus is addressing His disciples. He is about to leave and now the idea of “knowing God” takes on new meaning. Jesus was about to leave and go back to His Father’s house in heaven (14:2). From this point on the disciples would know God in the same way you and I can know God. No longer would Jesus be physically here, but it was by seeing Him for who He is and by believing in Him, would we have a relationship with God.

These disciples have been with Him for over three years. They have listened to all of His teaching. They have seen all of His miracles. They have traveled with Him all over the country and they are still somewhat fuzzy about knowing God. They were still fuzzy in their theology about His connection to the Father.

There has been some grammatical debate as to whether this section is a rebuke Jesus is giving to His disciples or just didactic instruction. We believe the context indicates both; this is didactic rebuke (v. 9). This is serious teaching that these disciples truly needed. May I point out that this teaching is not shallow, emotional or quick. We live in a time when people want to go to church and hear a ten to twenty minute sermonette that does not step on their toes. Often when you hear someone say, “That was a great service,” they are referring to the band not the Word of God. Jesus was a serious, systematic teacher and never is that more evident than in this Upper Room.

What Jesus teaches in this section is still needed today. People are still fuzzy about how to have a relationship with God and still fuzzy about who God or what God is. The ecclesiastical world needs a good dose of what Jesus teaches right here because what He says is this:

IN ORDER TO BE IN A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, ONE MUST BELIEVE AND KNOW THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY LINK TO GOD, FOR GOD THE SON IS THE SAME AS GOD THE FATHER.

In John 14:3, Jesus gives us our first reference to the Rapture of the Church. It has often been asked why didn't He expound more about the rapture to the disciples. One answer to this is because they had bigger and more pressing theological issues they needed to resolve. Just hours before Christ is to die on a cross, they still have not connected the dots concerning Him and His Father and this key issue takes precedence over the Rapture issue. Going to heaven was not determined by what they believed about the Rapture, but it was determined by what they believed about Him.

If we keep in mind that Jesus is driving this point home to His disciples in a private setting in the Upper Room, we may conclude that Jesus knew that this doctrinal point would be a key point of discipleship. Jesus knew that this very point - His connection to His Father would come under attack. It was important that these disciples know this truth and be able to defend this truth. The doctrine of Trinity stands up perfectly after the incarnation of Jesus Christ just like it did prior to His incarnation

One cannot walk away from this text without seeing Jesus Christ is fully and completely God. If one purposes to embrace the devil doctrines of the Mormons or Jehovah's Witness or the Muslims or any other system that denies His Deity, one deserves to be condemned.

Now there are a series of six key points that Jesus wants to make with these disciples:

POINT #1 – If you had known Me, you would have known My Father. **14:7a**

The greatest problem with man in his relationship with God is his ignorance and his arrogance. Most people think they know God and know things about God, when in all reality they don't know a thing.

A man was witnessing to a woman about sin and hell and the woman he was witnessing to said "I don't like to hear things like that because we all know God is love." The man responded, "Where did you get the idea that God is love?" The woman said, "Well everybody knows God is love." He said "Oh, no, everybody does not know it. They don't know it in India and Africa and Russia and many other parts of the world." You see the idea that God is love comes from the Bible, the same one that speaks of hell. Many believe they know truth about God when they really don't.

Jesus made this very same statement to unbelieving Jews - **John 8:19**. Now He must make it to His own supposedly believing disciples just hours from Him hanging on the cross. Both groups had failed to grasp the real identity of Jesus Christ. Now that He was about to leave, it was critical that His own disciples grasp it and get it.

What Jesus says in this verse, truly does make you stop and think. He makes the statement that if these disciples had known Him, they also would have known His Father. The obvious implication is that they do not know Him. What does that mean? What does it mean to know God or not know God? **A.** There is the knowing of facts about God which obviously these disciples knew; **B.** There is knowing God by a faith that believes in God - a theist, not an atheist; **C.** There is knowing of God in the sense of having a personal intimate connection and relationship with Him through Jesus Christ. This is what Jesus is speaking of here.

There are things you may know about God through creation. In fact, Paul tells us in Romans that men are without excuse by creation (Romans 1:20). **But you cannot know God personally and intimately apart from Jesus Christ. If you want to know God and if you want to go to heaven, you must know Jesus Christ and believe He is God.**

Jesus is saying, you do not have to wait until you get to heaven to get to know God the Father, you may know Him right now through Me. I love what H. A. Ironside said, "If you want to know what God, the Father, is like, just get better acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ" (*John*, p. 612).

POINT #2 – From now on you know Him and have seen Him. **14:7b**

The phrase "from now on" designates a new moment in time in which this doctrine absolutely needed to be embraced. To have seen Jesus Christ is to see the Father and to have known Jesus Christ is to know the Father.

Jesus delighted in speaking about God being His Father. John clearly saw this and remembered this because he uses this expression at least 156 times. In the O.T., God is not referred to much as a Father. He is referred to by His names Elohim - the self-existing, all powerful God with plurality, Jehovah - the sacred "I AM," and Adonai - the master and Lord of all. When Jesus equates Himself with God His Father, He is equating Himself with being Elohim, Jehovah and Adonai. Jesus is saying here to His disciples, from now on it is your responsibility to realize you have known God and seen God.

Christ now puts full responsibility on these disciples from this point on to realize and admit that they have known God and seen God through Him. In other words, from this point on His Deity needed to be known and seen and defended.

From this moment on, these disciples were accountable to see something the entire nation Israel missed. They must know and understand that when they saw Jesus Christ, they saw God.

Now the question comes - what would enable them to all of a sudden have the bulbs go on in their heart and brain to see this? Two things: 1) The Glory of God they were about to see; 2) The Spirit of God they were about to receive.

POINT #3 – The one who has seen Jesus Christ has seen the Father. **14:8-9**

Philip had come a long way in his faith since the day Jesus found him and called him (1:43-45). But he wanted to see some display of God. Philip said, just show us the Father and that will be enough for us to really believe. The word “show” means Philip is saying, “Let’s see some physical manifestation of the glory of God.”

He was probably thinking about seeing some of the theophanies of the O.T., in which God revealed Himself prior to Christ’s incarnation in some very unique way. Man has always wanted to see God. This too was the desire of Philip. He wanted to see some special manifestation or display of God. But as Dr. S. Lewis Johnson said, Jesus “is the great and final theophany” (*Bib. Sac.*, 119:473, Jan. 62, p. 13).

There are many people who want more than Jesus Christ. They want to have something tangible in religion. People like ritual. They like to do things because believing in Jesus just isn’t enough. That is why some people go on some annual pilgrimage to Mecca. That is why some people wash themselves in the Ganges River. That is why some crawl on their bare knees up Pilate’s staircase in Rome. That is why some like to hold rosary beads in their hands or have a crucifix to see or light some candle. They want to see something physical; they want something tangible. Jesus Christ is not enough and they are all dead wrong.

Christ instantly rebukes Philip. Jesus said to Philip, how can you even ask Me to show you the Father? What kind of stupid question is this? Don’t you know who you have been traveling with? You have God traveling with you in Person? “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.” As Charles Feinberg said back in 1935, “Never before or since has God been so clearly revealed to men.” Jesus says don’t you realize I am God and if you have a relationship with Me, you don’t need any thing else.

One of the key purposes of the incarnation of Jesus Christ was to personally reveal the Holy God to sinful man.

POINT #4 – Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in Jesus. **14:10a**

The verb “believe” is second person singular, which means that Jesus is specifically addressing the matter of Philip’s faith. The Greek construction of the question here to Philip expects a “yes” answer. Philip did believe the truth that Jesus was in God the Father and God the Father was in Jesus.

The Greek construction here is very emphatic. The preposition “in” (*εν*) is one that specifically means within something or inside something (Dana & Mantey, p. 105). Literally this means that Jesus Christ is completely within and inside the Father and the Father is completely within and inside Him. In other words, this construction clearly teaches that you have perfect and complete Deity embodied in a perfect and complete humanity.

No cult can get around the grammar here. You may choose not to believe the grammar, but you cannot say the grammar does not teach what it teaches. For the grammar clearly teaches Jesus Christ is fully and completely God. He is fully and completely Elohim, Jehovah and Adonai.

POINT #5 – Jesus does not use words or do works except by the Father. **14:10b**

Again the Greek grammar here is powerful and unavoidable. Jesus is claiming that the very words that He spoke were words the Father was speaking. The very works that He did were the works that His Father was doing. Jesus Christ never did anything in word or deed apart from God the Father. What Jesus Christ said was God the Father speaking. What Jesus Christ did, was God the Father working. When these disciples listened to and looked at Christ's humanity they were hearing and seeing His Deity. What Jesus was, God was. What Jesus is, God is.

POINT #6 – You need to believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me. **14:11**

The verb “believe” in **verse 11** is second person plural, meaning Jesus is addressing all the disciples. He is addressing everyone. The present tense means that these disciples needed to continue to believe in the connection between God the Father and God the Son.

Jesus is demanding that people believe that He is God. Either believe the grammar of what He says or believe the miracles and what He did. Believe His words or His works.

What is so ironic is that our words and works are that which exactly proves we are far short of God's glory. But Jesus' words and works prove He is God's glory. The words and works of Jesus Christ prove He is God.

Now I ask you - Have you ever witnessed a baptism in which God spoke audibly from heaven and the Spirit visibly descended on the person? Have you ever seen any other person go into a cemetery four days after a body was buried and bring the person back to life? Have you ever seen any other person talk to a storm, including the wind and the waves, and it obeys him? Have you ever seen any other person walk on top of liquid water? Have you ever seen any other person take five loaves of bread and two fish and feed 5,000 men, plus women and children? You must see this. Either believe the words and the grammar or believe the works because both show Jesus is God.

You will not go to heaven if you do not believe this. He will not come back to take you to live where He lives if you do not believe this truth. He is God. **Jesus Christ is your only God/Savior and you must believe that in order to be saved from your sins.**

All systems of religion tell you they can point you to the way of the eternal - Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Mormonism, Taoism. Jesus Christ says I don't point you in the way, “I AM THE WAY.” The reason He is the way is “HE IS GOD.”