

*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 had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."*

*Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."*

*Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip?"*

*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 I say to you, I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.*

*Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.*

*Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works I do;*

*and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.*

*Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

*If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.*

*If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper,*

*to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him*

*nor knows him. You know him for he dwells with you and will be in you.*

*I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.*

*In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you."*

**John 14:6-20**

### **"I Am in the Father, and You in Me, and I in You"**

Pastor Stephen Ridge

On the night of the Last Supper in John's gospel, Jesus stuns his disciples with a parade of imponderable facts. He invites them to a dinner at which the guest of honor, "...the Teacher and the Lord" Jesus called himself, would appear as a household slave, stripped down to a tunic, a bowl in his hands and a towel around his waist, and no sooner does he get their feet all clean than he announces that one of them is not clean, will never be clean, and Jesus sends Judas on his way into the dark of night.

It is the saddest thing, it will break the camaraderie that had bound these men to Jesus and had held them together over hill and dale for three years. Yet Jesus teaches them that the break between them is an indispensable part to his finding glory and to the disciples finding love. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another just as I have loved you." But Simon Peter can't get past the break, the parting. "Lord, why can't I follow you now?" he asks Jesus. And the answer Peter gets is that he just can't, he's going to fail.

A brave man, more than willing to fight and die for Jesus, Peter will not be willing to throw his life away for a kind of glory he doesn't even understand. So on the same night that Judas will betray Jesus, Peter will fail him despite his own best intentions. And Jesus' advice to a tableful of men who had just seen their Savior become a slave, and one of their companions wander out into darkness, and then they hear that big, strong, brave Peter would fail, would flee from Jesus side before rooster crowed at dawn?

What was Jesus' advice? He said: "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me." So Judas would lose his soul, and Peter would shrink away from Jesus' side, and the Teacher and the Lord would be betrayed and humiliated far worse than any slave, and Jesus' advice to his men was that they don't let it trouble them. Why? Carl Mende told you last week. Because there's plenty of room in heaven for anyone who wants to go there. You're going to lose me, Jesus promised them, but I'll be back, and when all is said and done, you'll be with me in heaven. After all, Jesus told them, you all know the way!

Thomas, another brave man, was too honest to make believe he knew any of this. "Lord, we don't know where you're going, so how can we know the way?" It was an honest question Jesus was happy to answer. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by me. If you'd known me, you would have known my Father as well. From now on you do know him and have seen him." Philip, the man from Greek country, wants to hear more about this, "Lord, show us the Father and it will be enough for us."

The mere mention of the Father in heaven excites the hope in Philip that a few moments in the Father's presence will sort out all the confusing things that Jesus is saying and doing. With Judas gone, and Peter floundering, and Jesus sounding stranger every moment, Philip longs for a high altitude perspective, for the crystal clarity with which the Father sees all these events from heaven. Moses had felt the same way at another moment of crisis in the wilderness some fourteen hundred years before Christ.

Moses had received a Law from God on Mt Sinai only to find that, while he'd been up on the mountain, the Chosen People had betrayed and fallen away from everything God called them to be. And faced with a Golden Calf and a panorama of human treachery and failure, Moses had asked God to show him his face. And God's answer in so many words? "Nothing doing!" No fallen man had ever seen or could ever see God face to face and survive. God is that holy, lethally holy.

John taught us as much in the very first chapter of his gospel, he wrote, *"No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made God known."* The point being that Jesus, God the Son in human flesh, is God's answer to the longing that Moses felt in the chaos at Mt. Sinai, and the longing that Philip felt in the confusion around the table in the Upper Room. So Jesus tells Philip that Philip has had what he's longing for the whole time and just didn't know it.

*"Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? 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 in me?"* And here Jesus teaches the lynchpin fact that makes the whole swirl of human treachery and failure make sense, and brings meaning to Christ's humiliation and suffering .

Jesus teaches us that he is not some sort of heavenly consultant teaching us a frame of mind that will allow us to navigate our own way through the winds and tides of life in a fallen world. Jesus himself is the way, is the truth. Jesus is the living expression of thoughts and ideals, and feelings and affections that live in the Father's heart. He tells Philip: *"The words that I say to you I don't speak on my own, but the Father within me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me, or else believe on the account of the works themselves."*

What Jesus possesses, and what we long ago lost, is a relationship with the Father that functions as a kind of compass for the thoughts and ideals and feelings and affections of our own hearts. *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."* Jesus went on to say. The point being that God's truth is not some sort of abstract conception that we master that will make us want to do what's right over and against our own desires. Jesus himself is the truth. He is that person we come to love and so we hold to his thoughts and ideals and feelings and affections because the thought of parting ways with him would leave our hearts empty and bereft.

It was Jesus' relationship with his Father that made him so devoted to his Father's plan, that prompted him to share the compassion his Father felt for lost sinners to the point of giving his life away to regain for sinners the relationship with his Father that our ancestors so recklessly threw away. So Jesus says to Philip, *"Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me..."*

As a boy, Jesus studied his Bible, learned the Law of Moses, not because he needed an "A" from his rabbi but because his Father lived in his heart and Jesus knew that Moses' law was the expression of his Father's will. As a boy, Jesus missed the caravan home from Passover because the old temple was his Father's house and every corner of the place contained some picture, some symbol of what his Father was like, what his Father wanted. *"Didn't you know,"* the boy said to his mother and step-father, *"that I would have to be in my Father's house?"*

What Jesus has begun to teach us this morning is that the whole universe turns on the axle of a relationship that exists in heaven. The Father loves the Son, who loves the Father, who loves the Spirit, who loves and exalts the Son and Father. It is that love that shows us *"the way,"* that love that defines *"the truth,"* that love that brings our lost and confused and godless souls to *"life"*. *"If you love me,"* Jesus said, *"you'll keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth...In that day you will know that I am in the Father, and you in me and I in you."*

It is a relationship with God that will restore us to a whole and balanced understanding of ourselves and each other and life, a relationship with each other that will prove whether we are his disciples or not. The truth that will save our souls, the doctrine that will set us free can only be learned in relationship. And in the weeks to come, in the Upper Room and at Gethsemane, Jesus will invite us to join the circle and teach us how it all works if only we have ears to hear and hearts to care.