

Like Son, Like Father

(John 14:7-14)

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Introduction

During my childhood, the Whitmire library offered a summer reading program.

Go to the library.

Get a book.

Write down what you read and anyone who finishes 50 books is invited to an ice cream party at the end of summer.

Well, the library was only one street over from my grandma's house, so we signed up.

Thinking that I would read some Dr. Seuss and Encyclopedia Brown, I spent a lot of time in the fiction section of the kid's library.

However, I soon learned that it only took a week to make it through every Dr Seuss book in our small library.

That lead me to what I considered the boring non-fiction section.

However, while glancing at all the books in that section, I came across a set of 3 books..

I can't remember the exact titles, but the 3 books were something like..

Mysterious Places
Mysterious Animals
Mysterious Disasters

And for the first time, my world was opened up to things like the Loch Ness Monster.

The Bermuda Triangle.

Bigfoot

The Underwater City of Atlantis.

I met the people who investigated these mysteries.

I stared at their pictures, and I was hooked right away to the point of trying to create my own mysteries..

In some ways, I am still a lover of the unexplainable and the unpredictable..

A few months ago, I came across a TV show called "Mysteries of the Abandoned" that goes to places that were once very busy with activity but now lie in ruins.

It was fascinating.

I set the DVR to record the whole series but haven't watched another one.

With that in mind, the Bible contains some mysterious truths.

How does God create the world out of nothing?

How does God divide the Red Sea to the point that Israel escaped through it on dry land?

How can a large fish swallow Jonah and then spit him up on the beach?

How can an ax head float on water?

How can Jesus feed 20,000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish?

And those are just a few of the mysteries of Scripture..

Yet, the answer to all of that is that the God of the Bible is a supernatural God.

He can and often does break the natural laws that HE created.

God is not limited in the way that we are..

He is unlimited in power and authority and can act as He wills..

But even the nature of God is also a mystery.

How can the God of the Bible be One in Three?

How can Jesus be God?

How can the Father be God?

How can the Spirit be God?

And all be fully God yet distinct in their person?

It is truly a mystery, but it also something that every true believer affirms and believes.

God is 3 Persons in 1 Essence.

But why do we believe this reality of the nature of God?

Well, we believe it because that is how the Bible consistently describes God to us.

In the very first chapter of the Bible, God is creating the universe out of nothing, and on day 6 he makes man.

Genesis 1:26.

Let us make man in our image..

In the very first book of the NT, we read this in

Matthew 3:16-17..

16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and [i]he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and [j]lighting on Him, 17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is [k]My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

In that scene of Jesus’ baptism, we see the Son and the Spirit, we hear the Father..

But these are the only places that we see the concept of triune God.

Paul closes out his second letter to the Corinthians like this..

2 Corinthians 13:14...

14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

Though we all monotheists and believe in one God, we know that God is eternally existing in three persons.

Now how are we to understand this mystery?

First and foremost, we must realize that our capacity for full understanding is lacking in our current fallenness.

You and I will never fully comprehend the mystery of the trinity.

With that said, a second reality is this.

We must constantly seek to improve our understanding of the trinity.

And I can think of no better place to increase of understanding of the relationship between Father, Son, and Spirit than in John 14-17..

Here in the Upper Room only hours away from the crucifixion, we are going to see Jesus help the disciples in their understanding of the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

Here we are going to Jesus praying to the Father to send the Spirit.

Here we are going to see Jesus dependent upon the Father and the Spirit to carry out his purpose of going to the cross..

Now, I assure that all your questions about the trinity will not be satisfied here, but we will address some of them and definitely grow in our understanding of the nature of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit..

So let's set the stage for today..

We are going to look at John 14:7-14 and get a better understanding of the relationship of the Son and the Father...

It should be a passage that comes to mind when talking to a Jehovah's witness and really anyone who doesn't affirm the deity of Jesus...

Let me read the whole passage and then we will go back and work our way through it..

John 14:7-14

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

8 Philip *said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” 9 Jesus *said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; 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 say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. 11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves. 12 Truly, truly, 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 the Father. 13 Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

To embrace the trinity requires faith.

You will not affirm a God who is 3 in 1 based solely on your understanding...

You must believe in the nature of triune God even though you cannot fully grasp..

So let's look at this passage in terms of how to believe in one God revealed in three persons..

The first thing to notice is this..

Our belief can be small at times...

Look back at verse 7 and 8...

We will simply call this...

I. Belief is Meager (7- 8)

As we arrive at verse 7, we are still in this banquet room above a house in 1st century Jerusalem.

The city is packed with people because Passover is approaching, which means a million or more Jews are arriving in the city for the week long festival.

No one but Jesus really knows how incredibly unique this Passover will be as He is crucified outside the city on Friday afternoon.

No one knows the earthquake that is going to rock that city to accompany Christ's death.

No one knows the darkness that is going to fall over that city in the middle of the afternoon as Jesus breathes his last.

No one knows the graves that are going to open as the dead rise in response to Christ's death on a Roman cross..

All of that is now less than 24 hours away as Jesus as these 11 disciples sit in this Upper Room.

Now, Jesus has predicted his death to these men.

On this very night, He has told them that one of them will betray Him, one of them will deny, but none of them are going to go where he is about to go.

Which is a clear reference to his coming death.

So all of that information shakes their world.

As verse 1 of chapter 14 says, it troubles their hearts.

So last week, Jesus sought to assure them that things would be okay for them.

He told them that they had always believed in a God that they had never seen, so they needed to believe in Him as HE went away..

Jesus also sought to assure them that they would be okay since he was going to heaven to make a place ready for them...

In others words, their hearts shouldn't be troubled by anything since they were going to heaven..

And then he comforted their hearts by reminding them that they knew the truth.

They knew that belief in Him was the way to heaven..

And we looked at all that last week..

But now in verse 7, Jesus continues to explain his relationship to the Father.

Not only is He the way to the Father, he and the Father are One.

Look at verse 7..

7 If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also

Let's be clear here..

Jesus is not telling the disciples that they didn't know him in a saving way here..

In fact, he just told all of them that he was going away to prepare a place for them in heaven.

So, this isn't a statement of their unbelief, it is simply a statement that they didn't fully understand everything there is to know about who Jesus is..

For instance, I can go and buy a car today at a car lot and I can get that car home without having to read every line of the owner's manual.

If the salesman will give me the basics, I can make that car function.

Many of you have smart phones with you today, and I would imagine that none of us know everything there is to know about them.

But we are able to use them.

In the same way, the disciples didn't know everything about Christ.

They knew His identity.

In fact, they all confessed Him as the Messiah.

They knew his power.

They knew his authority.

They knew his compassion and love.

But they still failed to grasp the truth that He and the Father were One.

And the reason we know that here is because their hearts are troubled that He is about to leave them..

In their minds, his departure would be catastrophic..

But what is saying here is this..

If you have known everything about me, my death and my leaving would not grieve you..

If you fully understood that I and the Father are one, you would know that my departure wouldn't lessen my care of you but improve it..

You see, Jesus had self-imposed limitations while on earth.

For instance, he couldn't be with the disciples at all times..

He would go away to prayer and they would stay behind.

In fact, he is going away to pray in the garden later this night, and they end up falling asleep..

But when Jesus leaves, He can be with them at all times..

But the disciples lacked this understanding..

However, it was coming..

Look at the second half of verse 7..

“..from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.”

The truth is that the disciples would get it.

They would come to understand the full picture of who Jesus was and is.

And what was the defining moment in these disciples getting a full picture of Christ?

The resurrection!

When he died on the cross, their belief was probably at its lowest, but when he rose from the dead and appears to them, it was at its highest.

In fact, even doubting Thomas' view of Jesus is expanded when he sees Jesus for the first time after the resurrection..

Listen to what he says,

John 20:28..

28 Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”

However in the Upper Room on the night before Jesus' death, the full picture of the nature of Christ was still lacking..

Look at verse 8..

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

What an amazing demand on Christ given the fact of what Phillip and the others have already seen and heard from Jesus!

Here were these men who had been exposed to miracles and authoritative teaching, yet these men are still demanding proof and sign of who Jesus is.

Again, this is not of unbelief, but it is a sign of shallow and immature belief..

These men wanted to believe that Jesus and the Father were one, but they couldn't take Jesus' word for it.

They still demanded proof.

Show us the Father and it will be enough.

These disciples remind me of people who come into churches and don't think the word of God is enough.

Instead, they seek signs in the church.

They want to hear an audible voice from God.

They want to feel the presence of God in worship.

They want to see a vision.

They want to experience the touch of an angel..

You get up and you show them the glory of God in
Scripture and they leave unsatisfied because they haven't
had an experience..

Let me confess something to you..

I've never seen an angel, be touched by angel.

I've never even known if an angel is around.

I've never heard the audible voice of God.

I've never had a vision of God.

Yet guess what?

I know that God is real.

I know that Christ is real.

I know the cross and the resurrection are real.

And I believe in all of that despite the fact that I haven't
a vision, a touch, or a voice from heaven.

I believe all that because I believe the word of God.

When Jesus said that he and the Father were one, the disciples should have believed that.

When Jesus tells them in verse 7 that seeing Him equals seeing the Father, the disciples should have believed.

But weak and immature belief demands a sign and proof.

Mature belief and mature faith is simply satisfied in the word of God.

Because in the word of God, I see Christ.

I hear from Christ.

I know that angels are real.

And I hear the voice of God on the pages of Scripture.

As Jesus seeks to explain his nature to them, he is met with what can call meager belief...

It was small and weak..

So he takes the next few verses to grow that belief..

The first way to strengthen the faith of these men is to anchor that weak faith in the words and works of Christ.

II. Belief is Anchored (9-10)

9 Jesus *said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; 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 say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. 11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.

In verse 9 and 10, Jesus expresses grief at the weak faith of Philip and the other disciples...

How long have I been with yall and yet you still don't understand that I am one with the Father?

You still don't believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?"

Well, here are two foundational proofs that I and the Father are One.

The first is the words I speak..

The testimony about Jesus is that no one had ever spoken taught with the authority that Jesus displayed.

He would open up the OT and preach it with authority and certainty..

He would cast out diseases and illnesses and demons by the power of his word.

HE would create bread and fish out of thin air by the power of his word..

Just as the Father spork the world into existence, Christ displayed similar power in the words he spoke.

But that is not the evidence of his oneness with the Father..

Verse 11..

Believe because of the works themselves.

In other words, the disciples may not have believed that Jesus spoke bread and fish into existence, but they could not deny that he fed everyone on that hill.

The disciples may not believe that he raised Lazarus by simply telling him to come out of the tomb, but the couldn't deny that Lazarus was dead and now lives.

The disciples may not believe that Jesus gave sight to a blind with the power of his word but they could not deny that the blind man could now see.

Ultimately, the words and the works of Christ are proof of his Oneness with the Father..

And the disciples were witnesses to both..

They had heard the words and witnessed the works, so their trust in Christ's identity should be strengthened..

A final truth of this passage is found in verses 12-14..

WE will call this...

III. Belief is Rewarded (12-14)

So far, Jesus has confronted their incomplete view of his person by reminding these 11 men that his words and works were proof of who He was and is..

But he steps it a step farther in verses 12-14 and tells them that those who see and believe in all that He is will be rewarded..

Verse 12..

12 Truly, truly, 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 the Father.

13 Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

On the surface, this seems like an impossible promise.

How can these 11 men with weak faith accomplish more than Jesus?

How can this group of fisherman and tax collectors do greater works than Christ?

I mean, who can improve on raising someone from the dead or giving sight to the blind?

And the answer is no one can improve on the miraculous nature of what Jesus did..

But the disciples are going to take these works to the ends of the earth..

Jesus' ministry was confined mainly to Israel.

He did go outside the borders on a couple occasions.

But these men are going to take the works and words of Jesus to the Mediterranean world..

These nature of the disciples works will not be greater in quality but they will be greater in the size of their impact..

But not will a full view of Christ be rewarded with greater works, it will also be rewarded with greater provision..

In verse 13, Jesus tells these men that he will provide for their needs and their ministries and their lives if they will ask in his name..

In other words, those who pray for things that further the name of Christ in the world will be answered with a yes.

That may sound like a big promise from Christ, but I would assure that is a bigger requirement for the one praying to ask for things in Jesus name.

This isn't the silly practice of throwing Jesus' name onto the end of our prayers as a magical way to get them answered.

To ask for things in Jesus name is to ask according to His will and His purpose and for his glory and not our own.

The disciples are going to need help to fulfill their mission in the world..

But no help will be given to those asking out of selfish ambition or pride or greed.

Christ will provide for those seeking his glory in whatever they ask, but he will not provide for those seeking their own glory in their prayers..

The disciples would be wise to examine their hearts before they pray, and we would be wise to do the same.

Conclusion

So what can we say and learn about this little exchange in the Upper Room?

#1 - The identity of Christ is of utmost importance.

I want to be honest here, but I want to be clear here.

It is frustrating to preach the glory of Christ and see Christians so disinterested in it.

I have heard people say things like, “we know Jesus is God. Move on to something else. We need help today.”

Yet, these are the same people who can’t answer the Mormon or the Jehovah’s witness or the Muslim who says that Jesus isn’t God in the flesh.

The people who sleep through passages like this and yawn when talking about the identity of Christ are the same people who won’t go to their doors when a false religion knocks at it.

Let me tell you something church.

The identity of Christ is of utmost importance to you.

John 14 should immediately come to mind when someone in your company attacks the deity of Christ.

Sadly, the church sleeps while the person of Christ is attacked.

If you can't defend the One who you claimed saved your soul, how much do you really know Him?

#2 - The insufficiency of Scripture is alarming.

Equally frustrating in the church is the growing number of people who need more than Scripture..

There are plenty of Phillips in churches today not satisfied with what Jesus has said.

Instead, they want further proof..

They want experiences and visions and voices..

For those folks, the Bible isn't sufficient.

They are always needing more.

I am concerned when the people of God need more than the word of God to grow in their faith..

God has given us His Spirit and His word and that is enough.

#3 - The instruction of God is comforting,

When I read about these 11 disciples, I don't get mad at them simply because I see myself in them.

It is easy to think that we would have gotten all this truth about Jesus right if we had been there.

But the reality is that we would have been just as ignorant and slow to believe as they were..

Yet, the kindness of God is that he takes the ignorant and teaches them.

He takes the hardheaded and instructs them in his truth.

Thomas was a doubter.

Philip needed proof.

Peter was a denier.

And the rest weren't any better either.

Yet, Christ was patient and gracious with them, and these 11 men turned the world upside down.

Today, Christ has shown patience with us all.

For the believer in here, be thankful that God has not deserted you in your stubbornness.

Instead, he has forgiven and taught and grown you..

For the unbeliever in here, God has shown patience with you as well.

Despite your unbelief, God has fed you and clothed you and protected every day of your life..

But don't take the patience of God for granted.

His patience with you has one purpose and that is to move you to repentance and faith in Him.

If you came here looking for proof that God exists, God has demonstrated his existence in the words that we read.

You don't need more evidence, more visions, more hairs standing on the back of your neck.

You simply need to believe the words and works of God that you have heard today.

May God grant you that faith today.

Let us pray.