



DESERT VIEW BIBLE CHURCH

SERIES: THIS WE BELIEVE • WEEK 3 • JOHN 14:1-26 •
1/22/2023

MAIN POINT

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all co-equal and co-eternal. Each is God and yet each is distinct in its person and work.

INTRODUCTION

How would you explain the Trinity to someone from another faith?

In his book, *Knowing God*, J. I. Packer wrote, “The evangelical world has virtually become a world of unitarianism.” Unitarians do not believe in the Trinity. In other words, evangelicals might say they believe in the Trinity but their faith in the Trinity doesn’t really affect the way they live. Do you think that is true? Why or why not?

Do you think Christians today talk about the Trinity very often? Why or why not?

Perhaps the reason that Christians today do not speak a lot about the Trinity is because we don't really understand it. The Trinity is one of the most difficult and most controversial truths of the Christian faith. It is also, however, one of the most essential. In short, the Trinity teaches us that God is one and yet three persons. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all co-equal and co-eternal. Each is God and yet each is distinct in its person and work. If we hope to grow in our relationship with God, we must get to know God as He reveals Himself to us in the three persons of the Trinity. Today, we will look at how God reveals Himself to us in the person of the Father. Throughout John 14, the different persons of the Trinity are revealed.

UNDERSTANDING

READ JOHN 14::1-11.

What does Jesus mean in referring to Himself as the Way? Truth? Life?

How would these truths have encouraged His disciples at that moment?

How might Jesus' claim at the end of verse 7 been received by faithful Jews during Jesus' day? Why?

As staggering as Jesus' claim to be the exclusive way to the Father was, His statement "you do know Him and have seen Him" must have been even more staggering to the disciples. The Jews taught that no one had seen God at any time (see John 1:18); the Greeks claimed that God was invisible. Jesus asserted that if anyone knew Him and saw Him, that person had known God and seen God.

What do you think Jesus meant by the phrase, "I am in the Father and the Father is in Me"?

What evidence do we have that Jesus' words are true?

Philip and the disciples were called to believe Jesus as well as to believe in Him. The grounds of belief are two-fold: first is Jesus' declaration, and second is the evidence of Jesus' power. There is a call to recognize the miracles as signs pointing to Jesus' deity. Believers have ample reason to be confident in Christ because His words reveal God's truth and His works reveal God's power.

In these verses, then, two persons of the Trinity are affirmed: God the Father and God the Son. They are distinct in person and role, but equal in power. God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

God the Son perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man.

READ JOHN 14:15-26.

What comes to mind when you think of the Holy Spirit?

Who is the Holy Spirit? What does the Holy Spirit do (c.f. John 14:26, 15:26, and 16:10)?

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity that indwells followers of Jesus and is the presence and power of God in their lives. The Holy Spirit helps us understand

Jesus and remember His teaching (John 14:26). The Spirit bears witness to Jesus (John 15:26) and will convict the world of sin, righteousness and God's judgment (John 16:10).

Why must we not think of the Holy Spirit as a power or a force?

When Jesus told the disciples that He would send "another," He used the word that meant another of the same kind. The counselor will be like Jesus Himself. In what ways is the Holy Spirit like Jesus?

How is the Holy Spirit our "helper" (v. 16)? In what ways does the spirit help us in our walk with Christ?

The Greek word for "helper" in verse 16 is "Paracletos," and it is used to describe an advocate or a counselor (c.f. John 14:25, 15:25, and 16:7). The original thrust of the word contains the meaning of "working on someone's behalf" or "coming alongside someone." The Counselor picked up where Jesus left off after His ascension. While Jesus physically walked the earth for a very short time, the "another" Counselor will be with us forever. He will remain our Advocate for eternity.

The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force or power, but a person. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Based on today's study, how would you respond to someone who believes Jesus is a great teacher but not truly God?

How might reminding yourself that the same spirit that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, change the way you approach your walk with Christ?

How might relying on the Spirit's power help you overcome feelings of inadequacy? What is one area of your life in which you need to rely on the power of the Spirit to help you glorify God?

PRAYER

Pray that your understanding of the Trinity will not merely be an intellectual exercise but also a life-changing truth

COMMENTARY

JOHN 14:1-26

14:1. Troubled people need peace and affirmation. The problems of the disciples were as real as our problems. In fact, it is probably fair to say that most Christians are realists. From Scripture they recognize the reality of sin, the reality of evil in the world, the reality of deliverance from sin, and the reality of ultimate eternal life. These disciples, good Jews, had already trusted in God and now Jesus asked them to trust in him. They had watched him feed five thousand people and bring Lazarus back from the dead, but now they must trust him not just for food or miracles, but with their lives.

14:2. Let us acknowledge at the beginning of this chapter that this portion of Scripture is not about huge buildings in heaven but about space. Lots of songs have been written to proclaim “mansions over the hilltop,” but Jesus simply told his disciples, “There’s room in heaven for you.” But he also wanted to indicate that he would go ahead of them to do specific work—the preparation of heaven (14:2b). The New Testament teaches us we are pilgrims and wanderers in this world. We may own homes, and some of them may be huge and beautiful. But we do not belong here because we are not primarily citizens of this world. In heaven we will be where we really belong because Jesus has gone ahead to prepare a place for us.

14:3–5. Forget the mansions; what this passage talks about is the personal touch of the Savior. Count the times he says I or me in these two short verses, and you will come up with five. He wanted the disciples to trust him personally. It was not just preparation of a place in focus here, but the personal return of Jesus to take his own to heaven. This passage does not speak about levels of reward or big buildings in heaven. It promises the second coming of Jesus Christ. Did they really know the way? They should have known; it has been obvious in this book since chapter 3.

14:6. In response to a question from Thomas, Jesus stated that He was the way and the truth and the life. Jesus did not claim to be one of many ways. Jesus is the way. He not only taught the way, demonstrated the way, and provided the way, He Himself is the way—the only way. The way is not a philosophy or a principle, but a Person. Jesus is the truth. The expression emphasizes Jesus’ utter dependability and also the saving truth of the gospel. Jesus is the single reliable source of redemptive revelation. Apart from Him there is no means of knowing God. Jesus also is the life. No real life exists apart from Him. Jesus claimed that individuals are dead without Him. He is the Source and Giver of life and the Conqueror of death. Through Jesus, the very life of God is available to us—abundant, everlasting life.

14:7. Jesus' words "if you know me" refer to the disciples' limited comprehension. Of course, they had known Him well enough to leave their homes and livelihoods to follow Him. Jesus was not saying their knowledge of Him was not real. Rather, He was saying their knowledge did not go deep enough. They had not fully comprehended that Jesus was the only and absolute way to the Father. They needed to come to a fuller knowledge of Jesus and His significance. As staggering as Jesus' claim to be the exclusive way to the Father was, His statement "you do know Him and have seen Him" must have been even more staggering to the disciples. The Jews taught that no one had seen God at any time; the Greeks claimed that God was invisible. Jesus asserted that if anyone knew Him and saw Him, that person had known God and seen God. This reality gives believers confidence and a deep assurance that trusting Jesus is all that is necessary to ensure a place in the Father's house.

14:8-9. Philip wanted an immediate display of the Father's glory. His request reveals that He had not grasped Jesus' words recorded in verse 7. Perhaps Philip desired the kind of revelation of Himself that God occasionally gave in the Old Testament. Jesus' response to Philip reflects an element of sadness and a measure of rebuke. Although Philip had heard Jesus teach and had witnessed His miraculous power for such a long time, he had failed to grasp the unity between Jesus the Son and God the Father. In light of all that the disciples had seen throughout Jesus' ministry, how could Philip say, "Show us the Father"? As believers, we need to be continually growing in our knowledge of Christ. Is our knowledge of Jesus what it should be in light of the length of time we have been following Him?

14:10. Jesus' question to Philip expected a yes answer. The essential unity between Jesus and the Father was so evident that Philip should have recognized that the words and works of the Son were the words and works of the Father. Father and Son are one in nature and essence. The word living points to a permanent relationship.

14:11. In this context the verb believe involves intellectual content as well as personal relationship. Philip and the disciples were called to believe Jesus as well as to believe in Him. Observe the two grounds of belief. First is Jesus' declaration and second is the evidence of Jesus' power. The phrase believe because of the works themselves is a call to recognize the miracles as signs pointing to Jesus' deity. Believers have ample reason to be confident in Christ because His words reveal God's truth and His works reveal God's power.

14:15–18. How do people know that they are Christians? How do you and I gain confidence that we are born again by the regenerating power of God’s Holy Spirit? The world cannot know because the world cannot accept the Holy Spirit. But the disciples were told that the Holy Spirit lives with you and will be in you. Pentecost was still in their future, so at the present time the Holy Spirit was constantly with them. But after Pentecost, he would actually be in them and in every other believer since that day. Consequently, they were identifiable (as we are) as God’s children, not orphans.

What did Jesus mean by the promise at the end of verse 18: I will come to you? Some interpreters suggest this refers to the resurrection, while others see another promise of the second coming. But in the context of these verses, it surely means the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Jesus lives in us through the person and power of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit lives in us to identify his children. The doctrine of the indwelling Holy Spirit does not rest completely on this passage, but verse 17 is of great significance. First, the spirit was dwelling “with” the apostles in the Gospel era. In Greek the words “with you” literally mean “beside you.” In that sense, the Holy Spirit had a companion ministry to the apostles. He was beside them, but not inside them. Second, Christ predicted that the Spirit would be in them. After the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, the same Spirit who was beside them would be inside them. Christ also changed verbal tenses to show the difference in the two relationships of the Spirit to the apostles, from present to future. Not only that, but this indwelling will be endless—the new Counselor will be with you forever. No orphans in the family of God, no abandoned people with no place to turn. The Holy Spirit will be a constant presence of Jesus with all believers.

14:19–21. How well we remember the song that states, “Because he lives, I can face tomorrow; because he lives, all fears are gone.” Perhaps the idea for the lyrics had its birth in John 14:19. When did the disciples (later called the apostles) realize that Jesus was in the Father and that they dwelt in Him? Did they have to wait for the second coming for that? Of course not. The reference to that day must refer to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. That frightened, hesitant group of believers huddled in an upper room knew the power of the Holy Spirit broke forth upon them because it literally blasted them around the city, around the country and around their world.

14:22–24. The Holy Spirit lives actively in us all the time; we do not need to pray for him to come to a certain meeting, or a certain occasion, or at a certain time. He is not some kind of theological or spiritual helicopter looking for a place to land.

The disciples always wanted to know why Jesus treated them differently than he did the world, and we find that question again in verse 22. But the answer is always the same. Jesus reveals himself to people he knows will respond to him and obey his teaching. The key word of these three verses is obey or perhaps even the phrase obey my teaching. Again the Lord linked himself with the Father and indicated that the Father and the Son through the Spirit take up residence in the lives of believers. Judas is also mentioned in Luke 6 and Acts 1 but only here does he speak. Likely he is the same person as the Thaddaeus of Matthew 10:3 and Mark 3:18. His interruption, like those of Thomas and Philip, reminds us not only that the disciples were confused about all this doctrine, but also that they felt comfortable enough in the presence of the Lord to interrupt him with questions. But what is the answer to his question? Quite simply, love. The obedient children of the Father receive the Holy Spirit who will manifest (show) Jesus to them, although his true nature will still be hidden from the world.

14:25–26. The Holy Spirit reminds us of truth that Jesus taught. In the case of the disciples, it was an immediate application to their spiritual memories. In our case, it is assistance in understanding and applying the Word of God. In their lives and ours, constant awareness of the Spirit's presence is a daily practicality.