

# Looking in the Face of God

Thomas Robinson, February 21, 2010

John 14:1-14

<sup>1</sup> **"Do not let your hearts be troubled.**

**Trust (believe) in God; trust (believe) also in me.**

<sup>2</sup> **My Father's house** has plenty of room; if that were not so, would I have told you that **I am going there to prepare a place for you?**

<sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you,

**I will come back and take you to be with me**

**that you also may be where I am.**

<sup>4</sup> **You know the way to the place where I am going."**

<sup>5</sup> **Thomas** said to him, "Lord, **we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"**

<sup>6</sup> **Jesus** answered,

**"I am the way and the truth and the life.**

**No one comes to the Father except through me.**

<sup>7</sup> If you really **know me**, you will **know my Father** as well.

From now on, **you do know him and have seen him."**

<sup>8</sup> **Philip** said, "Lord, **show us the Father** and that will be **enough** for us."

<sup>9</sup> **Jesus** answered: "**Don't you know me**, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time?

**Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.**

How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?

<sup>10</sup> Don't you believe that **I am in the Father**,

and that **the Father is in me?**

The **words** I say to you I do **not** speak on **my own authority**. Rather, it is **the Father, living in me**, who is **doing his work**.

<sup>11</sup> Believe me when I say that **I am in the Father**

and **the Father is in me;**

or at least believe on the evidence of the **works themselves**.

<sup>12</sup> Very truly I tell you, all who **have faith in me** will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even **greater things than these**, because **I am going to the Father**.

<sup>13</sup> And I will do whatever you ask in my name, **so that the Father may be glorified** in the Son. <sup>14</sup> You may ask me for anything in my name, and **I will do it."**

John 14:23

<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered him, "Those who **love me** will keep my word, and my **Father will love them**, and **we will come to them and make our home with them."**

John 17:24

<sup>24</sup> "Father, I want those you have given me **to be with me where I am**, and to see **my glory**, the glory you have given me **because you loved me** before the creation of the world."

## Home Beyond Our Troubled Hearts

This text begins with famous words of comfort. But they follow troubling words about betrayal and denial. The discourse ends, *“In this world you will have trouble...”* (16:33), and Jesus is on his way to crucifixion. We live in a world of challenges, trials, death. We are restless seeking our meaning in things we gain. We long for fulfillment, wholeness, meaning, life - a home of love, welcome.

Jesus wants his disciples strong for their struggles by knowing their true home - where they are known, welcomed, loved, fulfilled. Don't settle for stuff! Root your life in the trust of a personal relationship: *“believe in God/me.”* The “me” we trust is one willing to give himself completely for our sake, to prepare a place for us, immersed in the glory of divine love (17:24). The eternal promise begins now in the present life - God, Jesus, Spirit making their home in our lives (14:23). [“You have made us for Yourself and our heart is restless till it finds rest in You.” -Augustine]

### “You Know the Way!”

Jesus leads the disciples by assurances that they know more than they think they do. Thomas protests. The answer leads them deeper into their relationship with Jesus. “I am.” The washer of feet, crucified servant, is the **Way**, the **Truth**, the **Life**. In his incarnation and passion he creates the bridge from God to us, the way for us. He embodies the reality of God's love, the core reality, truth of all existence. He is the creator of life and opens God's divine, eternal life to us mortals. The Gospel.

An astonishing affirmation. The relativism of our time protests against such assertions: all faith claims are equally true/false, personal truths. Assertions of actual truth are bad taste, dangerous, intolerant. But Jesus' affirmation has no element of coercion, enforced by state power. It is God's ultimate inclusion, grace, reconciliation. The affirmation is true or false; it can't be just opinion. If God is not God of the universe, he is God of nothing. If Jesus is not Lord, giver of life, servant of all, God with us, then he is a fool and deceiver. Forget him. The truth of Jesus denies to his followers the right to arrogance or coercion; they contradict him. None of us knows the full extent of all God is doing in Jesus.

### “Show Us the Father!”

Jesus leads to the next step of insight/revelation. The Disciples know it's wrong to say they've seen God. But they have. We humans have confused, obscured conceptions of God. The Gospel does not define Jesus by calling him God, but defines God by pointing to Jesus. When you look into the face of love in that foot-washing servant, self-giving crucified one, you are looking at God's face.

God is radically personal. The great purpose of the incarnation is to allow God's true reality, God's glory, to be experienced to the fullest extent possible by humans. We often want to “glorify God” - push God to a safe distance, away from us. God comes close, entering into personal relationship, sharing home with us, pouring out love, serving without reservation, giving his life, showing God's glory.

Jesus says his work will continue through his disciples. Even greater things to be done. As we seek to show that reality/glory of God, he continues to work. The personal God shows his glory, self-giving love in our trusting service in his world.