

**"I am the way, and the truth, and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through me."**

John 14:6

Jesus Is the Way to the Father

JOHN 14:1–14 ¹*"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴And you know the way to the place where I am going." ⁵Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" ⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."*

⁸*Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied."* ⁹*Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" ¹⁰Do 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; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves.*

¹²Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

As Jesus continues to instruct his disciples at the supper, he anticipates the effects of his own departure. He urges them not to let their hearts be troubled; rather, he says, “Believe in God, believe also in me” (verse 1). Believing, in John’s gospel, is personal and relational. Jesus urges his disciples to place their trust in God and in himself, and also to do all they can to overcome their fears and their doubts with confidence and fidelity.

Jesus consoles his disciples by assuring them that he will not forget them after his departure. In fact, he tells them that one of the purposes of his leaving is to prepare a place for them among the many places for dwelling in his Father’s house (verse 2). The metaphor imagines many dwelling units combined to form an extended household. The image suggests abundant space and family closeness among all those who are prepared to follow Jesus. As Son of the Father, Jesus establishes his disciples as members of the Father’s household and makes his own home a permanent, eternal residence for them.

Yet, when Jesus tells them that they already know the way to the Father’s home, Thomas responds, saying that they know neither the place where he is going nor how to get there. Jesus responds, in one of his most memorable sayings, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (verse 6). He himself is the road to the Father’s home. He himself is the way to experience the very essence of truth and the fullness of life, the greatest aspirations of humankind. Jesus is going to the Father, whose love defines the meaning of home; all the homes we have ever known in this life pale by comparison.

The disciples will not be forced to find their own way to the Father or to use only their own resources for the journey. For the Father is transcendent and hidden, the one whom even Moses was not allowed to see (Exod 33:20). When Jesus tells his disciples that they already know the Father and have seen him, it is natural that Philip should be confused and assume that he is referring to a wondrous divine vision awaiting them (verses 8–9). But Jesus responds, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.” The union between the

Father and the Son is so intimate that knowing him and seeing him is the same as knowing and seeing the Father. Because Jesus is the Word of God made flesh, he provides firsthand revelation of God. The transcendent God is manifested in his life, not only through the words of his teaching and the signs of his power, but also through the greatest sign in which he will be lifted up from the earth and draw all people to himself.

The responses of Thomas and Philip to the teachings of Jesus indicate that they do not yet understand how the Father is present in Jesus or how they themselves will enter by faith into that wondrous flow of life between the Father and the Son. The promise that Jesus makes about his disciples' future is nothing less than stunning: "The one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father" (verse 12). Those who believe in Jesus will do "greater works" than even the wonderful signs performed by Jesus during his earthly ministry. His disciples will do greater works because Jesus is going to the Father and will be working within them as their exalted Lord. Whenever the disciples ask in his name, Jesus will continue to do the works of the Father among them.

Reflection and discussion

- What aspects of being home do I most enjoy? How will it feel when these are infinitely multiplied in my Father's house?

- What are the issues that are perplexing Thomas and Philip while Jesus teaches them? In what way do I also struggle with these issues of understanding and belief?

- What are the implications for my own life of Jesus' memorable saying: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life"?

- Jesus tells his disciples that the glory of God, once seen in the deeds of Jesus, will be seen in the deeds of his church. In what ways does the church demonstrate these "greater works" in its worship and sacraments?

Prayer

Son of the Father, you are the way, the truth, and the life. Show me the way that leads to the eternal home where you live with the Father. Help me to trust that you will do whatever I ask in your name so that your Father may be glorified.