

John 14:1-31

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[0:00] I had a couple of conversations this week with non-Christian friends who asked me about what they called the current celebrity fascination with Jesus. We mentioned last week about the personality Russell Brand getting baptized and I noticed this week that he posted a video of what we might describe as his testimony describing how he had come to believe in Jesus.

But he's not alone. There are lots of people who are opening up conversations about these things. Joe Rogan, no less, recently said that the answer to the problems that he saw around him in the world could only be fixed by Jesus.

He said, we need Jesus, I think, for real. End quote. What did I think about this, these people asked me?

Well, one of the conversations focused on the question of truth. This was because in an interview with Kid Rock, Joe Rogan said, quote, I want to believe Jesus was real.

I really want to believe that. So we discussed the historical question. That was the direction that the conversation went around the historicity of Jesus and the significance of who he was if the history was credible.

[1:14] The other conversation went in a very different direction. My friend asked basically, through various different ways, the question really came down to, what's in it for me?

If I believe all of this, what's in it for me? It is a common desire. The call of Christ is all-encompassing. He calls us to lay down our lives, to die to our old selves in order to give ourselves to him.

And the question is, if we are prepared to do that, if we trust ourselves to him, what will he give us in return? And it's not just unbelievers.

It's not just skeptics that ask that question because I think it's a question that lies deep down in the hearts of lots of professing Christians as well. It's a version of the same question.

What's in it for me? Is it really worth it? But I wonder, teenagers, this morning, as you look around and you see the lives that your friends are living and your parents have been bringing you along to church, you've been raised in a Christian home, and you wonder, is Jesus really worth it?

[2:23] Well, this passage in John 14 this morning, back in the upper room, in this intimate gathering with the Lord Jesus, speaks directly to those questions. The question of truth and the question of what's in it for me.

Is it worth it? And what I want us to see is the answers that it provides, the answers that this passage provides, are jaw-dropping in their magnitude.

Now, we saw last week, it's the night before Jesus' death, and he is explaining the significance of all that lies ahead, the significance for him and also for his disciples.

Judas, we finished up last time, has just gone out to action his betrayal. And if you look, verse 31 of chapter 13, Jesus says, right, it's now time to go.

Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and glorify him at once. Jesus is saying, my hour has come, it's time now for me to be glorified.

[3:25] I'm going to be exalted on the cross. And in that event, the Father will be glorified, and the Father will in turn give glory to his Son. Jesus clarifies that he's leaving his disciples.

They can't come with him yet, chapter 13, verse 33. But as they continue serving him on earth, the mark of their discipleship will be love, 34 and 35.

The love that Jesus has shown to the world during his earthly ministry is to be continued through the love of his disciples. This is how the world will know that the church is the church.

This is how our culture will know that we follow and love the Lord Jesus Christ. It is as we love one another. Now, as Jesus says these things, it is shocking and unsettling for the disciples who still haven't grasped what this hour that has now come, what his departure will mean.

So the questions start to flood in. Chapter 13, verse 36. Simon Peter. Then Thomas 14, verse 5. Philip joins in.

[4 : 30] 14, verse 8. And then the other Judas, verse 22, completes the job. Peter, Thomas, Philip, the other Judas. Jesus is saying, I'm leaving and you can't come.

And they say, wait, where, how, what? Are you sure? Their heads are spinning. But what happens in this back and forth in this chapter as Jesus answers them is that his departure will actually be better for them.

And he promises them. He promises every Christian four things. They're not really things, as you'll see, but he promises them. He makes four promises. Here's the first one.

He promises them future glory. Verse 2. Now, it's probably not a surprise at this point, but Peter is the first one to jump in. Verse 36.

Lord, where are you going? Jesus answered him, where I'm going. You cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward. Peter said to him, Lord, why can I not follow you now? I'll lay down my life for you.

[5 : 34] Jesus answered, will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times. Let not your hearts be troubled.

Believe in God. Believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

Where are you going, Jesus? Well, he repeats that the disciples can't follow him now. There's a delay between his going and the disciples following. But he is going via the cross, as we heard last week, to his Father in order to prepare a place for his followers.

There is, verse 2, plenty of room in the Father's house. And the Son is going to get things ready. He will come later for the disciples and bring them to where he is. But because his route to glory requires him to go through the cross, he has to go ahead.

Only he can do what is needed to secure this future home, this future glory. That's what Peter doesn't get. Why can't I go with you now?

[6 : 45] I'd lay down my life for you. I'll go to battle with the Roman authorities for you, Jesus. Don't you worry about that. You can trust me. He's still missing the point of the foot washing. He doesn't understand where Jesus is going or why he is going or why he needs to go.

Peter can't atone for sins. Peter can't bring the cleansing that was demonstrated to the disciples so vividly moments earlier when Jesus washed their feet.

Jesus must go ahead. And he must go alone. Jesus promises his disciples future glory.

A new home for eternity in the presence of God. He is promising us a transformed future where everything sad will come untrue. But we have to wait.

We have to wait. And we can't bring it in on our terms. That's what Peter was trying to do. We must beware the impatience and the self-reliance of Peter. He doesn't know what he's saying.

[7 : 49] Augustine said this, The weak man boasted of his willingness, but the physician has an eye on the state of his health. The ignorant was bold.

He that foreknew all condescended to teach. None of us can bring about our own salvation. Not Peter. Not any of us. And none of us are strong enough to endure temptation every step of the way, all the way to glory.

Jesus tells Peter what we must do. Not, I'll go with you. Not, leave it to me. Not, let's get this job done quickly.

None of us can do that. What does Jesus say? Verse 1, chapter 14. Don't be anxious while you wait. Believe in God. Trust the God who has made himself known in Jesus Christ.

What's in it for you? What's in Christianity for you? A glorious future. Future glory.

[8 : 53] And the effect of knowing what lies ahead works its way back into the present. In that it floods your life with hope. If this life is all there is, we have no grounds for hope in anything.

If there's no hell below us, if above us is only sky, if there's no one to answer to, and the world is random, we have no grounds to believe that anything we do ultimately matters.

We just have here and now. We just have make the best of it while we can. We just have grit your teeth and grin and bear it. We don't have any hope.

If our life is good, it'll all come to an end and there'll be nothing. If life is bad, well tough. But Jesus says something else. He says there is a Father.

There is a God to whom we will all one day give an account. And he has a house. He doesn't have a house, but that's the imagery. He has a place where we will go and rest in glory.

[10:02] That reality that lies in the future reframes everything for us now. Completely reorders our priorities. It means that the best experience we have now is only the start.

And it means that the worst experience we have now is always on the timer. However, it will one day give way to peace and joy in the presence of the living God. He promises future glory.

Well, Thomas asked the next question, verse 5. Can you see? Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way? You say, you know where we're going, but we don't.

How can we know the way? Here's the second promise. He promises us Christ. He promises us Christ. Verse 6. Jesus promises himself. I am the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. Jesus is the way. By dying on the cross, by fulfilling his hour, by being glorified, he is the way through which sinful humanity can have their sins forgiven and are granted access to God.

[11:15] How do we get to the Father's house? How do we get to our future rest? How do we get to glory? Christ is the way. There isn't another way. If you're trying another way, stop it and get back onto this track.

This is the only track. Jesus is the way. Jesus is the truth. His words are the Father's words. His actions are the Father's actions. He's made that point already in John's Gospel, chapter 7, chapter 8, chapter 7, 16, and 8, 29.

But have a look further down, verse 10. We'll come to this again in a moment, but have a look. 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 authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.

Here is the answer to the question about truth, actually. Jesus is not only real. He didn't only exist. Almost all sane people know that the history about Jesus is sound, but he is the definition of truth itself.

There is no truth apart from Jesus, because he is the exact representation of the Father. You could say that he defines reality itself. If you're asking the, is Christianity true question, here's where you need to go.

[12:34] Look at Jesus. Listen to Jesus' words. Look at how he acts. And what you see there, what you hear there, is the embodiment. It is truth enfleshed. And you will see that in his ministry, he reveals the truth about God's rescue.

He tells us how it is. He reveals how it is that we can be put right with God. He knows the way to the cross, and he knows the way out of the empty tomb, out of the tomb in order that it would become empty.

And he knows the way into the Father's presence, where he prepares a place for all and any who believe. And Jesus is the life.

Again, it's another thread. John's gospel has thread upon thread, that just keep being pulled along the way. John has followed this one. In him was life, right back in chapter 1, verse 4.

He has life in himself, chapter 5, verse 26. He is the resurrection and the life. You remember he said that at Lazarus' tomb in 11:25.

[13:37] And this is the life that he lays down for his sheep in his glorification, only to take it up again in the resurrection. All of this means that eternal life has its source in him.

There is nothing of value anywhere in the world, nothing that does not come from or find its significance in Christ. Apart from Jesus, there is no way to God, there is no truth, and there's no life. Apart from Jesus, there's nothing. We can create our own truth, we can describe what we have now as life, but we're just pretending because we don't have the authority to define these things.

There's no such thing as my personal truth. Truth is objective or it's not truth. But when you put your faith in the Lord Jesus, you have the way to God.

You have the truth about reality. And the life that is truly life is yours. And you have these things because you have Christ. You have these things because you have Christ who embodies these

things.

[14:46] What's in it for you? You get Christ. Well, that's not enough for Philip. He wants to see the Father. Just show us God. That'll be enough, Philip says.

Look, it's simple. If God appeared and showed himself to me, then I'd believe. We hear that a lot, don't we? If your God turned up and revealed himself to me, well, then I would believe. Well, this is Jesus' third promise.

He promises the Father. Verse 9. Promises the Father. Oh, Philip. Philip, Philip, Philip.

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 that I say to you, I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Was Philip asking for a vision of divine glory like the one that Moses had in Exodus 33?

[15:48] Oh, show us your glory. Show me your glory. Maybe. But it's clear that he's misguided. He has been with Jesus from the beginning of his ministry and the way that Jesus responds to him presupposes that he should have recognized him.

He should have understood him for who he was. He should have known that he is the one who makes the Father known. And Jesus goes on to explain exactly why that is the case.

He says he is in the Father and the Father is in him. If you were at Andrew's adult Sunday school class this morning, you'll be all over this.

But as much as there is a distinction between the persons of the Father and the Son, there is a clear and essential overlap and unity. It's what theologians call mutual indwelling.

Now that is true of the Trinitarian persons in the divine essence, in God and himself. But it's also true in the way that the incarnate Son reveals the words and the works, verse 10, of the Father.

[16:53] Everything Jesus is, everything he has said and done, is an expression, not only of the Father, but by the Father. We can and we must differentiate the persons of Father and Son, but we cannot and we must not separate their operations.

Whoever has seen the Lord Jesus has seen the Father. The Lord Jesus' works are the Father's works, and his words are the Father's words. And what that means is, when you get Christ, you get the Father.

You get drawn into a relationship with the God who made heaven and earth, and you become the recipient and the beneficiary of this astonishing fatherly care.

The truth is, by nature, because of our rebellion and sin, we are under the anger of God.

His anger is entirely just and right for our rebellion against him in the world that he has made. And yet, when we come to Christ, that anger is turned away because it fell on Jesus at the cross at his glorification.

[18:05] And when it fell on him, it meant that the floodgates of God's mercy were flung wide open, and the love of a perfect Father flows down like waves in our direction.

He promises his disciples future rest. He promises his disciples himself Christ. He promises them in getting Christ, they get the Father. But he doesn't just promise those things.

We're actually even more privileged than that. Fourthly, we also get the Spirit. He promises the Spirit. Verse 15, If you love me, 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, 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. The Spirit, the helper, he is the gift of the Father.

Verse 16, He is only given to those who are in Christ, and he dwells with and in his followers. Verse 17, And the Spirit isn't just the gift of the Father, but look at verse 18.

[19:28] Do you see how Jesus says, I will come to you. In the coming of the Spirit, Christ comes to the believer. The Spirit is the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us.

He is Christ in you. The Christ who is physically present with the disciples can only be present in one place at one time. That's what having a physical body means.

You can't be in two places at once if you have a body, a physical body. But when the Spirit is poured out, and that will happen after the events of his hour, he will come at Pentecost later.

Christ, by his Spirit, can be present, verse 17, with them and in them, wherever they are. This is the blessing that comes solely to those who follow Jesus, who love him and keep his commandments,

verse 21.

And Judas, verse 22, not the betrayer. Can you imagine this poor bloke the rest of his life? What's your name? Judas, not that one.

[20 : 38] He wants to know how this works, verse 22. So he asks, how will Christ be made known to his followers and not to other people? And the answer, verse 23, is by the presence of the Spirit.

If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words, and the word that you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.

Again, Father and Son, mutual indwelling. These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring you to remembrance.

Bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Anyone who trusts in the Lord Jesus receives the Spirit, and he, and it's personal, he, not an impersonal force, he is the third person of the Trinity. He will open your eyes and your heart to see Christ and understand his word. That is the reason why people change their minds about God. That is why lives are turned on their heads.

[21 : 49] That is why once hardened enemies of the Lord are brought to repent and believe in Christ. If Russell Brand has been genuinely converted, if Joe Rogan genuinely does see his need for Jesus, this is why the Holy Spirit has transformed them on the inside.

But what Jesus is saying here is about the Spirit's work and these anxious believers. He is making promises to them as believers. He's saying, I'm leaving you.

I'm going to go and be glorified. I'm going to rise from the dead and I'm going to return to the Father in order to prepare a place for you. And then I'm going to come back for you. But I'm leaving.

But you have no need to fear because the Spirit will be present with you. And look, look what the Spirit will do. The Spirit's coming, verse 12, will mean greater works.

The powerful work of the Father through the Exalted Son will now be carried out in the world by the disciples in the power of the Holy Spirit. The gospel will now go farther and wider than Jesus was ever able to take it in His earthly ministry.

[22 : 58] The gospel will go to the ends of the earth in the power of the Holy Spirit in a way that wasn't possible when Jesus was on earth. Greater Communion, verses 13 and 14.

In the same breath as talking about the works of God, Jesus includes a prayer. Ask anything in my name and I will do it. It's not a blank check for whatever we want. Those that rip that verse bleeding out of its context are doing an injustice.

It's not a blank check for what we want. It is a recognition that when we are captured by the Holy Spirit, we want to do God's work in dependence on Him, in communion with Him.

And the Spirit enables that deeper communion. He enables that closeness with God and that empowering by God to do His work in the world. Greater works, greater communion.

And then look at verse 27. Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you.

[24 : 00] Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. The Spirit gives us a greater peace. The Spirit of God brings the believer the peace of Christ.

Restless souls find rest in Him and Him alone. A restless heart only finds rest in Christ. How is that possible in the power of the Holy Spirit?

So what's in Christianity for you? Taken together? You get God. You get God.

When you come to Jesus, you get drawn into the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You get reality. You get truth and beauty and goodness.

You get security for the future and a certain hope. You get a new transformed life and the power to enable you to live to please God. But all of these things are consequences. At the most fundamental level, when you come to Christ, you get God.

[25 : 07] And when you get God, you get everything. So, yes, Joe Rogan, we do need Jesus for real. But, it's not just the celebrities who need to grasp this.

It's not just unbelievers who need to grasp this. If you're a Christian, this is what you possess. You have God. Why would we want anything else?

Let's pray.