

Session 11 Participating in the Family Dynamics of the Trinity (Jn. 14)

I. DO NOT BE TROUBLED (JN. 14:1-6): BELIEVE WHAT GOD SAYS

- A. The primary themes in John 14 are Jesus' exhortation on how to find peace when our hearts are troubled and how to relate to the Father in a deep way. Jesus told them not to be troubled by the fact that He was leaving them physically (Jn. 13:33, 36). He used the occasion of His departure and their troubled heart to explain the new relationship with God they were to enter (14:7-24). Going deep in our relationship with God is an essential aspect of overcoming a troubled heart.
- ¹***“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.” (Jn. 14:1)***
- B. He highlighted two foundational truths to help His people overcome a troubled heart (Jn. 14:2-6). We go to the Father—physically in the resurrection (v. 2-3), and relationally in this age (v. 4-6).
1. ***Father's house***: We will be with the Father and Jesus forever on the earth (v. 2-3). The Father's house is the New Jerusalem, which will descend to the earth (Rev. 21:2, 10). The Father's house has many mansions, because His family is very large. Knowing that we will live in the Father's house forever is a key to overcoming despair (2 Cor. 4:16-18).

²***“In My Father's house are many mansions...I go [to the cross] to prepare a place for you...³I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” (Jn. 14:2-3)***

 - 2. ***Relating to the Father***: We can cultivate a deep relationship with the Father in this age (v. 4-6). We are called to *participate in the family dynamics of the Trinity* as described by Jesus in John 14:7-24 and then applied in John 15:1-11.

⁵***Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going...”⁶Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. (Jn. 14:5-6)***
- C. ***The way***: Jesus' death on the cross made a way for us to go to the Father by paying the debt of our sin on the cross to give us access to relationship with the Father in this age (Eph. 2:18).
- D. ***The truth***: Jesus showed the truth about what the Father is like and how He relates to His people. He told the truth about how He related to the transcendent God of Israel *as a Man* (Jn. 14:7-11), and how His people are to relate to the Father in a similar way by the Spirit (Jn. 14:12-24).
- E. ***The life***: Jesus is the supernatural life that enables us to relate to the Father in deep union and to experience the realm of the Father. Jesus is the only source of deep relationship with the Father. This relationship requires an on-going present tense empowering of the Spirit to understand and walk it out. Jesus elaborated on being “the life source” to union with the Father in John 15:1-11.
- F. ***Summary***: Jesus is the *way* to the Father by His death; He is the *truth* about how the Father relates (14:7-24); and He is the *life* source to empower this relationship (15:1-11). He addressed each point in sequence. John 14 unfolds logically when reading it with a relational paradigm.

II. UNDERSTANDING JESUS (JN. 14:7-9): REVEALING THE FATHER

- A. The disciples found it difficult to believe that a *human* could relate to the transcendent God in an intimate way. They did not understand Jesus and His mission, thus they did not understand what the Father is like or how He wants to relate to His people. Jesus came to make a way for us to relate to the Father forever and to show what the Father is like and how He desires to relate. He had taught that to see Him was to see the Father, but they did not understand (Jn. 8:19; 12:45).
⁷“If you had known [understood] Me, you would have known [understood] My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen [understood] Him”...⁹Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known [understood] Me, Philip? He who has seen [understood] Me has seen [understood] the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? (Jn. 14:7-9)
- B. Israel was looking for the Messiah to reveal Himself as the Son of David and the king of Israel, who would liberate them from the oppression of Rome, heal their diseases, and prosper them.
- C. They believed He was Messiah—even the Son of Man and the Son of David—but they did not understand that Jesus lived as the model man, according to God’s original design. Jesus called Himself “the vine,” as the model and source of how God wanted to relate to His people (15:1).

III. UNION BETWEEN THE FATHER AND JESUS (JN. 14:10): HOW GOD RELATES (JN. 14:20)

- A. Jesus elaborated on John 14:7-9 by describing His relationship to the Father as a Man (14:10). Jesus’ point was to show how He relates to the Father to introduce how God relates to His people (Jn. 14:20). The truths in John 14:10 and 20 are foundational to abiding in Christ (Jn. 15:4).
¹⁰“Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works...²⁰At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.” (Jn. 14:20) (Jn. 14:10, 20)
- B. The gospel of John highlights at least five elements in the union between the Father and Jesus—their *mind* (thinking), *heart* (feelings), *will* (values), *words* (speaking), and *works* (actions). In other words, they think, feel, value, speak, and act in ways that are in unity with each other. Their being is of one essence, and their mind and will are distinct, yet they are in perfect unity.
- C. To be “in” the Father or the Son includes being in perfect agreement with the fullness of love and joy (Jn. 15:9-11). When Jesus said, “I am in the Father,” He was saying, “My thoughts, feelings, values, words, and actions resonate in and move the Father’s heart, and what He thinks and says resonates in Me. The Father is moved powerfully by what Jesus thinks and says, and vice versa.
- D. John 14:20 is one of the most dramatic and “extreme” statements in the Scripture—Jesus applied the relational reality that the Father enjoys with Him as a Man to our relationship with God. The Spirit enables God’s people to *participate in the family dynamics of the Trinity* by abiding in Christ. The fruit of this union of humans with God is *miracles* (v. 12), *answered prayers* (v. 13-14), and *obedient love* (v. 15) by the power and leadership of the indwelling Spirit (v. 16-17).

- E. Thoughts and words are two of the main elements in the union between Father and Son and between Jesus and the Body of Christ. We grow spiritually as we exert effort to bring our thoughts and words into unity with God's; this is foundational to abiding in Christ (Jn. 15:4-7).
- F. Thoughts and words in agreement with the Spirit bind people to God and each other in His grace. David understood the power of our thoughts and words in our relationship with God (Ps. 19:14).
¹⁴***“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight...” (Ps. 19:14)***
- G. The enemy seeks to disrupt our ongoing conversation with Jesus with busyness, anxiety, fear, and frustration, because he knows that fruit bearing comes from maintaining dialogue with God.
- H. In calling us to abide in Christ (15:1-11), Jesus elaborated on being our “life” (14:6). The Spirit is the divine Helper who came to lead us by His life into transforming union with God.
¹⁶***“...the Father...will give you another Helper that He may abide with you forever...”²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit...will teach you all things...” (Jn. 14:16, 26)***
¹³***“...the Spirit of truth...will guide [escort] you into all truth.” (Jn. 16:13)***
- I. The Holy Spirit wants to lead and help us in developing the same five elements in the union between the Father and Jesus—their *mind* (thinking), *heart* (feelings), *will* (values), *words* (speaking), and *works* (actions). We are to intentionally seek to think, feel, value, speak, and act in ways that are in agreement with God, knowing that this deeply moves the Father's heart. Over time, what He thinks, feels, says, and does will fill our hearts us and powerfully move us.
- J. John 15 is a highpoint in Scripture related to our relationship with God. Jesus' main exhortation was to “abide in Me” (v. 4-5) that we may bear much fruit that remains forever (v. 16).
⁵***“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me [talks to Me], and I in him [I talk to him], bears much fruit...¹⁶I chose you...that your fruit should remain...” (Jn. 15:5, 16)***
- K. Transforming union with God has two elements—we abide in Him, and He abides in us.
- L. ***Abides in Me***: The foundational activity related to growing in God is for us to abide in Christ. It involves three main activities: *talking with God*, *trusting His Word*, and *obeying His leadership*. Talking with God is the core activity of abiding. This is where it starts, but it includes more.
- M. ***Jesus abides in us***: There are two aspects of Jesus abiding in us: He abides, or lives, in our spirit *instantly* at our new birth, and abides, or manifests His presence in our hearts *progressively* as His activity increases in our mind and emotions. The Spirit renews our mind and emotions as we engage with Him. Both aspects are involved, but He emphasized the second aspect in John 15:5.
- N. Paul spoke of Jesus “dwelling in our heart” by His manifest presence (Eph. 3:17) and of Christ being formed in our hearts (Gal. 4:19). Jesus promised to manifest Himself to us (Jn. 14:21-23).
¹⁶***...that He would grant you...to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,*** ¹⁷***that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith... (Eph. 3:16-17)***

- O. ***Jesus abiding in our hearts:*** This involves at least three activities: the indwelling Spirit *teaches us* about Jesus' heart, Word, and will; *He inspires us* to obey or respond; and *empowers us* by renewing or transforming our mind and emotions (desires) to come into agreement with His.
- P. Some only emphasize our legal union with Christ—our justification by faith (Rom. 3:21-31). Others only emphasize our living union with Christ—our participation with His indwelling life.
- Q. We embrace both the work that Jesus did **for us** on the cross and the work the Spirit does **in us** as He draws us into an intimate relationship with God as our Father and Bridegroom King.
- R. Bible study is to lead us into conversation with God by giving the “conversational material” for our prayer life. It is simply speaking the truths of the Word back to Him as we read it. Talking to God as we pray-read the Word is a practical way to strengthen our life of abiding in Christ. This makes prayer enjoyable. (***For an article on How to “Pray-Read” the Word,*** see mikebickle.org)

IV. BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY

- A. We cannot bear eternal fruit in God's eyes apart from this abiding relationship. It is pride to think that we have the strength to live right spiritually, to relate to people in God's love, and to do the work of ministry that bears fruit that remains without connecting with Jesus.
⁵“He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” (Jn. 15:5)
- B. The Christian faith can be outworked in two very different lifestyles—“abiding Christianity,” which results in peace, joy, and spiritual fruitfulness, or “non-abiding Christianity,” resulting in spiritual boredom, burnout, and much anxiety, fear, and turmoil. Non-abiding Christians live with a troubled heart and lack peace, fruitfulness, and the feeling of being loved by God.
- C. The believer who neglects to cultivate an abiding relationship with Jesus will suffer spiritual boredom and burnout. This approach to Christianity is very common, but it is not biblical.
- D. Some who embrace Christian ethics and activities do not always walk in biblical Christianity, which only flows from a life of abiding in Christ. Jesus spoke to those who had a name for being alive and radical for God, but in truth were spiritually dull on the inside (Rev. 3:3).
- E. We can be genuinely saved and have a lifestyle filled with Christian ethics and activity, and yet live without abiding in Christ because we do not regularly dialogue with Him. The fight for living faith is found in contending for a lifestyle of abiding that regularly brings our thoughts and words to Jesus and takes time to be absorbed in His (Jn. 15:7).

V. QUESTIONS FOR SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION (*i.e., FCF FRIENDSHIP GROUPS*)

1. Which point in this session would you like more understanding of?
2. Which point most inspired or challenged you? Why? What will you do differently to apply it?
3. Which point do you want to impart to a younger believer? Why? How will you elaborate on it?
4. What is one point in this session that needs to be emphasized to the larger Body of Christ? Why?