

24. John 14:1-14

Getting started (but only if your group is up for it!)

What passage of Scripture would you want read at your funeral? *[This passage is probably one of the three most chosen. The others are 1 Corinthians 15 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17.]*

Observations

1. Why might the hearts of the disciples be troubled (verse 1)? *[See 13:33-38. Jesus had been predicting his departure.]*
2. In verse 5, do you think Thomas was just being thick, or are we too quick to read in our knowledge of how the story develops?

Interpretation

1. Why is it important, in the context of this part of John's gospel, for his disciples to trust Jesus?
2. We read in Revelation 21:1-4 that when Jesus returns he will bring heaven to earth. How does this fit with Jesus coming back and taking us to another place? *[Suggestion: we do not want to take every line of Scripture too literally. In the context of a metaphor of a place with many rooms it makes more sense to talk about us being taken there, than to say, 'I will come back and remake earth to be a place with many rooms'.]*
3. What does Jesus mean when he says that he is 'the way, the truth and the life'?
4. Why does Jesus say that 'if you really knew me you would know my Father as well'? *[Work your way through verses 9-11]*
5. What are the implications of the Father being in Jesus and Jesus being in the Father? *[Explore the common purpose, love and power of the Father and Son. For example, the Son could not do his 'miracles' if he did not exercise divine power.]*
6. What greater things might Jesus' followers do (verses 12-13) and why?
7. Why would it bring glory to the Father for Jesus to do whatever we ask in his name?

Comment:

The language of 'asking in someone's name' is the language of diplomacy. It was well known in the first century. When an Australian ambassador speaks at the United Nations, she does not speak in her own name. She does not express her views. She speaks in the name of Australia. She says only what she is authorised to say, or what she knows the Australian government would want her to say. When we pray in the name of Jesus, we may only ask for things that we can anticipate Jesus wanting.

For this reason, when we 'pray in Jesus' name', we are not invoking a magical incantation, like 'hocus pocus' or 'abracadabra'. We are simply invoking the right Jesus gives us to ask for things he might want, and to do so on his behalf.

Implications

1. What comfort or challenges do you get from the image of the Father's house having many rooms?
2. How do you feel about the exclusive claims Jesus makes in 14:6?
3. In what ways has Jesus revealed his Father to us?
4. What limitations should we set on the prayers that we say 'in the name of Jesus'?

Prayer suggestions

1. Thanks that there is room for every one of us in our Father's house.
2. Praise for Christ's revelation of the Father to us.
3. Ask that our prayers be shaped by our understanding of God's purposes, character and will.