

Final Words Part 1 - Many Rooms 03.20.11

John 14:1-6 ESV

Video: "Going Home" by Main Things Ministries [3:13]

Introduction: We have entered into the last six weeks leading to Resurrection Day. Traditionally this period in the Christian Church has been known as Lent - a special period of time when we re-focus and re-examine our lives in Christ. We're going to provide you several ways to do that here at CR. We'll celebrate communion together at the end of each of our services over these 6 weeks. And we'll examine some of the final words that Jesus shared with his disciples in his final 24 hours. Specifically, we'll be taking a close look at the final chapters of the gospel of John.

John 13 turns the Gospel toward the cross at Calvary. The other gospels all tell of a dispute between the disciples about who was the greatest. Jesus responds by washing his disciples' feet. Jesus turns his focus upon Peter, who will lead the church in the months and years to come, but in the near-term, Peter looks shaky. Jesus glances over at Judas and sees the betrayer. For 3 years Jesus had poured his life into these men and now, near the end, they didn't look like much. Jesus, it could easily be assumed, was filled with soul sorrow.

The disciples are not much better. They have served at the feet of the greatest man ever known to walk this earth. The wind and waves answer his beck and call. Food appears with Jesus' blessing. Killer diseases disappear with just a touch of Jesus' hands. Evil spirits shake in Jesus' presence. Dead people live at Jesus' command. And yet, Jesus is talking about going away, about his own death. "Where I am going you cannot come." 2x 13:33, 36. Twice because they cannot fathom they heard correctly the first time. The disciples, it is safe to say, were filled with soul sorrow.

Have you been there? Have you known soul sorrow? Has your world ever turned upside down? Your expectations flown right out the window? Your business fail? Your friend turn away? Your spouse leave? Your children break off? Feeling betrayed, hurt, alone? **Jesus had a message for his disciples on that last day. One of his final words. They're good words and they are our words too: "Do not let your hearts be troubled."**

I. We relieve our **SOUL SORROW** by our trust in **JESUS**.
"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me."
John 14:1 NIV

It's important that we put Jesus' name to our trust. We trust in God because we're supposed to do so. But "God" (to us) can be generic. Everybody can believe that there might be some kind of God out there somewhere, somehow. Jesus says it's not enough just to trust in generic God. We need the specific name: Jesus. "**Trust also in me.**" Jesus is the answer to life's deepest sorrows.

What is trust (belief)? Placing my whole confidence into it. Not just a mental assent, not just a historical belief, not theoretical. **Jesus then tells us exactly what trusting in Him looks like...**

II. Part of that trust includes...

- A. believing in what Jesus is doing now: **PREPARING A PLACE**.
“There are many dwelling places in my Father’s house. Otherwise, I would have told you, because I am going away to make ready a place for you.”
John 14:2 NET

When we are filled with soul sorrow, our lives will turn positive when we consider what Jesus has been doing for these past 2 millennia. He has been working on a wonderful place for you and me. Sadly, I believe we as Christ-followers have been robbed of some great joy by not dwelling more on our future dwelling places in heaven.

3 Things We Learn About Heaven:

1. Heaven is a place, NOT **A STATE OF MIND**.
It would be hard to get too excited about an ethereal realm, where our spirits float around. We are physical beings. We will be physically resurrected someday. We will inhabit new, powerful physical bodies. And we will be in a physical place!
2. Heaven is where **GOD THE FATHER IS**.
Most important of all is that Heaven will be the place where God the Father will be. We will know Him and be close to Him in ways we can’t even begin to imagine now.
3. Heaven is **IMMENSE** with great **DIVERSITY**!
We have to imagine as far as our minds can take us... and then we’re not even close to just how big Heaven will be. It’s going to be immense! Huge! Many dwelling places. Many rooms. Many mansions.

Read several paragraphs C.S. Lewis Great Divorce p. 537

Diversity - There will be more people than we think / Different kinds of people / Different denominations / Different rooms.

- B. believing in what Jesus will do: **COMING BACK AGAIN**.
“After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me so that you may be where I am.” John 14:3 NCV

When Jesus finishes his preparation, he will come back again. It could be any day. The early Christ-followers looked forward to Jesus’ returning. It’s theorized that the Gospels weren’t written down because Jesus would return any moment. 25/27 NT books reference it. Jesus himself instructed: “Stay awake for you do not know what day your Lord is coming” (Matt 24:42 ESV). Paul writes, “Now you have every spiritual gift you need as you eagerly wait for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:7 NLT).

There is something about that kind of trust - eager anticipation of the King’s return - that begins to shade every event in our life. It brings vibrant color and life back to the gray, shadowy disappointments. It reminds us that this world is not our final place. Jesus is preparing a new place. And it encourages us to change this place for the better. To be the Christ-instigator to bring heaven here to earth.

And that brings us to the issue of what we do while we wait...

- III. Christian GPS: about the **JOURNEY** not the **DESTINATION**
Jesus: "And you already know the road I'm taking." Thomas said, "Lord, we don't know where you are going. How do you expect us to know the road?"
John 14:4-5 The Message

Gotta love Thomas! No taking anything for granted with him. You know how it is when you don't know what someone is talking about, but you're just sure you're the only one and you don't want to look stupid, so you don't ask. Then someone else asks exactly what you were wondering about anyway... That's Thomas! "Hey I don't know WHERE you're going... let alone THE ROAD that gets us there!

I don't care if you have the latest GPS or the basic map and compass. You have to have a DESTINATION in mind before you can figure out a ROUTE.

But it's pretty clear from Jesus' first statement that he didn't see it that way. He says, "You know the road I'm taking (MSG)." "You know the way..." (NIV, ESV, NLT). In other words, you've watched me. You know the path I've been on. Just stay on the path. Just keep doing the things you have seen me do. And you'll get there. You'll be surprised when you arrive... but this way gets you to the destination.

Pastor Mark: "You've heard the saying that so and so is so heavenly minded that they're no earthly good? Not so of a true Christ-follower. The heavenly minded are always about the earthly good, about bringing heaven to earth!"

- IV. The journey is all about **JESUS**, the path to **THE FATHER**.
Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6 ESV

This statement from Jesus often leads to objections of exclusiveness. How can Christians really believe that Jesus is the only way to know God? Well... without meaning to sound trite... because Jesus said it. Jesus said it. I trust in Jesus. So I believe it.

However, there may be more here than the simple concept of Jesus as gatekeeper. We often think of this path to God as a toll road and Jesus is the toll booth. You can't get on the highway unless you go through the Jesus booth. I don't think that *in context* that's it.

Illustration: When our Jennifer and Jonathan were 5 and 3 - before Jessica and Jillian were even born, Mary Kay and I invested in a class C motorhome. Over the next decade, with the family we traveled to 44 of the 50 states together. We loved the ROAD TRIP! Back then we didn't have the GPS. We had AAA. Before every vacation we would go get our packet from AAA for all the states we'd travel to. Our trip to heaven is the same way. **There are 3 dimensions...**

3 Dimensions of our Road Trip to Heaven:

1. **The way:** **The Route** of the roads I need to travel. We would get a big map with the route highlighted, then a TripTik. Sometimes we'd stay on one major interstate for days at a time.

It's the same with Jesus, except we don't get a preview of what's around the bend. The way with Jesus is to do things the way

Jesus did them. We stay on the route by doing what Jesus did. Asking ourselves, "What Would Jesus Do," then doing them.

2. **The truth:** The Tourbook - understanding my location. Part of the packet we received from AAA included Tourbooks which explained the lay of the land. What this part of the country is known for. Why we might want to stop and see something along the way.

We Christ-followers also have a Tourbook. It's called the Bible, the Word of God. It reminds us of the truths of what Jesus taught. It helps us to understand what's going on around us. It reminds us of when we may need to slow down and check out what's going on around us... or at other times to remind us to get back on the road. To keep in mind the destination. It helps us to keep in mind the solid, central truth of Jesus' way and not get sidetracked by the muddled thinking of "any truth will do." Frankly we Evangelicals do a pretty good job of emphasizing the Tourbook and Map concepts of staying on THE WAY. **Sometimes, though, we lose sight of...**

3. **The life:** The Company - the joy of fellowship during trip. The reason we took the trips with the kids was not just to arrive at the destination. Sure, we were always heading somewhere, but the fellowship was the whole thing! It gave us the chance to be together!

The same is true of the Jesus WAY. The journey should be enjoyable - full of life and joy and wonder. We don't take this journey alone. We have (1) the Holy Spirit with us at all times. Don't forget that this is the Spirit of Christ. It's like having Jesus along side of us. That's why Jesus says, "It is to your advantage that I go away," (Jn 16:7 NASB) because then the Holy Spirit will come - described variously as the Helper, the Comforter, the Advocate, the Counselor, the Friend. There is great joy in sharing life together with the Spirit of Christ!

Also we have (2) one another. There is great joy and celebration in the life we share with other Christ-followers. We do not go through this journey alone. We are designed for fellowship. We are designed to enjoy this trip through life with one another. That's why there are 58 "one anothers" in the NT. "Serve one another." "Accept one another." "Forgive one another." "Greet one another." "Bear one another's burdens." "Honor one another." "Teach one another." "Submit to one another." "Encourage one another."

Conclusion: There are three possibilities of where you might find yourself today. (1st) You just don't think about heaven much at all. You are so wrapped up in your own life, and possibly your own soul sorrow, that heaven seems distant and non-impacting. Consider these words of Jesus. "I go to prepare a place for you." Circle the "you." Make it singular. Make it personal. What might YOUR room look like? (Cheryl illustration.) (2nd) You are so heavenly minded that you are no earthly good. Maybe you think about heaven all the time, but in an escapist way. As if you can't wait to get away from THIS place so you can get to THAT place. That's not what Jesus has in mind. He put you here for a reason. He wants to work through you to bring a little bit of heaven to earth now! (3rd) You are doing just that - living in a daily anticipation that TODAY could be THE day of Jesus' return, and DOING all you can to prepare.