

# **A Heart to Prepare our Future - John**

## ***14:1-11***

### **Introduction**

- Today I want to start by sharing an opinion of mine with you, and I'm pretty sure it's an opinion that most if not all of you will share.
- I am very tired of COVID.
- I remember a year ago at this point, I was getting ready to go away on a Florida vacation with my family, taking a week away, and at the time we were just beginning to hear rumblings of this new virus that had shown up overseas.
- Jump to now, and here we are, in the midst of the second wave of this virus that has completely changed the way our world works over the past year.
- And don't get me wrong, God has been very good, and very faithful throughout this entire pandemic, but I am still very tired of this virus, and I really hope it ends soon.
- Sometimes, though, that hope feels much more difficult, and like a distant dream.
- I had a conversation with Elaine the other week where I told her that a part of my mind knows that COVID will eventually end, but another part of me has just resigned myself to the fact that this is life now, staying home, not being able to see people, and living with this virus.
- Sometimes we hear reports that help to spark up that hope again, like reports that there is a vaccine that is being rolled out! It helps to show us that there might be a light at the end of this tunnel and revives a bit of that hope!
- On the other hand, we also see many reports that seem really discouraging, and make it even harder to keep hoping. Reports like the delays and issues with the vaccine rollouts, or reports that say this pandemic could last another two or three years. Things like that just feel like they take the wind out of our sails, and make it even harder to hope that this will eventually pass.
- This whole pandemic has been quite a roller coaster in that way, and it does feel so difficult on days to feel like we really have any firm or concrete hope in this. We don't really want to let ourselves hope, because we don't want to be disappointed again.
- So where can we really find hope in the midst of all this?
- Well today we're going to be returning to the book of John and continuing in our series, The Heart of Christ where we're looking to understand more of who Christ is.
- We're still in the midst of this "Farewell Discourse", the final moments that Jesus has with his disciples before he is betrayed and crucified, and the situation does not feel overly hopeful.

- In Ch. 13 we've seen Jesus washing his disciples' feet, giving a picture of what was about to come, he's reminded them that he is about to leave them when one of their close brothers betrays him, and he's just told Peter that he will deny his saviour three different times.
- It doesn't seem like a very hopeful situation, and the disciples were struggling to see any hope in the midst of all of this, but beginning in Ch. 14, where we're going to spend our time today, Jesus is going to share with them some amazing hope for the future, and reveal more of his heart to them and what we're going to see in the passage we're looking at today is that the Heart of Christ gives us a firm hope in the future he has prepared for us.

### **We can have hope because Jesus has promised to prepare our future:**

- Now today we're going to begin just with looking at the first 11 verses of Ch. 14, and V. 1 sets up perfectly the tone of the passage that we're about to deal with as Jesus says:

*"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me." - John 14:1 (ESV)*

- This seems to be in stark contrast with what we've already been reading in Ch. 13. Jesus has been warning his disciples that there are some pretty dark days to come, and they're about to face something more difficult than they've ever faced before, but here in the first verse he gives them hope, telling them not to be troubled, not to let their hearts be troubled. And he urges them, in the coming days, no matter what is about to happen, to trust God in it all. Believe in him, believe in his plan, and by extension, believe also in Christ himself.
- You see, what is about to come for the disciples, should not have been a shock to them. Jesus had told them at many times throughout his ministry that this is where things were leading, that eventually he would have to die. He's been preparing them for this very day, but he's also been preparing them for the fact that that death would not be the end, and ultimately he would overcome death through his resurrection. We see Jesus talking to his disciple about this earlier in the book of John in Ch. 10:17-18, which says:

*"For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father." - John 10:17-18 (ESV)*

- So Jesus has told the disciples that he will lay down his life for them, yet also given them hope that he has the authority to take it up again. Death will not ultimately defeat him, and really never could.

- So he's urging his disciples to trust in God in what's about to happen, and trust in the words he's already spoken to them as he has prepared them for these moments.
- He's comforting them, telling them that despite everything that is about to happen, he has everything under complete control.
- Jesus knows what the disciples are going through in this moment. He understands that they're scared and confused about what the future is going to hold for them, and so he takes this time to speak incredible comfort into their lives. He encourages the disciples that, no matter how dark the days get, and how hopeless it seems, they can have hope by believing in God, and by extension, believing in him.
- Can I take a moment to encourage you? No matter what you're facing, no matter how dark the days, or how deep the struggles, Jesus knows what you're feeling and he is able to speak such an amazing hope into your life. Look at the disciples and what they were about to face, yet Jesus speaks hope into their lives. No matter where you are in life, Jesus understands what you're facing and can speak that hope into your life. *"Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in [him]"*.
- Then the second verse, Jesus gives some context to this hope that he is sharing with the disciples. He says:

*"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?" - John 14:2 (ESV)*

- So here Jesus is beginning to show the disciples where their hope can be found in the midst of what they're about to go through, and that is that he has promised to prepare a future for them.
- Jesus knew that his time on earth was quickly coming to a close, even after his resurrection he wouldn't be on earth with them in the same way for very long. And this was also something that Jesus had prepared them for, telling them that he had come from the Father, and was going back to the Father.
- And Jesus shows his disciples that there is a purpose in his leaving them, and there is a purpose in him returning to the Father. He is leaving them and going back to the Father in order to prepare a place for them. He talks about the many rooms in the house of his Father, showing the disciples that there is a place for them with the Father. There is a place for all of those who follow Christ with the Father, and in leaving them, he is going to prepare that place for them.
- Later on in the book of John, in passages we'll read in the weeks to come Jesus describes to his disciples why it's actually a better thing for them if he leaves to go be with his Father, but he is giving hints of that even now. While the disciples will find it difficult to see Jesus leave,

he is giving them the hope that in his leaving, he is going to prepare a future for them with God.

- So when Jesus leaves them, as he has promised, that is not the end. He is going with a purpose, and that is to prepare a future for his disciples, and a future with God. But he continues to elaborate in V. 3, saying:

*“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.” - John 14:3 (ESV)*

- So Jesus continues to speak such a profound hope into the lives of his disciples, and this is such an amazing thing that he is saying! Not only has he promised his disciples that when he leaves he is preparing a place and a future for them with God, he promises that he will return to them and “take them to himself”. How absolutely incredible is that truth!
- In the face of such a dark time Jesus tells his disciples that when he leaves, he is preparing a place for them with God, and that he will come back one day to bring them to be with himself.
- Ultimately what he is referring to here, is his second coming, the time in which Jesus will return for all of his followers.
- So this is something that provides such an amazing hope, not only for the disciples in the upper room with Jesus in this moment, but for all of us who have given our lives to follow Christ. In his death and resurrection he has prepared a place for us with God, and promises that one day, he will return for us and take us to himself, that we may be where he is. What an amazing truth that is. So Jesus is not just offering hope for his disciples in their immediate moment.
- So just in these first three verses we see where we can find true hope. We have hope because Jesus has promised to prepare our future.
- Jesus then continues with these words in V. 4 which lead right into the next thing we will see in this passage which will show us why we can have hope:

*“And you know the way to where I am going.” - John 14:4 (ESV)*

### **We can have hope because Jesus provides a way to our future:**

- So Jesus tells the disciples that they know the way to where he is going, the way to the Father, but as we come to V. 5, Thomas pipes in with a question for Jesus about all this. Look at what the verse says:

*“Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” - John 14:5 (ESV)*

- This seems to be in direct contrast to what Jesus has literally just said in the previous verse that the disciples know “the way” to where he is going. From Thomas’ comments, it seems like they have no idea.
- This is a common issue for the disciples, and actually a theme that can be seen running through the entire book of John, which is the theme of misunderstandings. Whenever Jesus makes statements that could have multiple interpretations, one being physical, the other Spiritual, the disciples always seem to interpret Jesus words wrong.
- This is a great example of that. When Jesus is talking about going to be with the Father, and his Father’s house, he is talking about his death, his resurrection, and then returning to Heaven.
- What the disciples are seeing, however, is that Jesus is going somewhere like a different town or city, and they’re just supposed to know where that is, and how to get there. They are struggling to fully understand what Jesus is telling them here.
- But the next verse that we read beautifully shows that, while the disciples may not have fully understood where Jesus was going or the way to the father, they did in fact “know” the way. Look at what Jesus says, and be completely amazed by these words:

*“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)*

- These are such beautifully powerful words from Jesus. *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life”*. Jesus lays out so clearly for his disciples the hope that he is providing for them. This is what Jesus meant when he said that he was going to “prepare” a place for them. In his death, resurrection, and returning to the Father he provided the way for his disciples to also be with the Father, and for all those who give their lives to serve God! Jesus provided himself as the way to the Father.
- He also tells them that he is the “Truth”. Throughout his entire ministry on earth Jesus’ life was dedicated to preaching and teaching people truth. Teaching them who God was, and pointing them back to him. Every word out of Jesus’ mouth was the true Word of God, and those are the same words that we have today recorded for us in the Bible.
- And finally the “Life”. Jesus is the ultimate source of eternal life for all who believe in him. John 1:3-4 tells us:

*“All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men” - John 1:3-4 (ESV)*

- So Jesus provides the way for us to have life, he teaches us about that life, and is himself the source of that life.

- So not only do we have hope because Jesus has promised to prepare our future, we can have hope because Jesus provided the way to that future, so that all who follow him could spend eternity with the Father.
- While this is such a beautiful truth that Jesus, in his life death and resurrection, provides himself as the way to the Father, he also makes an incredibly important statement here at the end of the verse. He says *“No one comes to the Father except through me”*.
- He is not saying that he is “one” way to the Father. He is not saying that he is the “best” way, or the “easiest” way to get to the Father. Jesus Christ is the **ONLY** way to get to the Father. It is through Christ and Christ alone that we are able to have a relationship with God. This future comes through him only.
- Any hope that is founded on anything other than Christ will not last. Everything in this World will eventually pass away. We spent a lot of time in the fall looking at the book of Ecclesiastes, which tells us that everything is “vanity”, literally a breath. Here today, gone tomorrow. There is nothing in this world that can give us a lasting hope. The only true hope is found in Jesus.
- Then in V. 7, Jesus says:

*“If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” - John 14:7 (ESV)*

- Now that Jesus has made clear to the disciples that he is the ONLY way to the Father, and the only source of true and lasting hope, he makes this amazing claim that now the disciples know the Father, and have seen him, because they have seen Jesus.

## **We can have hope for the future because Jesus is God**

- This leads into a conversation that happens in the next few verses, up to V. 11. Another of the disciples, Philip, joins the conversation, once again showing the struggle that the disciples were having to understand Jesus’ words. What he was saying sounded really good to them, but they wanted some kind of proof in order to be sure that what Jesus was telling them was accurate. Look at what he says in V. 8:

*“Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” - John 14:8 (ESV)*

- This continues with the theme of misunderstanding in the book of John, the disciples are just struggling to really understand what Jesus is saying, and they think that if Jesus will just show them the Father, then they would be able to believe.

- Jesus responds in the next few verses, showing some disappointment and a bit of frustration at the fact that the disciples are still not getting this. Here is what he says up to V. 10:

*“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.” - John 14:9-10 (ESV)*

- Isn't that so true of us? Don't we do the same thing that Philipp has done here? We tell God that "I'll believe in you if you just give me one more sign". I'll believe in you if... Jesus is saying that the disciples don't need anything more. They don't need to see the Father because they already have, because they have seen Jesus. And the same is true for us. We have God's Word. We have the Bible, and we don't need anything else.
- So Jesus here essentially repeats what he already said in V. 7, yet explains it more clearly.
- It is such an amazing truth that Jesus is sharing here with his disciples, that he himself is the same as the Father. For the past number of years that the disciples have been ministering alongside Jesus, they have been traveling and living with God himself. This is an absolutely mind blowing truth.
- In our devotions, Elaine and I have been looking at the book of Exodus, and we're right in the part of the book when the Israelites have come to Mt. Sinai, and God's presence has come to rest on the mountain in order to give the law to Moses. There are some pretty amazing and powerful descriptions given in these passages about the glory of God, and Scripture even says that when Moses came down from the mountain after speaking with God, his face was literally glowing, and just radiating with the glory of God. He shone so much that he literally had to wear a veil just for people to be able to look at him because God's glory was reflecting off of his face.
- This is so amazing when we think that Christ is the same as the Father, the one who was there on the mountain in all of his splendour and glory. That is who Jesus is.
- He also speaks of the authority that he has been given to him by his Father, speaking of the amazing relationship that exists within the Trinity, and it also shows us the third reason that the heart of Christ gives us hope for the future.
- We can have hope because Jesus has promised to prepare our future, because Jesus provided the way to that future, and thirdly, because Jesus himself is God. He is the only one who actually has that authority to provide that kind of firm hope, the hope of eternal life.
- Finally in V. 11, Jesus says:

*“Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.” - John 14:11 (ESV)*

- So Jesus tells the disciples that even if they’re struggling to believe his words, they should look at all of his actions. Everything that he’s done while he’s been among them, and see the proof in those actions that he really is who he says he is. He really is God.
- This last exchange with Jesus and Philipp really shows something important about the heart of human beings. Jesus came to do something so amazing in giving up his life, laying it down so that we would be able to have such an amazing hope in the future that he has prepared for us, yet we are so slow to believe him and actually give our lives to him. But I want to encourage you this evening, we really do have hope because of what Jesus has done, and the sacrifice that he has made.

## **Conclusion:**

- So I want to end this evening with a question for all of you.
- Where is your hope? In moments where everything else in the world seems to be so uncertain and unreliable, where is your true hope found? This is a question that I have to ask myself so regularly as well.
- Do we hope in the things of this world, hanging all of our hopes on a possible vaccine, or a thought that things in our life will eventually get back to normal, or is our hope in Jesus Christ? Because that is a hope that is much greater than this world.
- Hoping that a vaccine will come, and that the pandemic will end is not a bad thing. But that cannot be our ultimate hope. I hope that all this ends, but even if it doesn’t I still have that hope that my future is securely prepared for me in eternity with Christ because of what he did on the cross.
- And it’s important to know that having hope for the future in Christ doesn’t mean we won’t face difficult times right now.
- Jesus spoke these amazing words of hope to his disciples, encouraging them to believe in him, yet they still had to live through the darkest moments in human history at Jesus’ crucifixion, and many of them would go on and be put to death for their faith.
- The hope that Jesus gave, and the hope that he gives, is not a hope that our life on earth will be easy. In fact Jesus tells us that following him will not lead at all to an easy life, but to one that will often be very challenging. But the hope that he gives is a hope for a life beyond the one we have here on earth that, while we may not have an easy life here on earth, we have the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ. The promise that he has prepared a place for us with the Father through his life, death, and resurrection, and a hope that he will return to take

us to be where he is with the Father. That is the most amazing hope, and it is one that will never fade.

- I would encourage you, if you never have before this point, put your faith in Jesus Christ. He is the only way to the Father, and the only one who can provide us with a firm hope that will never change no matter what is going on around us.
- And this hope, while not giving us a promise that we'll never face hard times, does help us to endure those hard times, knowing that our hope is in our eternal life with Jesus Christ, not the one we have here.
- So ultimately, as we've looked at the heart of Christ today, I want to end with this, and I want you to remember this. The heart of Christ gives us a firm hope in the future that he has prepared for us. It is the hope of eternal life, and it is a hope that will never, EVER change.