



John 14 v 1 to 14 The generous life of the Trinity

We are starting a series on the work of the Holy Spirit and how he empowers us to **SERVE** the Body of Christ – the local church.

What must it have been like in those last weeks of Jesus' earthly life? For the disciples it must have felt like a journey into the unknown. They had followed Jesus for three years and seen many mind-blowing incidents, heard much counter-cultural teaching and been amazed at the way Jesus dealt with people. Like any of us, they want to cling on to a good thing – the thought of him disappearing is scarcely bearable.

In John 13:33 they receive deeply disturbing news; Jesus will only be around 'a little longer' and where he is going 'they cannot come'. (v36)

1. How should the disciples have responded to this news?
Were they being selfish?
Had they missed the point of Jesus' earthly ministry?
Had they forgotten his teaching?

Jesus is clearly concerned about their anxieties and seeks to re-assure them. This section of John's gospel from John 13:31 is often called 'the final discourse'. It is worth looking back a few chapters to see Jesus talking about his death and now, his going away. They have entered Jerusalem for the last time with Jesus.

2. What were they concerned about?
Was it their loss of status?
Were they concerned that their leader was going to suffer and to die?
Were they worried about their own lives after Jesus' departure?

As ever, Jesus is anxious to comfort them and give them hope and his points are a response to their questions.

Peter (13:36); Thomas (14:5); Philip (14:8) and Judas (14:22)

Jesus talks about all aspects of the Trinity. When he speaks he talks to them about God the Father and how they can find a way to him. He talks about the Holy Spirit as the one who will be with them (14:15ff).

3. Are we trinitarian enough?
How aware are we of the fatherhood of God and what does it mean to us?
Are we like the disciples and fail to listen to the teaching of Jesus?
Are we aware of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives?
Do we have a bias towards one person of the Godhead?

Jesus' appeal to the disciples is TO BELIEVE. The reason he gives NOT to be troubled about the future is to 'trust in God. trust also in me' (v1). The reason he gives them to trust in him is that his departure is

purposeful. He's not just disappearing but he's going 'to prepare a place' (v2) and he's coming back (v3) and he's going to take us to our prepared place.

4. How much is our life built on this promise of Jesus that our future is eternally secure and we have nothing to fear?
Are we too rooted in the reality of the present so that we don't see our eternal future clearly?
How does this idea affect the way we process the world we live in with all its pain and suffering?

Clearly all this going and coming is too much for Thomas (v5). He doesn't understand the 'prepared place' idea so if he doesn't know the place, directions to it could be tricky. Early Christians were sometimes described as 'people of the way' which they got from this massive statement of Jesus in verse 6. Jesus is saying that access to the Father's place can only be gained through the work of Jesus. He is the sin bearer on the cross that means we can approach a holy God. That is the TRUTH that gives us (eternal) LIFE.

5. Jesus is saying he is the only mediator who creates the only avenue to God.
What does this mean to you?
What does this mean in our discussions with people of other faiths?
What does Jesus' statement in verse 7 tell us about Jesus and his father?

Inevitably there is another question from the disciples. Philip wants a simple rational explanation. He asks Jesus to show him the father. Clearly, he doesn't understand Jesus' statement in 1:18 – 'no one has seen God at any time'. Jesus tells Philip that, stood before him, is the full embodiment of God. He is not just a religious teacher or the latest prophet on the block – he is the one in whom God can be found.

6. Are we ever in danger of devaluing Jesus to the level of great teacher or interesting person?
How important is it that we project the full power of who Jesus is?

Jesus' goal has been to encourage and comfort his disciples. Verse 12 begins a change of subject where Jesus tells his disciples what he has put in place after his physical departure. His statements are mind blowing particularly the one that says they will do 'even greater things' in his name and he will do 'anything they ask in his name' (v13)

7. Does this mean we can ask anything we like and God will do it?
Do we underestimate what can be accomplished in the power of the Holy Spirit?
Do we ask enough? Do we expect too little?

For the coming week let's think about what it truly means to be TRINITARIAN

***We have a father who loves us
We have a son who died and rose again
We have a spirit who lives in us
One day we will live in a place prepared for us
But there's still work to do
We are HERE TO SERVE***